Tragicomedy: an Attempt at Classification.

Jeri Laureen Lowe
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/7000

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
TRAGICOMEDY: AN ATTEMPT AT CLASSIFICATION

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 French and Italian

by

Jeri Laureen Lowe
B.A., Baylor University, 1989
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1992
August, 1999
Dedicated to Carroll and Wanelle Lowe
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their contributions to this work:

Dr. Selma Zebouni who guided this dissertation and whose help and support were indispensable; my readers and committee members Dr. David Wills, Dr. Lucie Brind'Amour and Dr. Greg Stone for their kind suggestions and insightful comments; and lastly the many family members, friends, and loved ones who contributed to this work through their moral support and encouragement.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ......................................................... iv
ABSTRACT ................................................................. vi
INTRODUCTION .............................................................. 1
CHAPTER 1. EPISTEMOLOGY .............................................. 13
CHAPTER 2. THEORIES .................................................... 34
CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS OF PLAYS ....................................... 81
CONCLUSION ............................................................... 129
BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................ 135
APPENDIX. PLOT SUMMARIES .......................................... 145
VITA ................................................................. 172
ABSTRACT

This study has attempted to identify the specificity of tragicomedy in light of the lack of any critical consensus as to its nature by looking at tragicomedy as theatre. Theatre's difference from other genres lies in the importance of the spectator's role in the theatrical event, and it is the premise of this analysis that it is in the role of the spectator that the specificity of tragicomedy is to be identified. Whereas in tragedy and comedy the spectator is made to participate in closure by a well-constructed structure which leads him/her to a conclusion ("catharsis" or "epiphany"), this study finds that in tragicomedy (s)/he is denied this role.

In order to understand why at a certain period—in this case the Baroque—a specific genre dominates, it was necessary to look to the intellectual milieu of the Baroque. This milieu is identified as a period of transition: from a world envisioned as a totality (cf. Foucault) where reaching Truth of essences is considered to be possible— to the episteme which displaces it: that dominated by the possibility of attaining knowledge of phenomena as truth (modern science). There is a shift from the notion of Truth in the word/world to that illustrated by Descartes' Cogito where knowledge is founded in the individual consciousness: a positing of a subject that can attain knowledge of the world as object.
The period being identified here is the Baroque: characterized by the "impossibility" of attaining Truth of essences while at the same time not yet attaining knowledge. The characteristics of the period (illusion, ambiguity, emphasis of appearance over reality) are present in tragicomedy as well - with the end result that there is a disruption of the traditional structure and function of theatre. In this study some of the devices used in tragicomedy to destabilize the role of the spectator have been identified by the analysis of certain plays of the period with the conclusion that the specificity of tragicomedy lies in its denial of the role the spectator plays in traditional theatre.

vii

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
INTRODUCTION

The dominant theatrical genre in France in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (1550-1650) is tragicomedy. This period is widely referred to as the "Baroque."

The term "Baroque" is used in reference to other art forms as well (music, sculpture, painting, architecture) both in that period and in others. For example, three periods of Baroque music have been identified: the "early period" (1580-1630), the "middle period" (1630-1680), and the "late period" (1680-1750) (List 39). Although different types of musical compositions and consequently different "styles" were developed during this 200 year period, the basic Baroque characteristic which remains constant is the "interweaving of harmonic (tonal) and contrapuntal (melodically interdependent) facets" (List 29). In other words, Baroque music is polyphonic: containing many "voices" - a Baroque characteristic which occurs in literature as well.

Interestingly enough, Baroque art and architecture span the same 200 years as Baroque music, although not every country experienced its Baroque period at the same time. For example, Italy began its Baroque period between 1590 and 1605, whereas Russia's and England's Baroque period began later - at the end of the seventeenth century (Bazin 103; 113, 119). Nevertheless, regardless of when the Baroque
period occurs, its characteristic features are the same: illusion, metamorphosis, movement, ambiguity, excess, emphasis of appearance over reality, emphasis of the uncommon/the particular over the common/the universal, extravagance ... Indeed, these characteristics are manifested in both the art and the architecture: in such paintings as Velasquez' *Las Meninas* (Kitson 102), and in architecture where painting and sculpture are combined to present an illusory "three-dimensional" effect (Blunt 11).

These very features are present in French Baroque tragicomedy. Yet, although a number of studies of individual French plays of this period have been undertaken - studies which spotlight the Baroque characteristics present in the plays, there has been no comprehensive study of French tragicomedy as such but most importantly, no consensus exists as to its nature. Most of the research has focused largely on English and German manifestations of tragicomedy, but no definitive theory of it has emerged. That is, its specific nature has not been determined. Indeed, existing research does not address the problem of the specificity of tragicomedy but rather most often bases its identification either on the oxymoronic nature of the name - concluding that tragicomedy is a mixture of the two genres tragedy and comedy, on the subject matter (a non-historical plot involving a mix of commoners and nobility; a political plot dealing in ethical issues),
or on its dénouement - identifying tragicomedy as a tragedy which ends well. The ultimate goal of this study is to try to identify the specificity, if any, of tragicomedy - that is, to identify a distinctive feature which would differentiate it from either tragedy or comedy or a combination of both: as a category which has a function in its own right as opposed to that of tragedy or that of comedy.

The view that tragicomedy is a mix of tragedy and comedy is on the whole surprising considering the strict division between tragedy and comedy which is advocated by the Aristotelian model dominant in France at the time. Following Aristotle's lead, this division is emphasized by most sixteenth and seventeenth-century theorists who underscore the differences and mostly oppositions between tragedy and comedy - for instance the types of characters specific to each: noble, high-born characters of tragedy; common, low-born characters of comedy. According to the Aristotelian model, the tragic character must be neither good nor bad but someone with whom the spectator can sympathize - one whose misfortune is not brought upon him by some vice, but by faulty judgment (Aristotle 238-39; ch.13). It is this situation which arouses the pity and fear of the spectator - and this "catharsis" becomes the function of tragedy: pity for the "undeserved misfortune" and fear because (s)he is like the spectator (Aristotle 238; ch.13).
This catharsis is a direct result of a sequence of events leading up to a climax where it occurs.

For example, in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1608), the spectator sees the main character fall from the great height of majesty to a poor demented exile - all because of his vanity and bad judgment. The spectator follows a series of events which gradually bring about the conclusion of the tragedy as Lear is rejected by his daughters and, surrounded by his enemies, descends into madness and wanders the moors. His rescue by Cordelia precedes his recognition that she is the only daughter who really loves him. The action builds to a climax as Lear holds the dead body of his daughter, Cordelia, in his arms and says, "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, // And thou no breath at all?" (5.3). This is the cathartic moment for the spectator. This Aristotelian conclusion is reached in spite of the presence of many Baroque characteristics throughout the play: excess violence (the onstage blinding of Gloucester), madness (both the feigned insanity of Edgar and the very real insanity of Lear), and an important subplot which echoes the main plot (as one melody mimics another in Baroque music) in the portrayal of Gloucester and his two sons, Edgar and Edmund. Consequently, my premise is that the function of a genre - the effect it has on the spectator - is what determines its specificity and not whether tragic and comic elements are combined or the manner in which they are combined. *King Lear*
is an Aristotelian tragedy not because of the "formal" elements of tragedy (unities of time, place, action), for it does not possess these, but rather because of the presence of the cathartic moment.

Since pity and fear are not the emotions necessary to comedy, no identification process between the spectator and main character is present. Rather, comedy portrays the deeds of a worse than average character - with a ridiculous/ugly fault or deformity (Aristotle 229; ch. 4), resulting in laughter on the part of the spectator who recognizes the breach in a social norm committed by the character - to whom (s)he feels superior (Bergson 215-216, 228). The function of comedy - the "epiphany" at the end - is accomplished when the scapegoat (Northrop Frye's "blocking character" who is an obstacle to the happy conclusion) is expelled and the spectator/society experiences a feeling of rejuvenation (Frye Anatomy 163-165).

A look at Molière's L'Ecole des Femmes (perf. 1662) will help to prove this point. The main character, Arnolphe, is the quintessential old bachelor in love with a young woman, Agnès. Having raised her since she was four years old, he believes he has been able to control her environment and to raise her in ignorance, thus making her the perfect candidate for the ideal wife. However, the spectator soon realizes that Arnolphe is the one who lacks
knowledge as (s)he bears witness to the very thing he fears most - his deception at the hands of Agnès. As the play progresses, she passes from ignorance to knowledge. The spectator is "in" on the joke at Arnolphe's expense as Arnolphe unwittingly helps Agnès deceive him by insisting upon the marriage of his rival (Horace), never realizing that the marriage in question is the very one he's trying to prevent: that of Agnès to Horace. Indeed, almost everyone else possesses knowledge of the identity of the intended bride and groom. As Arnolphe is confronted with the truth, he is rendered speechless - an unwilling spectator to his own deception. He is the "bouc émissaire" who is silenced (expelled) at the conclusion, leaving the spectator with a joyous feeling.

If tragedy and comedy are distinguished by the effect they have on the spectator, the question to pose, then, regarding tragicomedy, is whether there is a function of tragicomedy that distinguishes it from tragedy or comedy. That this point is at the core of the theatrical event should come as no surprise because of the importance of the role of the spectator. Indeed, the theatrical spectator's role - a role which differs from that played by the reader of the novel or the spectator of film - is what distinguishes the theatre from any other genre. As theatre critics such as Susan Bennett and Anne Ubersfeld point out, the spectator is the locus where meaning occurs. His/Her
active participation is necessary for the function of the theatre.

While similar claims are sometimes made for the reader of the novel and the film spectator, neither of these roles parallels that played by the spectator of theatre. For example, although theorists like Wolfgang Iser argue for the necessity of the reader to the novel's meaning, there are particular differences from the theatrical spectator which should be noted. As Iser himself points out, meaning occurs within a confined interaction and is virtually always predetermined. Of the reader, Iser states, "His position must therefore be manipulated by the text if his viewpoint is to be properly guided" (152). The viewpoint of the reader is then necessarily restricted to/by the (narrator's) perspective he is forced to share "in order to make him adjust and even differentiate his own focus" (X emphasis added).

Because, like the theatre, cinema is a visual art form involving actors and spectators, one might be tempted to view it as parallel to the theatre. However, there are important differences. In film, too, the spectator's gaze is restricted by the camera which, like the narrator of the novel, decides what the spectator sees and when. In addition, the film is and remains unaffected by the spectator. In this aspect it is obviously closer to the novel than to the theatre.
The importance of the spectator, claims Timothy Reiss, is often overlooked when discussing the French theatre of the early seventeenth century (Toward Dramatic 1). Reiss concentrates on the various elements in Baroque theatre which throw the spectator into a "constant fluctuation between belief and disbelief" (Toward Dramatic 181), but he does not identify the participatory role the spectator plays in any closure (or absence thereof) in the plays. His interest lies with the effect of the work on the spectator rather than his/her function. While Reiss emphasizes what occurs in early seventeenth-century drama in general, he does not address the specific nature of tragicomedy.

The search for the specificity of tragicomedy is particularly timely as there has been a renewed scholarly interest in the genre by some modern critics on the grounds that it fits our modernity. This is evident, for example, in the very title of critic Omar Calabrese's work, Neo-Baroque: A Sign of the Times. Calabrese elaborates on his understanding of the Baroque as "not only, or not exactly, as a specific period in the history of culture, but as a general attitude and formal quality of those objects in which the attitude is expressed" (15).

Although comparisons between two historical periods might be tempting, they are also problematic since in writing history, we run the risk of writing fiction. Nevertheless, such comparisons bring up the very important
point that a work of art is in large part conditioned by its intellectual milieu. For the critic of modern theatre it is clear that the "Postmodern" thrust of the present times is what feeds the contemporary emergence of tragicomedy. The claim that a work is conditioned by its period is neither new nor original. In the case of tragedy, for instance, Walter Benjamin, George Steiner, and Timothy Reiss among others argue that tragedy is only possible in certain periods and disappears with the advent of the scientific discourse which occurs around the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries.

Following their lead, it is my contention that in order to identify the specificity of tragicomedy, it is necessary to consider its intellectual milieu - a milieu in which a transition occurs from the episteme to which Michel Foucault refers as "ressemblance" (Mots 32) - an episteme dominated by the search for Truth (Benjamin 27-56) - to the episteme of "representation" (Mots 92), dominated by the search for knowledge (Benjamin 27-56).

It is during this transition period from the cosmological view of the world where properly interpreted signs reveal the essences of things (Foucault Mots 41) for man, to that in which the world becomes an object on which man as subject confers meaning, that tragicomedy flourishes. Baroque man finds himself detached from the stable moorings of a cosmological/theological system of reference,
in a state of flux, not yet having attained the stability of the Cartesian subject, master of a world he controls (or thinks he does). The relationship between the emergence of the subject as the locus where meaning occurs and the dominant role the spectator plays in the theatre bears further examination and is particularly significant for this study. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to attempt to show that the intellectual milieu (the Baroque) determines the function of the spectator in tragicomedy - a function or a role different from either that in tragedy or comedy.

In the first chapter, the intellectual milieu that informs the Baroque period will be outlined. The second chapter will identify the nature and function of tragedy and the tragic, comedy and the comic, and give an outline of the existing research on tragicomedy. Once the basic terminology and concepts are covered, the plays will be addressed where the specific nature of tragicomedy will hopefully be identified.

Because of the enormous quantity of plays produced in the Baroque period, only certain of the plays will be analyzed here with facets of other alluded to. In forming this corpus of approximately 30 plays, consideration was given both to the importance of the playwright to the period and to the presence of Baroque characteristics within the plays. It should be noted that self-labelled dramas of all
types ("tragedy", "comedy", "tragicomedy", and "pastoral") were consulted. However, considering that the nature of "tragicomedy" is the question which informs the subject of this study, it was judged prudent and necessary to dispense with the notion of subscribing to pre-determined labels and to neither exclude nor include plays solely on the basis of their self-labelling. Since the majority of the dramas are unfamiliar to most, plot summaries will be given in the Appendix. The dates given after the plays refer to the dates of publication rather than of performance unless otherwise indicated.

NOTES

1 Here I have followed the dates set by Jean Rousset in his La Littérature de l'Age Baroque en France for the beginning and end of the French Baroque period. However, there is disagreement among critics as to the exact dates. As one example, see Floeck, Wilfred. Esthétique de la Diversité. Pour une Histoire du Baroque Littéraire en France. Trans. Gilles Floret. Seattle: Biblio 17, 1989. Here Floeck sets the dates for the Baroque at 1575/85 - 1650/60.

2 Although musicologists seem to be in agreement concerning the existence of Baroque music from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, there is disagreement as to the beginning and end of each period. Here musicologist Kurt List, for example, follows pioneer music critic Manfred Bukofzer's temporal delineations, but cites Suzanne Clercx's alternate timeline: the last third of the sixteenth century; the seventeenth century; and the first half of the eighteenth century in his History of Baroque Music New York: Orpheus, 1967. Another theorist, Claude Palisca, suggests 1550-1640; 1640-90; 1690-1740 (See his Baroque Music New Jersey: Princeton Hall, 1981.)

3 Although he does not belong to the period in question, it is difficult to think of seventeenth-century comedy without associating the genre with Molière.
Many critics (such as Susan Sontag, Stephen Heath, Pascal Bonitzer, and Laura Mulvey to name a few) have done important studies on the subject of the link between the film spectator's gaze and the camera.

This emphasis on the Baroque as relevant for our times is shown by the presentation of John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (1663) in March 1994 by the Louisiana State University Department of Theatre. Indeed, the director, C.C. Courtney, maintains that the play is pertinent to our period - dealing as it does with such issues as "violence, incest, destructive emotions." Courtney, too, draws parallels between the Baroque and Postmodern periods: "...in true Postmodern fashion where the fictional and the real become one, the very detestable actions of Giovanni do assure the immortality of the protagonists." (See Page 5 of the program brochure LSU Presents 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. Baton Rouge: LSU Dept. of Theatre, 1994).
CHAPTER ONE: EPISTEMOLOGY

Since the Baroque period is situated between two other periods characterized by two different epistemes, it is the shift from one to the other which needs to be identified. In *Les Mots et les Choses*, Michel Foucault analyzes the episteme of "ressemblance" - which he claims played a major role in western thought until the end of the sixteenth century (32). In "ressemblance", parallels are drawn through the belief in repetition: "Le monde s'enroulait sur lui-même: la terre répétant le ciel, les visages se mirant dans les étoiles,..." (32). All is connected in a chain - a circle (43) which is infinite (Poulet *Métamorphoses* 33). The world is marked by signatures (Foucault *Mots* 50) - signs which, properly interpreted, can reveal the essence(s) of things: "Il n'y a pas de ressemblance sans signature. Le monde du similaire se fonde sur le relevé de ces signatures et sur leur déchiffrement." (*Mots* 41). Foucault moves from this type of episteme to that of Classicism and the notion of "representation" - where "le langage représente la pensée, comme la pensée se représente elle-même" (*Mots* 92), with only a sketch of the Baroque (*Mots* 65). While he does mention the characteristic ear-marks of the period: the "trompe-l'oeil", "illusion comique", the "théâtre qui se dédouble...des songes et visions,..." (*Mots* 65), Foucault does not give an in-depth discussion of the actual transition from one episteme to another, and it is precisely
at this juncture between two epistemes that the works to be studied are located.

Along with Foucault's skeletal summary of that which informs the Baroque, is Walter Benjamin's discussion identifying the Baroque as a period between two epistemes: one dominated by the search for Truth (of essences), the other by the search for knowledge (27-56). He begins his analysis of the period with a discussion of the episteme which precedes the Baroque. According to Benjamin, there is no method for attaining Truth, but rather Truth represents itself (30). For Truth is not formed "in the consciousness, but ...[is]...an essence" (30). It is fixed and has "prior existence" (29). This places it in direct contrast to knowledge which must be sifted through the consciousness where it receives its form, leaving it "open to question" (30). The Baroque then is the period in which the possibility of attaining Truth begins to be viewed as problematic: where the possibility of attaining Truth is put into question.

Benjamin is not alone in his conclusions about the shift away from Truth towards knowledge and the problems which arise from this transition. Timothy Reiss traces this shift - beginning with a definition of the type of discourse prevalent through the sixteenth century: a discourse of "'patterning'" (Discourse 77, 106), where it is assumed that true meanings can be gathered from what is visible.
Reiss states that, in the Middle Ages in particular, the "presentation of the object gave the name" (Discourse 76). Here "discourse is a part of the 'world' and not distinct from it" (Discourse 30). It gives "no special privilege either to the enunciator of discourse or to the act of enunciation" (Discourse 30). It is easy to see that for Reiss this is radically different from the modern, what he calls "analytico-referential discourse" - a discourse which "assumes an exterior and marks that assumption in its own elaboration" (Discourse 28-29). This discourse assumes a separation of the world "as a fixed object of analysis" (Discourse 41) and "the forms of discourse by which men speak of it and by which they represent their thoughts" (Discourse 41). It acts upon the world, expressing "knowledge as a reasoning practice upon...[it]" (Discourse 30).

It is this transition from the discourse which precedes it to that which follows and marks the modern age which might explain certain aspects of the Baroque. As a movement, the Baroque is not organized, but rather is identified by certain characteristics: change, movement, metamorphoses and multiplicity, among others (Rousset 246). The most typical feature, however, is the dominance of ornamentation - a dominance which Jean Rousset sums up concisely with his "le paraître l'emporte sur l'être" (181-82, 215-19). The Baroque emphasizes appearance, existence,
and phenomena over reality/essence/Truth. This duality between appearance and reality is a recurring theme in the art of the period - where reality and illusion are constantly overlapping. As Rousset points out, this confusion between reality and illusion applies especially to the theatre:

Tout se meut ou s'envole, rien n'est stable, rien n'est plus ce qu'il prétend être, les frontières entre la réalité et le théâtre s'effacent dans un perpétuel échange d'illusions et la seule réalité qui demeure est le flot des apparences cédant à d'autres apparences...(30).

This confusion can be seen, for example, in Corneille's L'Illusion Comique. The play is a play within a play where "illusion et réalité se confondent. Ce qui a été n'est pas - ce qui est ne sera pas et illusion et réalité aboutissent sur la scène par l'art d'Alcandre-metteur en scène" (Zebouni, "Comique" 611). To quote one of Shakespeare's characters: "All the world's a stage" (As You Like It 2:7).

These characteristics which mark Baroque art occur in a period of violent political, social, economic and religious changes, of transitions from one order to another. On the political and social levels, the feudal system is at an end. With the growth in the power of the monarchy, the aristocracy is losing its traditional role as the warrior class as well as its independence (Adam 6). The bourgeoisie is rising to power, amassing great wealth in the mercantile
business (Adam 6-8, 44). But even more important are the changes on the religious front with the Reformation (Adam 22) and in science, the end of the reign of the Ptolemaic system with the Copernican revolution and its consequences in the theological realm (Popkin 64). With the knowledge that the Earth is no longer at the centre of the universe came a sense of disorientation. Man's importance was undergirded by the Ptolemaic system - a system which assured him that he was the centre of the universe and the rightful beneficiary of all that existed (Poulet Métamorphoses 11). The demise of this system, then, and the subsequent establishment of the Copernican/Galilean model naturally resulted in a crisis in the ontological structure which supported the old system, causing man to question his position in the universe. No longer at the centre, man was moved to the outskirts - to the circumference of the universe (Poulet Métamorphoses 62) - a universe which Pascal's well-known metaphor describes as "... une sphère infinie dont le centre est partout, la circonférence nulle part" (Pensées 108). Man's displacement and his subsequent questioning of his relation to the established order of things indicates the Baroque as a period of change and confusion where Truth is displaced. The existence of Truth is not necessarily in doubt, but simply the possibility for man of attaining it. Thus, scepticism, as reflected in
Montaigne's "Que sais-je?", is characteristic of the period (Popkin 45).

This scepticism of Montaigne's is illustrated by his concept of the "self." According to Dalia Judovitz, "The Baroque text represents the self as both subject and object of its own discourse" (9). Montaigne's choice of "moi" to indicate the self reflects this Baroque stance - where the self is "always both subject and object" (2). This "Baroque self...is defined by the lack of a stable, universal referent, and its metamorphic character reflects its ever changing and fluid relations with the world." It cannot be separated from the world, language, or representation (8-9). Montaigne's self is plural - "tied to the speculative nature of Montaigne's enterprise: the mutual reflections of the self as observer and spectacle, as subject and object, as writer and text" (10). "As both subject and object of his own inquiry, Montaigne recognizes the impossibility of knowing and understanding himself as a definite entity" (12). Thus the Baroque self as shown in Montaigne demonstrates its link with fluidity and illusion, reflecting the Baroque view of language:

Language for Montaigne is not a transparent medium. Rather, language is caught in the domain of appearance ('paraitre') and it is always illusionistic ...Self presentation is already a representation, since a description is inevitably caught in the web of appearances and thus escapes being and can never fix it (Judovitz 17-18).
The problematic of the self exemplifies that of representation as we understand it in the Baroque: "always in excess of itself...the site of proliferation and illusion." All representations are simply illusion, and thus none "has any privilege over another" (Judovitz 155).

Consequently, certitude is impossible with Montaigne since he "recognized that knowledge about the world is always mediated through representation, which can neither be contained, totalized nor reduced to a formal schema." For Montaigne, "Knowledge...is a language, which, like all languages, has an arbitrary...relation to things, one which shifts both with the position of the observer and the nature of the object under consideration" (Judovitz 187-88).

On the other hand, the Cartesian subject which informs the episteme of representation which follows the Baroque is the exact opposite of the "subject" as illustrated by Montaigne. Interestingly enough, Descartes begins with scepticism in order to overcome it and to establish his scientific method. Unlike the Baroque subject, then, the Cartesian subject is the fixed point/locus where knowledge occurs. With the advent of Cartesianism, man becomes the subject of the world. He organizes the world into a structure of his making, his understanding. This point of the world becoming a fixed object ready for analysis by a subject is elaborated upon by Heidegger, for instance. For Heidegger, what distinguishes the forthcoming Cartesian
discourse (what Reiss refers to as "analytico-referential") from any other is man's organization of the world - "a name for what is, in its entirety" - into a picture (129). That is, "not...a picture of the world, but the world conceived and grasped as picture" (129). This discourse places everything which exists in relation to man: "What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth" (129-30). This "world picture" coincides with Cartesian discourse and the modern age, distinguishing it from any other age (127,130).*

For Judovitz, the Cartesian concept of man as the ordering subject of the world can be explained largely through Descartes' identification of intuition with the "natural light of reason": "Descartes' concept of intuition decenters divine reason by being identified with it and thus repositions intuition, thereby affirming the centrality of man" (63). As she points out:

The subject of knowledge emerges in a dominant position, for the world can now be conceived only in relation to it and as its extension, its product. The creative will of the Cartesian subject thus rivals God's will, since his newly created order challenges the preordained divine order (94).

Man is thus no longer "understood as an individual who has a specific place in the divinely created order. Rather [man] will henceforth be defined as subject" (Judovitz 108). Man's position as subject is shown in Descartes' choice of "Je"
which "indicates his autonomy as subject and the objective status of the world" (Judovitz 2). Here "man posits himself [securely] as ...certain" (Judovitz 180)."

The fixed and certain position of the subject is central to the role of representation in Cartesian epistemology:

As a schema, representation defines how the subject comes to know the world, by describing it according to its norms. The truth of representation emerge[s] as a result of adequation, not between ideas and the world, but rather, between ideas and the conventions that define the validity of those ideas (Judovitz X).

The world becomes an image - "the result of the systematic projection of a mathematical perspective upon nature" (Judovitz 2).

For Descartes, "representation becomes the index of the reduction of the world to a set of standards, to a prototype" (Judovitz 189). The term "representation", then: no longer means merely rendering or presenting, but rather signifies a new way of understanding the world...It implies a new worldview defined by the theoretical priority of the subject and the reduction of the world to an object (Judovitz 2).

Interestingly enough, at the same time that the concept of the subject as the locus of meaning is being elaborated upon, the theatre experiences its "golden age." Since the theatre is a genre characterized by the dominant role the spectator plays, a parallel could be drawn between the emergence of the Cartesian subject, and the role of the
spectator as not only a necessary participant in the theatrical event*, but as an active participant in the meaning of the theatrical event. This point reinforces the notion that the art of a period is closely related to its intellectual milieu.

The role of the "Cartesian subject" as spectator is demonstrated in French "Classicism" with the shift from an emphasis on the "vrai" to an emphasis on the "vraisemblable" - a move from what is True to what seems true to a subject (i.e. knowledge).

Because of the significance of this shift to what will be identified later as the role of the spectator in theatre - a review of Classicism and "Classical doctrine" is relevant here. The Classical movement is heavily indebted to Aristotle - and its tenets are often referred to as the "classical doctrine." One of the key concepts which Classicism takes from Aristotle is that of "mimesis." In his Poetics, Aristotle holds that man learns through imitation and delights in learning (226-227; ch.4). The notions of delight and learning are elaborated upon by Horace: "The man who has managed to blend profit with delight wins everyone's approbation, for he gives his reader pleasure at the same time as he instructs him" (91). Classicism adopts this view as "Art must teach and delight." Art becomes the locus of Truth for us (as Nature is for the poet). If, then, art is to teach, it must be able to
communicate Truth to someone without being misunderstood. There should be the least possibility for error. Consequently, art should be as objective as possible, devoid of the artist's (poet's) influence. Truth/Essence must be readily visible; therefore, the form must be rendered transparent. This is the paradox: Form is the only means by which art can communicate (Truth), yet that form must be absent, invisible. Essence and form must coincide so completely that they are perceived as one. Hence, the form must be simple, clear, concise, and tasteful (bienséances) so as not to interfere with the communication of Truth. In an attempt to achieve this clarity and simplicity, classicism maintains that art can be prescriptive: as shown, for example, by the unities (of action, time, and place) in the theatre.8

This ideal of transparency is best reflected on the level of language:

L'idée représente la chose...et le signe est la représentation de cette idée...Cette représentation est la signification du signe,...elle est exactement adéquate à l'idée et par là à la chose signifiée. Son idéal...est de s'effacer, transparente, devant la chose (Marin 81).

There is an assumption that language can represent the object unequivocally. However, as we shall see, part of the problem lies with establishing how representation functions. As Foucault points out, in the seventeenth century:

le texte cesse de faire partie des signes et des formes de la vérité; le langage n'est
plus une des figures du monde, ni la
signature imposée aux choses depuis le fond
des temps...Le langage se retire du milieu
des êtres pour entrer dans son âge ... de
neutralité (Mots 70).

Language becomes a convention of man, an arbitrary sign
(Mots 72), unable to convey Truth perfectly but only to give
a poor rendition of it. Language becomes a tool manipulated
by the subject.

Nothing is perhaps more indicative of the problem
of what constitutes representation than the notion of
"vraisemblance." If art is an imitation of Truth present in
Nature, and art must communicate to someone, then it must be
something which the recipient of the message can believe.

Aristotle set the precedent for this consideration:

From what we have said, it will be seen that
the poet's function is to describe, not the
thing that has happened, but a kind of thing
that might happen, i.e. what is possible as
being probable or necessary (234;ch.8)
since the "statements" of poetry "are of the nature...of
universals, whereas those of history are singulars"
(235;ch.8). Here Aristotle is clearly not advocating the
imitation of historical truth or historical reality, but
rather the imitation of Truth in a manner which transcends
any particular historical event - as that which is probable
and necessary. In setting this boundary for the poet,
Aristotle seems to affirm that this manner of re-presenting
Truth is not incompatible with Truth, but, rather, is a
rhetorical device which will aid in the communication of it through art.

In "Classicism" on the other hand, "vraisemblance" is not just a rhetorical means to aid in communication. Rather it is a notion of primary importance as a tenet of Classicism. Despite its importance, however, the notion of "vraisemblance" is indeterminate and varies from one theorist to another: ranging from something that is truer than Truth to the probable or necessary.

For instance, René Rapin, in his *Refléxions sur la Poétique*, states:

elle ["la vraisemblance"] sert aussi à donner aux choses que dit le poète un plus grand air de perfection que ne pourrait faire la vérité même...Car la vérité ne fait les choses que comme elles sont et la vray-semblance les fait comme elles doivent estre (41).

Here Rapin clearly privileges "vraisemblance" over truth, which he seems to define in a non-Aristotelian manner. He continues: "La vérité est presque toujours défectueuse, par le mélange des conditions singulières, qui la composent" (41). Truth, then, it would seem, is no longer that of essences, but is "equated with reality as the particular, grounded in existence" (Zebouni, "Classical Episteme" 36), while "vraisemblance" is the ideal, "les principes universels des choses: où il n'entre rien de matériel et de singulier qui les corrompe" (Rapin 41). It would seem at this point, then, that for Rapin, "le vrai" plays second fiddle to "vraisemblance."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Boileau, too, opposes Truth and "vraisemblance", though he does not really define either term. Of "vraisemblance", he comments: "Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable: Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable" (L'Art Poétique 84). This doesn't help much if we aren't sure of his definitions of either "le vrai" or "le vraisemblable", except to note that the two concepts can go their separate ways. The confusion continues as he seems to privilege "Nature": "Que la nature donc soit votre étude unique" (L'Art Poétique 98), and "Jamais de la nature il ne faut s'écarter" (L'Art Poétique 100). Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what meaning Boileau ascribes to "le vrai", "nature", and "la vraisemblance", the very difficulty demonstrates the problematic nature of these concepts at that period.

The question would seem to be, then, how to better define "le vrai" and "la vraisemblance" in light of the century and the epistemological background of the period. It will be remembered that the episteme which comes into play around the seventeenth century as defined by Benjamin, Reiss, Heidegger, et al. is basically Cartesian, grounded in man as the subject imposing his order upon the world as object. This does not contradict the fact that in the Baroque, man questions his position in the universe and what he can know. On the contrary, as already mentioned the Cartesian episteme emerges from the scepticism of the
period. Descartes begins with doubt in order to affirm that man as subject can attain knowledge of his world:

mais, parce qu'alors je désirais vaquer seulement à la recherche de la vérité, je pensai qu'il fallait que je fisse tout le contraire, et que je rejetasse, comme absolument faux, tout en quoi je pourrais imaginer le moindre doute (65).

Thus, Descartes begins his method for attaining truth - not of essences but of phenomena. He places man as the subject of his world as object. It is man's perception of this world which yields knowledge gained through experimentation, experience. With the advent of the scientific revolution, experimentation on phenomena reveals not Truth of essences, but the truth of reality - that is, of phenomena: knowledge gained through observation/experience of the world of existence - truth affirmed by a subject. To return, then, to the question of "vraisemblance", we could view it as akin to knowledge (Zebouni, "Classical Episteme" 41). Thus "vrai" is to Truth as "Vraisemblance" is to knowledge.

Boileau is easier to understand in light of this clarification. For instance, his famous "Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable" seems to be a bit less bewildering if we understand it to mean that (Absolute) Truth ("le vrai") is sometimes not borne out by knowledge gathered from phenomena. Yet at the same time, it is important to note a parting of the ways between Truth/"vrai" and knowledge/"vraisemblance" since, contrary to the
Aristotelian model, the two are no longer necessarily compatible (according to Boileau): "Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable: Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable" (L'Art Poétique (84). There would seem to be, then, if we follow this line of reasoning, a gradual move away from the Aristotelian model, coupling Truth and "vraisemblance" (at least the precedent for the seventeenth-century notion), towards one which begins to hail actual experience.

The ramifications of this split between "vrai" and "vraisemblance", the shift from the search for Truth of essences to the establishment of truth of phenomena through experience establishes a shift in the locus of Truth/truth from nature to an individual consciousness. Truth becomes grounded in the subject of a world object since it is through the perspective of the subject that truth as knowledge is established.

The dichotomy of "vrai" and "vraisemblance" is, to some extent, the parallel of the Baroque's "être/paraitre" (essence/existence). For the Baroque, existence overtakes essence, appearance covers reality, and thus Aristotelianism breaks down in favor of scepticism (Zebouni, "Class. et Vrais." 69-70). The scepticism which characterizes the Baroque gives birth to the scientific revolution, and the reliance on scientifically verifiable experience: knowledge gained through observation. Herein lies the foundation for
the Classical concept of the universal perceived as the general and common based on the model of scientific experience as opposed to Truth as absolute (Zebouni, "Class. et Vrais." 71). This scientific method is based upon observation – where laws are subsequently formed from constants. The French Moralists: La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld and La Fontaine use their observations of human nature to form "laws" from the data gathered. In the opening lines of his fable "Le Loup et l'Agneau", for instance, La Fontaine states that, "La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure" (44). It is the universal rather than Truth as absolute which Classicism in fact limits itself to – as opposed to the particular of the Baroque: the marvellous, grotesque and so on, which Gérard Genette identifies in "Mots et Merveilles", an analysis of Etienne Binet's *L'Essai des Merveilles*. Genette points out that for Binet, "le véritable objet de curiosité ...c'est ce qu'il appelle merveille, ou miracle, c'est-à-dire 'l'étonnant'" (178). Genette views the Baroque as "une esthétique de la surprise" (178) and finds this to be exemplified in Binet. Emphasis is on the particular, the non-general, the uncommon.

The notion of the sublime might offer a further illustration of this shift from Truth/Nature of a world/object to the conscience of man as the locus where truth/knowledge occurs. Boileau is the first to have used
the term "sublime" in his translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsos* (Zebouni, "Mimésis" 53). In his "Réflexion X", Boileau states that the sublime "n'est pas proprement une chose qui se prouve et qui se démontre; mais...c'est un merveilleux qui saisit, qui frappe et qui se fait sentir" (96). As Théodore Litman echoes, "le véritable sublime ne peut se définir que d'après l'effet violent qu'il produit sur les hommes" (173) for it is the "presentation of the nonrepresentable", that which cannot be conceptualized, derived, but only felt (Lacoue-Labarthe 74). As Selma Zebouni states:

La mimésis représente, re-produit un donné, un a priori, un déjà-présent dans/de la nature, tandis que le je ne sais quoi lui, échappe à l’énonciation puisqu'il est précisément hors la connaissance...ce qui en marque les limites" ("Mimésis" 53).

The sublime is anchored in a subject's affectivity - yet it is universal for it requires the agreement of whomever is exposed to it. Boileau insists upon the dual nature of "goût" which is needed to recognize the sublime for it is both subjective (anchored in the individual) and universal (all should agree). Perrault, claims Boileau, does not recognize the sublime because he has no taste: "vous devez croire que vous n'avez ni goût ni génie, puisque vous ne sentez point ce qu'ont senti tous les hommes" ("Réflexion VII", 66 emphasis added). Boileau, as Zebouni has shown, is echoed 100 years later by Kant ("Mimésis" 54). As Kant explains, a judgment of taste must rest with the subject and...
is not (cannot be) "founded on concepts" since experience of
the sublime must be immediate (137,141), yet it must have
universal validity (132). Judgments of taste "must have a
subjective principle, and one which determines what pleases
or displeases by means of feeling only and not through
concepts, but yet with universal validity" (82). Thus the
issue of how to identify/recognize the sublime is one which
is surrounded by questions of subjectivity and universality
but the shift from the world/object to the individual
consciousness as to the "proof" of the existence of the
sublime is undeniable.

In summary, then, there is a shift from Truth found in
the world to truth found in the individual consciousness of
the subject. This shift - from Truth to knowledge -
characterized by a growing movement of scepticism
("philosophie libertine"), seems to have been the breeding
ground for the works produced in the Baroque. However,
before addressing a corpus of approximately thirty dramas
(self-labelled tragedies or tragicomedies dating from 1624-
1655), it is necessary to discuss the theories of tragedy,
comedy, and tragicomedy in an attempt to determine whether
these plays constitute a separate genre.

NOTES

1 It should be noted that when capitalized, the term
"Truth" refers to Truth of essences. Otherwise, it denotes
scientific/phenomenal truth. The term "Absolute Truth"
refers to transcendental Truth.
Although Reiss does not deny the complexity of the Middle Ages, he does believe that they can be viewed "as an epistemic totality" as long as "'episteme'" is understood "as a process of development and of meaningful articulation, not merely as a static and unchanging ... ideology characterizing for a time a given culture and society" (Discourse 23).

It is this uncertainty, this lack of a fixed center/point of reference which characterizes Baroque art - as seen in paintings such as Vélasquez' Las Meninas, and novels such as Cervantes' Don Quixote (See Chapters 1 and 3 respectively of Michel Foucault's Les Mots et les Choses for a pertinent discussion on these works), as well as Honoré d'Urfé's L'Astrée. In an analysis of the latter, Judovitz states that representation functions as "trompe-l'oeil." In d'Urfé's L'Astrée, there is a "free exploration of language and illusion" (Subjectivity and Representation 20). Expanding upon her example to include other (Baroque) novels, she points out that they "go so far as to suggest that identity is the effect of representation, of the inability of language to create and designate an absolute referent and thus stabilize the relation between names and persons, words and things" (21).

In this sense, the term "modern" coincides with the scientific/Cartesian episteme. Later it is used in contrast with the term "contemporary" to denote theorists of the twentieth century.

It is interesting to note that, according to Judovitz, although, unlike the preceding epistemological models, the Cartesian claims to arrive at certitude (Subjectivity and Representation 80), Descartes uses certain Baroque "figures": "the mask, the double, hyperbole, etc. in order to fashion his own philosophy" (38). For Judovitz, his use of Baroque "themes" - "dreaming, waking, madness, deception, illusion" (5) demonstrate a "transition from the baroque to the classical period, the shift from one worldview to another" (38).

The role the spectator plays as the feature which distinguishes the theatre from all other genres will be addressed in Chapter Two.

As Selma Zebouni points out in "Classical Episteme", there are different interpretations regarding Classicism. Some scholars refer back to Plato, for instance, rather than Aristotle as I do here.

This explanation of Classicism comes from Zebouni's class lectures.
As Zebouni points out in her article "Rhetorical Strategies in L'Art Poétique or What is Boileau Selling?", French Literature Series 19 (1992): 8-9, there is slippage among the terms "Truth/Nature/Reality" in the seventeenth century.

See Dalia Judovitz' Subjectivity and Representation in Descartes: The Origins of Modernity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Of Cartesian truth, Judovitz states: "This new definition of truth breaks with the traditional interpretation of truth (from Plato to the neoplatonists) that equated it with beauty and goodness. Descartes defines philosophical truth in the most narrow sense possible, concerned as he is with the conditions of interpretation of truth as certitude, that is objective representation...As a schema, representation defines how the subject comes to know the world, by describing it according to its norms. The truth of representation will be shown to emerge as a result of adequation, not between ideas and the world, but rather, between ideas and the conventions that define the validity of those ideas. The ambiguity that haunts Descartes's definition of subjectivity, its paradoxical emergence as subject of truth, as well as empiricism, will emerge as the expression of the problematic character of representation" (x).

Obviously this definition of "vraisemblance" conflicts with that of Gérard Genette in his essay "Vraisemblance et Motivation" (71-99 in Figures II. Paris: Seuil, 1969). Here Genette defines "vraisemblance" as that which conforms to public opinion - a definition which reduces "vraisemblance" to little more than social custom, putting it on the same footing as the "bienséances."

(See Zebouni, "Classical Episteme")
CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES

It is generally held that the seminal text on the theatre but especially tragedy - is Aristotle's Poetics: a text always present, virtually if not in fact, as reference for any criticism of or theory on the theatre. According to this text, the primary function of tragedy is to arouse pity and fear in the spectator, thus enabling the spectator to experience a catharsis (defined traditionally as "purgation") of these same emotions (230; ch. 6).1 The spectator experiences these emotions by the process of identification with the characters and the action. The spectacle must be such that this identification is optimum. Consequently, all the elements present in the spectacle must work to achieve this purpose. Thus, for instance, the tragic hero must be someone with whom the spectator can identify: someone he can pity and for whom he can feel fear. Consequently, the tragic hero should not be a perfect man nor a bad man, for the spectator knows he is not perfect, and conversely, will not identify with a villain (238; ch.13). Rather, the tragic hero must be "the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just" (238;ch.13). If, in order to arouse pity and fear in the spectator, it is important that the spectator be able to identify with the hero, it is equally important that the hero's situation be one which will elicit this desired response. The hero's misfortune, then, must not be "brought upon him ...by vice and depravity but by some error

34
of judgement" (238; ch.13). The hero, like the spectator, must be capable of making mistakes. It is this error, "frailty", which makes it possible for the spectator to identify with the hero and his situation. The spectator must fear that the hero's predicament, caused by his mistake, could be the spectator's own.

In the same manner, all the other formal aspects of a tragedy must be such that there can be an optimal possibility of producing pity and fear. For instance, a unified action is preferable since many different plots will surely distract the spectator and keep him from responding empathetically to the hero and his situation (234; ch.8). In turn, unity of action demands unity of time (usually interpreted as 24 hours) (230; ch.4), and unity of place since the action which will elicit the desired response from the spectator must be focused. (It should be noted that the unity of place was not added until the sixteenth century by an Italian theorist, Castelvetro, who translated Aristotle's Poetics) (Bray 37-39, 258-59). Although the Poetics are virtually always an intertext in the theory of tragedy (as shown by Castelvetro's interpretation as well as that of many other theorists of the same period) (Bray 23-48, 253-88)², they are basically descriptive.² Aristotle addresses not so much the notion of the tragic as such, but rather the means by which pity and fear can be produced. The question of what constitutes the tragic, however, is of interest here
since modern theorists of the tragic/tragedy (Hegel, Benjamin, Steiner, Goldmann, Reiss...) debate not only what constitutes it but also bring up the interesting hypothesis that the tragic is linked to an historical context - a hypothesis which, as we have already seen, is of import for this study. In order to show the pertinence of this hypothesis, it is necessary to discuss the separate views of some of these modern theorists.

Hegel divides tragedy into two categories: primitive (ancient) tragedy and modern tragedy (xvii). In primitive tragedy there is a collision of "ethical forces" - "forces" which, when taken alone, are justifiable, but which are rendered problematic when pitted against each other. There can be two sides which are, in themselves, equally "good", but whose justification is negated when they compete against each other (48). This is the predicament of the tragic hero. He must make his choice. Yet, in making his choice he must realize that he is accepting the exclusive right of one side, and denying the justification of the other (74-75). He must make a decision, yet he is unable to do so in a manner which is completely moral since both sides are "right" - but not exclusively. Herein lies the tragic situation of the ancient hero.

If the ancient tragic hero is to be understood, he must be placed in his world. Hegel maintains that the distinction drawn in modern times between decisions
affecting the personal versus those affecting the public, the community, does not exist in the "heroic age" of the ancient tragic hero (103). The "distinction" between the individual and his family is "unknown" (103). An entire family suffers for the mistakes of their ancestors. The "fatality of guilt and transgression" is inherited (103). All are condemned, their fate sealed. The ancient tragic hero, then, views "his actions... as part of all that is farmed out by the organic whole to which he belongs" (103). His decisions are not actions which reflect those of an individual separate from society, but rather his embodiment of society. He is what those before him were (103).

The modern tragic hero's world is quite different from that of the ancient tragic hero. Here guilt is not inherited but is rather a result of the decisions of an individual acting on his own (103). The hero stands alone, and his actions are private ones, reflecting "his own private personality" (103). He may represent society, but he acts apart from it. His error is a personal one (103). It has grave consequences, but is based more on an error in judgment than a cruel fate (103).

The differences between the heroic types is evident here, as is the manner in which each hero fits into his historical milieu. The heroes (both ancient and modern) are rooted in their respective worlds. Since Hegel has presented them both as tragic heroes, the question seems to
be, then, which Hegel prefers. Although Hegel does not
appear to deny the value of modern tragic tragedy, he seems,
according to noted Hegelian critic A.C. Bradley, to champion
ancient tragedy:

His first view of tragedy was thus, in
effect, a theory of Aeschylean and Sophoclean
tragedy; . . . Perhaps, then, when he came to
deal with the subject more generally, he
insensibly regarded the ancient form as the
typical form, and tended to treat the modern
rather as a modification of this type than as
an alternative embodiment of the general idea
of tragedy . . . I believe . . . that Hegel did
deliberately consider the ancient form the
more satisfactory (386).

Whether or not Bradley's assessment is accurate, it is
nevertheless clear that both forms of tragedy act out the
sacrifice of the tragic hero.5

There are, however, sacrifices which are acted outside
either of these models. In his Fear and Trembling,
Kierkegaard analyzes just such a situation. Using Hegel's
models as background, he examines the Biblical story of
Abraham and Isaac. Although Abraham might seem to be a
tragic character because of the sacrifice asked of him,
Kierkegaard points out that he fits neither the ancient
tragic hero model, nor that of the modern tragic hero as
defined by Hegel. Kierkegaard states that within the world
of the tragic hero, the actions of the individual are always
in relation to the ethical which is universal (of this world
rather than absolute) (28). In sacrificing Isaac, Abraham
is acting beyond this universal, outside of it (88). His
actions do not serve it, nor, for that matter, do they reflect selfish interests (22). Rather, he "puts himself as the single individual in an absolute relation to the absolute" (90). He responds, as an individual, directly to God. He holds himself accountable only to Him. Abraham is willing to sacrifice Isaac - for he believes that what is humanly impossible is possible with God (17-19). In a very real sense, Abraham gives Isaac to God in order to get him back (21).

It is Abraham's faith which sets him apart from the tragic hero, for it places him - as a single individual - higher than this world, than the universal (84).* Whereas the tragic hero "renounces himself in order to express the universal", the man of faith "renounces the universal" in order to express a relationship outside it (103). The tragic hero privileges duty over desire; the man of faith must give up both (105).

Whereas Hegel's tragic heroes and Kierkegaard's man of faith are posited in relation to a transcendental absolute (ethical/universal, or other-worldly), Nietzsche offers a model for a tragic man who completely renounces (other-) worldly concerns. Indeed Nietzsche's hero rejects any kind of "metaphysical solace" - so prevalent in Greek tragedy (Birth 107), considering this a "will to deny life...a hatred of the 'world'... a fear of beauty and sensuality" (Birth 11). Rather he expresses a will to affirm life - the
Dionysian (Will To Power 536): "a highest state of affirmation of existence...conceived from which the highest degree of pain cannot be excluded: the tragic-Dionysian state" (Will to Power 453). Nietzsche's tragic hero does not shy away from the harsh brutal pain of existence. Rather he embraces it: "The tragic man affirms even the harshest suffering: he is sufficiently strong...to do so" (Will to Power 543). He accepts the absurdity of life as it is exemplified in Nietzsche's concept of "eternal recurrence": the notion that there is no "novelty", no final state (Will to Power 546-47). The world "becomes and recurs eternally." No escape is possible (Will to Power 545). Nietzsche's tragic hero accepts this concept, terrifying though it be, for to seek cover in illusion is weakness (Gay Science 17).

Yet even as he faces the world in its horror, he experiences pleasure in his suffering (Will to Power 450). As Nietzsche points out, this pleasure is essential to the Dionysian. It accompanies (and is even vital to) the " 'justification of life'...at its most terrible, ambiguous" (Will to Power 521).

This (Dionysian) ambiguity is echoed by Bakhtin. Like Nietzsche, he confirms the simultaneous presence of pain and pleasure - emphasizing that neither is exclusive of the other. For Bakhtin, the "tragic seriousness" of tragedy "is infused with the spirit of creative destruction" (Rabelais...
121). There is pleasure present in the destruction. Here Bakhtin equates pleasure with "ambivalent laughter", maintaining the coexistence of it and pain: "In antique culture tragedy did not exclude the laughing aspect of life and coexisted with it" (Rabelais 121). This ambivalent laughter belongs to the Dionysian spirit of carnival. It is "mockery...fused with rejoicing" (Problems 104). Interestingly enough, it is the carnival which, as Bakhtin points out, brings the hero to earth. It makes him human and touchable (Problems 109).

If for Nietzsche (and perhaps Bakhtin too), this immanence is the key to the tragic, Walter Benjamin contrasts an earthly attachment and the transcendental, which characterizes the tragic nature of the hero's dilemma, distinguishing tragedy from the German Baroque dramatic form called Trauerspiel (historical drama) (16). In tragedy, the hero knows that he is in a class by himself. The knowledge that he is to be sacrificed puts him through suffering on a level that transcends everyone else's (16). He is bigger than life and cannot be restricted to a world that is mundane (16). The noble stature of the tragic hero is in direct opposition to the characters in Trauerspiel. Here the characters "cling fervently to the world" as they are pulled towards ruin (16). Unlike the tragic hero, they cannot face up to their moral responsibility but remain "earth-bound" (16). As Benjamin puts it, "The Trauerspiel is
counter-transcendental; it celebrates the immanence of existence even where this existence is passed in torment" (16). Here "it is not moral transgression but the very estate of man as creature which provides the reason for the catastrophe" (89). This catastrophe, because it arises from the state of man, is typical of all humans and is very "different from the extraordinary catastrophe of the tragic hero" (89).

The difference emphasized here between these two dramatic forms, tragic tragedy and non-tragic Baroque drama, is the transcendental nature of the tragic hero's situation in the former as opposed to the earth-bound nature of the characters in the latter. What is interesting is that Benjamin links tragic tragedy with the notion of Absolute Truth which, as stated earlier, "resists being projected... into the realm of knowledge" (29). Absolute/Transcendental Truth is the realm of the tragic. It is when man asserts that knowledge is possible that tragic tragedy begins to decline and non-tragic drama develops. For "knowledge is possession", and Truth eludes possession (29). Benjamin links Truth with the tragic, and knowledge, which is immanent and concrete, to the non-tragic. For Benjamin, Truth is displaced in western ideology by knowledge in the 17th/18th century (29). Consequently, Benjamin seems to posit (the hypothesis) that tragic tragedy is no longer possible in the modern scientific age.
It is this historical context as well as the transcendental nature of the tragic which George Steiner develops. He begins his analysis with the latter by describing the tragic hero. The hero is acted upon by "forces" which cannot be grasped intellectually, nor controlled through action by the hero (8). He cannot make sense of what is happening. There is no reason for it. He suffers in the extreme (8-9). Yet it is this extreme suffering which gives the hero his "dignity" (9). It is his suffering which makes him bigger than life.

Again, the transcendental element is deemed important for the existence of the tragic. At the same time, however, the hero is human and it is his humanity which dooms him. As all humans, he is destined to fall (13). If the hero were not "typical", "his fall would not be exemplary" (15).

Steiner links the transcendental nature of the tragic to a pre-eighteenth century view of man. A change in this view which spells the decline of tragedy for Steiner occurs in the Romantic period (124-25): a view of man inherited, among others, from Rousseau which held that man's troubles "were man-forged" (125). Man could shape his own future. He could "perfect" himself (125). Steiner directly opposes this belief to tragic tragedy where there is no answer to the suffering. The agonizing "why" of the tragic can never be answered. It has no response (128-29). In Romanticism, there is compensation for suffering, if not complete.
alleviation. Responsibility for man's troubles lies with society. If society's ills are righted, all will be as it should be (129). Neither tragedy nor the tragic, according to Steiner, can accept such explanations for the sufferings of man. Tragic tragedy, then, seems to be dependent on a certain historical frame of reference (here one which precedes Romanticism and its alternate belief in self-sufficient man.)

Timothy Reiss as well, claims in his *Tragedy and Truth* that tragic tragedy is linked to specific historical "moments": Fifth century B.C. Athens and Sixteenth and Seventeenth-century Europe (2). He distinguishes the tragic tragedy existing in these periods from non-tragic tragedy. Tragic tragedy is "the discourse that grasps and encloses a certain 'absence of significance'... and that renders impossible ...particular ordering, the meaningfulness of any such discourse" (3). The "'absence of significance', this impossibility of attaining to meaning in discourse" is the tragic (3). There is no explanation for the tragic, and it is important that tragic tragedy not offer one. The tragic cannot be grasped. It must be contained within the tragic tragedy without being dissolved by it (3). Once again, the tragic hero must transcend the situation in which he is placed in order to avoid being absorbed by the world. In non-tragic tragedy, on the other hand, there is no tragic because everything is explained away (6) - (as Reiss shows
through analysis of Racine's *Iphigénie* (240-58). There are no loose ends, no unanswered questions. Everything is neatly tucked away. This type of tragedy Reiss believes to be contrary to the very nature of the tragic (9-12). When the tragic can be explained or identified, it ceases to be tragic. All is revealed. Nothing remains secret. This is what threatens the hero (9-12). The threat posed by the world around the tragic hero, the threat of absorption, is one which endangers the very existence of the tragic hero and thus tragic tragedy (9-12).

For Lucien Goldmann, too, the world is a threat. Yet, for him it is a world of rationalism which acts as backdrop for the tragic hero, as he explains in *The Hidden God* (34). In this world, individual ethics reign, human reason rules, and nothing is transcendent (34). It is this world which the tragic mindset opposes in what Goldmann calls the "tragedy of refusal" (41). This tragedy is representative of the Jansenist position. It pits man against his social and spiritual environment (41). The tragic hero understands the world in which he lives: "the...world created by rationalistic individualism", (33) but refuses it as less than perfection - and perfection is what is demanded from a God "who is always present and always absent" (50) - hence the "hidden God", Pascal's "Dieu caché" (36-38). The hero must follow an absent God's imperative, yet he does not know what that is. He must follow in ignorance (68)." He "lives
for ever with God's eye upon him" (48). He lives only "for
God, finding nothing in common between Him and the world"
(49). He is "in the world, but not of the world" (50). There
is no possibility of reconciliation between him and the
world (317). The tragic hero always hopes, but his hope
is not "in this world" (50). He refuses the world, yet
remains in it, "refusing to choose and refusing to be
satisfied with any of the possibilities which it
offers" (57). Here the tragic hero follows a nobler path
than the one offered by a rationalistic world. He answers a
call to perfection - a call which is in direct conflict with
the world around him. Thus he must rise above the world in
which he lives.

It is here that the beginning of the counter-
transcendental can be seen. Thus, both non-tragic and tragic
tragedy seem to be present in the seventeenth century.
Indeed, Goldmann, in his analysis of Racine's work,
classifies some as tragedies and others as dramas (313-97).
This would appear to reinforce the hypothesis that there is
a link between historical context and the tragic.

Not only for Goldmann, then, but for most of the
theorists studied here, there is a consensus of opinion that
the tragic is found in certain historical "moments"
(although the historical periods in which the tragic is
found may vary). These historical periods are chronological
"moments" which, for Benjamin, Steiner, Reiss and Goldmann,
indicate the problematic nature of the existence of tragic tragedy after the seventeenth century. As shown here, most of these theorists agree that the tragic, which constitutes the essence of tragedy, is the result of a situation in which the hero must respond to moral imperatives (Nietzsche's model being the exception). It poses a question to which there is no answer. It deals an unexplained and unforeseen blow to the hero. The hero reels under the blow delivered, but by confronting his situation, rises above it and gains dignity. It is when this blow is prevented, when it is explained away by a world in direct conflict with the tragic that the tragic ceases to exist. The tragic hero does not shape his own destiny. It is dealt him — through fate and human error. The tragic dies when the hero of a tragedy tries to improve his situation by becoming a part of the world, or when a rational explanation is given to his fate.

The point of this brief survey of tragedy and the tragic is to distinguish between them. Tragedy is a series of events with a beginning, middle, and end which builds to a tragic moment. It is this moment, which is tragic, in which everything comes to a head for the spectator.

It is in this context that a discussion of the importance of the role of the spectator in the theatrical event is relevant. Theatre is representation. The concept of representation is closely connected to that of a
recipient as both subject and object. Nowhere is such a connection more evident than in the theatre. Indeed the relationship between representation and recipient/spectator in theatre is a special one.

Plays are written texts represented on stage. It is only in representation that dramatic works come into their own. As Anne Ubersfeld points out:

...le sens au théâtre ne préexiste pas à la représentation, à ce qui est concrètement dit, montré...Le texte (écrit) est de l'ordre de l'illisible et du non-sens; c'est la pratique qui constitue, construit le sens. Lire le théâtre, c'est préparer simplement les conditions de production de ce sens (275).

This is not to diminish the importance of the written text, but rather to suggest that other elements are as, if not more, essential: the interpretation of the written text by the director and the actors as well as the means used to communicate the text to the spectator. As Zebouni states, "A play is complete(d) only when performed" ("Problems" 43).

Since theatre is performance, the spectator is necessary to the theatrical event. His/Her importance to the theatre places it in a separate category from other literary forms such as the novel. Although the novel has a reader, the reader cannot actively affect the text. As Susan Bennett states:

While reader response criticism, concerned primarily with the novel or poem, can provide a core of receptive concerns, it is self-evident that theatre demands a more complex communication model...A theatrical
performance...is not a finished product in the same way as a novel or poem. It is an interactive process, which relies on the presence of spectators to achieve its effects. A performance is, of course, unlike a printed work, always open to immediate and public acceptance, modification or rejection by those people it addresses (72).

This sets the theatre apart from "the literary...text [which] is a fixed and finished product which cannot be directly affected by its audience" (Bennett 22).

The idea that the spectator of theatre affects the performance directly sets the theatre apart from cinema as well, despite their similarities (both involve performances by actors for an audience). According to Bennett, "Where the theatre audience can (and does) always affect the nature of performance, this cannot take place in the cinema" (80). As she points out, this difference between theatre and film applies also to theatre and television: "Television...denies the audience the sense of contact with the performers that is integral to any theatrical performance" (90).

The spectator of the theatre, then, ultimately plays an essential role in the performance. This role is emphasized by Ubersfeld who states that "le sens au théâtre...ne se fait pas sans le spectateur" (275). The spectator is the locus where meaning occurs. Bennett quotes the critic Karen Gaylord, "[T]he spectator serves as a psychological and empathetic collaborator in the maintenance and 'truth' of the fictive world onstage" (148-49).
The spectator is of course guided in his/her response to the play. Zebouni emphasizes this in her insistence on the role of the director, "What [the spectator] sees and hears is already an 'interpretation', the text translated through the eyes of the director" ("Problems" 43). There is at the disposal of the director a multiplicity of media to create a certain response from the spectator.

For instance, two opposing views on how to control the spectator's response are offered by Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud. Brecht wished to maintain distance between the spectator and the play - to prevent identification of the spectator with the characters on stage. As Jean-Paul Sartre puts it, Brecht "is chiefly trying...to demonstrate, explain, and compel the spectator to judge rather than participate" ("Epic" 78). If Brecht's ideal for theatre is to appeal to the spectator's intellect, Artaud's is to appeal directly to the senses (Artaud 69). For Artaud, all of the elements in the theatre: language, music, lighting, costumes, etc...should be geared to produce a certain effect in the spectator (Artaud 72-73). Unlike Brecht, Artaud wants the spectator to be bombarded with sensation-creating effects: "Artaud wants the spectator to move beyond merely seeing the event to actually experiencing it sensually and aurally, thereby feeling the immediate impact of the spectacle. Artaud suggests that his Theatre of Cruelty overwhelm the spectator with 'physical images', sounds,
pictures, movement, dance, mime, music, lights, creating 'violent physical images', 'a bloodshed of images...' that will 'pulverize, mesmerize the audience's sensibilities'...

(Chaim 40-41).

The point here is that both Brecht and Artaud manipulate distance through devices other than the text in order to elicit a certain desired response from the spectator.

For Sartre the director's role is limited since once the play is performed the play takes on a life of its own:

First, the unexpected interrelations which arise within the acts and scenes between a thousand things - gestures, attitudes, the characters' behavior, the time and place of the action, the scenery, the lighting, and so on. You can do something about all these, but nothing that is very effective; an 'object' is created, with its objective characteristics, and they get away from you ("Author" 66).

For Sartre, it is this relationship between the spectator and what occurs on stage which separates the theatre from other literary forms. Sartre defines this relationship in terms of distance:

In the traditional novel I usually choose a hero - or rather am made to choose one...and I identify with him to a certain degree, I see through his eyes, and his perception is my perception...In the film...we do not see things directly, but through the camera eye...through an impersonal witness that has come between the spectator and the object seen...In the theatre...all this is replaced by an absolute distance...I see with my own eyes and I am always at the same level and in the same place and so there is neither the complicity we have in the novel nor the
ambiguous complicity of the film; hence to me a character is always definitely someone else, someone who is not me and into whose skin I cannot slide ("Dramatic" 7-9 emphasis added).

Here the specific nature of the theatre is emphasized as Sartre distinguishes it from either the novel - where the narrator's point of view is the one with which the reader identifies, or the film where the camera plays the role of the narrator. In contrast to these two genres, the spectator is directly confronted with a re-presentation of life. Sartre believes that the theatre should "present to the modern man a portrait of himself, his problems, his hopes, and his struggles", the "state of man in its entirety" ("Forgers" 38). It is life which is imitated through action. The spectator identifies with what occurs on stage - not with the character himself. Sartre, here, echoes Aristotle.

It is interesting to note that Georges Poulet arrives at the opposite conclusion:

Nul écart entre l'auteur et son personnage; et nul même entre le personnage et le spectateur. Lorsque le héros 'brave en vers la fortune', son humeur et son audace sont les nôtres. Une sorte d'identité subjective s'établit, qui fait de l'auteur, du personnage et du public un seul être sentant. Le moment tragique a cela d'aisé qu'il est un moment vécu par un être unique en qui chacun ressent directement ce qu'il sent (Etudes 79).

How can there be two such opposing views? The answer might lie precisely in the special nature of theatre: as
stated before, there is a temporal presence for the spectator.

Since the spectator is the one who would confer meaning, (s)he must be able to construct a coherent synthesis of the action. In order to do this, certain elements must be present in a play. Nowhere is this more evident, perhaps, than in tragedy. It should be remembered that the spectator's identification with the hero's situation is necessary to tragedy as it is imperative to arouse the response of pity and fear in him/her. As stated earlier, all elements in a tragedy should be focused towards leading to the tragic moment - causing catharsis in the spectator. Richard Kuhns elaborates upon the desired response for the spectator in tragedy:

...what the audience must do, where the best tragedy is concerned, is to confer upon the protagonist the resolution his situation cannot confer upon him...This is an 'affective' realization, and comes closest to giving a sensible dramatic meaning to the concept of 'catharsis' (12).

Implied here is a unified picture presented to the spectator - one which builds up to a climax and settles to an appropriate conclusion. Unity of action allows the spectator to see a unified picture to which (s)he can then respond. As Kuhns points out, this dramatic "unity" is directly related to spectator experience:

Dramatic experience occurs as it does because of the structure given the drama...If the drama is well constructed and has the right plot, the audience will be led through the
right kinds of feelings, beliefs, and affects to the appropriate conclusions (8-9).

For Kuhns, the "right" dramatic structure is that discussed by Aristotle in which the structure of drama is "analogous to an extended argument with a beginning, middle and end" (8). As such, no extraneous elements must be allowed in the play. Robert Ablirached quotes Aristotle on this:

Il faut donc que, comme dans les autres arts d'imitation l'unité de l'imitation résulte de l'unité d'objet, ainsi dans la fable, puisque c'est l'imitation d'une action, cette action soit une et entière, et que les parties en soient assemblées de telle sorte que, si on transpose ou retranche l'une d'elles, le tout soit ébranlé et bouleversé; car ce qui peut s'ajouter ou ne pas s'ajouter sans conséquence appréciable ne fait pas partie du tout (54-55 emphasis added).

Thus, a certain type of organization in drama is essential to evoking a certain response in the spectator. The various parts of the play must build towards a specific point. As Merleau-Ponty states,

There is a natural attitude of vision in which I make common cause with my gaze and, through it, surrender myself to the spectacle: in this case, the parts of the [viewing] field are linked in an organization which makes them recognizable and identifiable (227).

The spectator puts the picture together as the events unfold in a linear structure.

Time is the conceptual framework in which an action is inscribed. Although time has a long history of philosophical discussion, only those points relevant to this study will be addressed here. For most (if not all)
critics, the concept of time is linked closely with questions of objectivity and subjectivity. That is, does time exist on its own or does it exist only in relation to events as perceived by a subject?

Plotinus, viewed as "one of the greatest minds the world produced from the death of Aristotle to the birth of Descartes" (Gunn 29), believes that time "'is a continuum in which events happen.'" That is, events are "conditioned" by time. They do not create it. Rather, "time...is the medium in which we realize our purposive actions." For Plotinus, then, time exists separate of any perceiving subject (Gunn 29).

According to critic Alexander Gunn, the philosopher Berkeley agrees that (an) Absolute Time exists for God, but resists the idea that we can know it: "For us all time is relative. It consists of particular instants, or passing sensations in the minds of percipient beings and is entirely relative to the percipients" (Gunn 29). Time for Berkeley is "subjective, relative, and private" (Gunn 29).

Henri Bergson seems to go farther than Berkeley by asserting that time does not exist outside of "our subjective awareness of it" (Gunn 172). The important point here is that both Berkeley and Bergson agree that there is a relationship between time and a perceiving subject.
Essential to the subject's perception of time is the concept of memory. Memory is what enables the subject to piece together the object that (s)he perceives in an organized fashion. As Merleau-Ponty puts it:

I find, through time, later experiences interlocking with earlier ones and carrying them further...There is no related object without relation...no unity without unification, but every synthesis is both exploded and rebuilt by time which, with one and the same process, calls it into question and confirms it because it produces a new present which retains the past (240).

Thus time and memory are tightly linked. Memory is referred to by Saint Augustine "as the basis of our concept of time. The present is the instantaneous happening. The past, while it is objectively no longer real for us, persists in memory" (Gunn 36).12

Interestingly enough, in his recent book Writing Cogito, Hassan Melehy links memory to the integrity of the cogito. That is, according to Melehy, no inherent continuity is implied in the cogito - with the result that memory must make the connection between past, present, and future (131-32). In order to perform this function, then, events must be organized in such a way as to allow memory to act. As Merleau-Ponty points out, "Before any contribution by memory, what is seen must at the present moment so organize itself as to present a picture to me in which I can recognize my former experiences" (19). In this manner,
"memory presupposes what it is supposed to explain...the patterning of data" (19).

The classical unity of action underlines this connection between memory and time. It implies a continuation of the past and anticipation of the future. The past is the cause for present events and creates possibilities for the future which the spectator can anticipate. This constitutes the structural linearity of the play. For example, in Racine's Andromaque, the choices are clearly presented: whether "Andromaque" will succumb to "Pyrrhus'" advances, thereby saving her son from death or...

In like fashion, the spectator is presented with definite predictable choices in Racine's Bérénice and again in Phèdre. Will "Titus" choose "Bérénice" over his throne? Will "Phèdre" confess her crime in time to save "Hippolyte"?

In conclusion, for the tragic "moment" to occur for/in the spectator, (s)he must be able to follow a gradual linear development of events which come to a closure for/in him/her.

Up to this point, the emphasis has been on the tragic and tragedy. Yet equally important to this study is an analysis of the comic and comedy. As with the analysis of the tragic and tragedy, some modern theorists will be used as reference: Bergson, Kern, Frye, Langer, and Bakhtin.
As with the tragic and tragedy, the comic and comedy will be discussed in terms of the reaction of the spectator. If the identification process is important in tragedy so that the tragic can occur, it is emotional distance which is important for the comic to occur. Henri Bergson maintains that the laughter which results from this distance is a physiological response based on a feeling of superiority in the spectator (215-16, 228). That is, the spectator recognizes a discrepancy in the behavior of the character being ridiculed - behavior which is in conflict with an accepted norm. The spectator possesses knowledge of this norm to which the character fails to conform (216). His laughter is "corrective" and is aimed at eliminating the unacceptable behavior (224). The important thing to remember here is that behavior is the key to the comic. It is behavior, judged by social mores, which elicits the laughter of the comic. It is these mores which provide the norm. It cannot be a personal "identification", because laughter is a group response based on a historical/social context (215).

The type of laughter described here is produced by the comic in the setting of a comedy. Yet, laughter based on the recognition of a discrepancy in a social norm is obviously not unique to such a setting. According to Edith Kern, this type of laughter can also be found in what she terms the "absolute comic", which has its roots in the carnival (4). She echoes Bakhtin's analysis of carnivalesque
laughter: laughter which appreciates the violation of the "usual and the... accepted" (Bakhtin Problems 126). As Bakhtin points out, this laughter rejoices at the overturning of the natural social hierarchy. It mocks the suspension of right order, and celebrates the establishment of temporary bedlam (Problems 126-27). This laughter, like that produced by the comic in the comedy, recognizes a break in the norm.

Yet the carnivalesque laughter is not that of a spectator at a specific breach of the norm, but rather a general laughter of everyone at everyone and everything (Kern 8). The laughter is not only generated by a discrepancy in the natural order of things, but also comes from within the atmosphere of the violated norm - a general recognition and appreciation of the overturning of the natural state. Carnivalesque laughter takes place within this temporary anarchy (Bakhtin Problems 125-27).

The focus so far has been on the comic. The spectator, in his "corrective" laughter, is prompted by a feeling of superiority to judge the character. The spectator sees the comical character whose behavior does not fit the norm and laughs at his lack of self-knowledge. The spectator's judgments are a product of social codes, mores of behavior which are brought to bear on what is happening in the comedy.
It is comedy which is of interest when discussing characters and plot. For Northrop Frye, the basic plot of most comedies consists of a young couple's desire to be together, the opposition, "usually paternal", to that desire, with the end result being a happy resolution and the subsequent formation of a "new society" around the couple (Anatomy 163).

This is the structure of comedy. The "action" of comedy is the opposition to the couple which is represented by the "blocking character" (Anatomy 163-64). Because of his "lack of self-knowledge", he is often made the object of the spectator's ridicule (Anatomy 172, 165). He does not possess the social norm by which he is being judged.

Although at the end of most comedies the blocking character is converted or reconciled and re-integrated into the new society which forms around the young couple, often enough he is sacrificed and becomes the key player in "a scapegoat ritual of expulsion..." (Anatomy 165). According to René Girard, the scapegoat is traditionally the one who represents the fears of society and must be sacrificed/expelled from the community (34). In the role of scapegoat, then, the blocking character must be evacuated from the stage, thereby removing all obstacles to the happiness of the protagonist(s) (and to that of the spectators).
This happiness that the spectator feels at the happy outcome of the plot is, for Frye, a type of catharsis not unlike that which the spectator of a tragedy experiences. In tragedy, the catharsis occurs with the "sacrificial ritual" which forms the basic structure of the tragedy - a "ritual" in which the hero is necessarily sacrificed, while in comedy, it is linked to the "resurrection that follows the death, the epiphany or manifestation of the risen hero" ("Argument" 238). This symbolic interpretation allows Frye to reach the conclusion that "tragedy is really implicit or uncompleted comedy"; that "comedy contains a potential tragedy within itself" ("Argument" 239). It is obvious, then, that the genres are related. The differences are with the manner in which the situation of each is handled. This is what makes the play a tragedy or a comedy.

While Susanne Langer argues that the two genres are related, she insists that the differences are "deeper than surface treatment" (327). She parallels both dramatic forms with largely biological "life rhythms" (328-332). In comedy, this rhythm is connected to fertility and rebirth (331), while in tragedy it is linked to death (332). Both forms are symbolic. That is, they are structured to reflect something else: the larger picture of earthly biological functions. Although for Langer, the two genres are distinct but related, she points out that this does not mean that they are opposites:
The fact that the two great rhythms, comic and tragic, are radically distinct does not mean that they are each other's opposites, or even incompatible forms. Tragedy can rest squarely on a comic substructure, and yet be pure tragedy (362-63).

What is interesting here is that the distinction between comedy/comic and tragedy/tragic seems blurred. Langer appears to use the terms somewhat interchangeably. Both Langer and Frye seem to define the elements of the comic and the tragic on a structural level. That is, they are placed on the level of genre rather than being considered components of it. Nevertheless, both Frye and Langer identify in comedy a final moment of "closure" or "resolution" for/in the spectator. As shown throughout this chapter, our interpretation relies on a distinction between comedy/comic and tragedy/tragic.

The distinctions between tragedy/tragic and comedy/comic will become even more important as we look at the dominant theatrical form of the French Baroque period, the tragicomedy. The term "tragicomedy" first appears in the mid to late sixteenth century in the writings of contemporaries. These authors/theorists wrestled with the term as they attempted to define it. Indeed, defining the "genre" became an important undertaking since prevailing Aristotelian theory only recognizes two dramatic genres: tragedy and comedy - which it keeps strictly separate. The fact that tragedy and comedy are the only theatrical genres that Aristotle discusses raised questions concerning the new
"genre", and the problem of defining it became linked with the question of legitimacy.

The contemporary theorists who addressed this problem can be divided into two basic groups: those who define tragicomedy as a mix of opposite genres, and those who attempt to define it as an independent genre in its own right. 17

To those opposed to tragicomedy as an independent genre, tragedy and comedy are strictly separate and should not be mixed since they perform different functions: to inspire tears in tragedy and laughter in comedy. By implication, then, tragicomedy - defined here as a hybrid mix of tragedy and comedy - is nothing more than an illegitimate mostrosity.18 It should be noted here that by opposing a mix of tragedy and comedy, theorists fall into the trap of confusing tragedy and the serious/tragic and comedy and the comic. As pointed out earlier, tragedy and comedy have the same basic structure. It is therefore the mix of elements found in tragedy and comedy which they are actually against.

While most critics who oppose tragicomedy view it as a grotesque mix,19 others simply deplore the manner in which the mix is produced. In his "Defense of Poesy" (1595), for instance, Sir Philip Sidney laments the poor mix of incompatible elements present in the contemporary theatrical productions. He is not opposed to the mix per se, as long as
the elements which compose it are worthy of going into it. He rejects the elements prevalent in contemporary comedy: vulgar language, base laughter, lowly characters, and opposes their addition to the high and serious ones of tragedy (suffering, death, noble characters) (Sidnell 178-81).²⁰

On the other hand some theorists define tragicomedy not as a grotesque mix, but rather as a happy synthesis of compatible elements. Giambattista Guarini is one of the first and major proponents of tragicomedy as a genre in its own right. He elaborates on this theory in a defense of his popular pastoral, Pastor Fido (1589). For Guarini, tragicomedy takes from tragedy its "verisimilar" but non-historical plot, "stormy emotions", danger; and from comedy: "laughter that's not lewd", "fictional complexity" and its happy reversal of fortune. According to Guarini, such a synthesis creates a nobler genre than either tragedy or comedy alone since it "tempers" the "excessive melancholy" of the former and the "excessive lewdness" of the latter. As found in other theorists, there is slippage here as Guarini confuses the characteristics of tragedy and comedy - or the manner in which the subject matter of each is treated - and the structure of comedy in particular as he refers to its "happy reversal of fortune." Furthermore, an attempt to make a case for tragicomedy on the basis of a mix of elements or characteristics found in tragedy and comedy
falls short of accomplishing its goal since for instance many of Shakespeare’s tragedies contain these same characteristics while clearly remaining tragedies. Nevertheless, Guarini argues for such a synthesis of elements on the premise that it is representative of everyday reality where emotions are often mixed (Sidnell 153). Here what is emphasized is a dramatic form whose purpose is to imitate everyday life as opposed to one whose goal is to provoke a particular response (pity, fear, empathy – Aristotle’s tragic effect).

This legitimization of tragicomedy with the claim that it represents life is taken up again by François Ogier in his Préface to a little-known tragicomedy by Jean de Schelandre, Tyr et Sidon (1628):

> car de dire [qu’'il] est mal seant de faire paroistre en une mesme piece les mesmes personnes, traitant tantost d’affaires serieuses, importantes et tragiques, et incontinent apres de choses communes, vaines et comiques, c’est ignorer la condition de la vie des hommes, de qui les jours et les heures sont bien souvent entrecoupés de ris et de larmes (20 emphasis added).

As does Guarini, Ogier defines tragicomedy as a genre reflecting not the human condition in ontological terms, but everyday immanent (as opposed to transcendent) reality by its portrayal of “affaires serieuses, importantes et tragiques ... choses communes, vaines et comiques ... ris et ... larmes.” Ogier is basing his justification of it on the representation of a succession of moments in everyday life.
as opposed to one unified action (Aristotle) where the human condition as an ontological metaphysical reality is explored.

The definition of tragicomedy as either a grotesque mix or a (happy) synthesis is not, however, the only definition offered at the time. Defining the "genre" as a tragedy which ends well emphasizes the close relationship which many contemporary theorists believed tragicomedy to have with its namesakes tragedy and comedy. The concept of a tragedy with a happy ending is one described by Aristotle (although he states the necessity of suffering) (Aristotle 241). The idea that a tragedy could have a happy ending is revived by sixteenth century Italian theorists claiming that the term "tragedy" does not reflect the (sad) ending, but rather the type of characters in the play (noble). (Giambattista Giraldi, aka. "Cinthio", is one such theorist) (Sidnell 125-28). Their reasoning is that if a tragedy can have a happy ending, then it becomes necessary to separate the two types of tragedy: sad or happy ending. This can be done by calling the latter "tragicomedy", an appellation that becomes increasingly popular in the seventeenth century. However, the assumption that tragicomedy is simply a tragedy with a happy ending implies that tragicomedy has the same basic structure as tragedy. Yet, as will be shown in the next chapter, their structures are not the same. Once again
there is confusion between characteristics/content and structure.

On the other hand, not all theorists agreed that a tragedy with a happy ending should be called tragicomedy. For example, in his *Pratique du Théâtre* (1657), François d'Aubignac agrees with "Cinthio" about the possibility of a happy ending in tragedy, but disagrees that it should be called anything other than "tragedy." Indeed, D'Aubignac protests the use of the term "tragicomedy" for a tragedy which ends well since the use of the term would imply comic elements which he says do not exist in the plays referred to by that name - plays which are "serious and marvelous, with no trace of everyday life or buffoonery." Labelling a play "tragicomedy" would also give away the ending (Sidnell 230-31). Here again, tragicomedy is defined according to elements/characteristics present with no consideration of its structure.

The labelling of a tragedy with a happy ending remained a problem, as suggested, for instance, with Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* which he first labelled "tragicomedy", and later "tragedy." Defending the concept of a "tragédie heureuse" in his "Discours de l'Utilité et des Parties du Poème Dramatique" (1660), Corneille reviews the dénouements that Aristotle deems possible for a tragedy and argues for the possibility of one not known to Aristotle:

`quand ils...font de leur côté tout ce qu'ils peuvent et qu'ils sont empêchés d'en venir à`
l'effet par quelque puissance supérieure ou par quelque changement de fortune ....il est hors de doute que cela fait une tragédie d'un genre peut-être plus sublime que les trois qu'Aristote avoue, et que s'il n'en a point parlé, c'est qu'il n'en voyait point d'exemple sur les théâtres de son temps. Ce n'est pas démentir Aristote que de l'expliquer ainsi favorablement, pour trouver dans cette manière d'agir qu'il rebute, une quatrième espèce de nouvelle tragédie plus belle que les trois qu'il recommande, et qu'il leur eût sans doute préférée, s'il l'eût connue ("Discours de la Tragédie" 834).

It is in light of this type of tragedy, in which those who actively seek revenge are prevented from succeeding by a power superior to their own or a change of fortune, that Corneille defends Le Cid. Corneille points out that Chimène does all she can to avenge her father but the king prevents it ("Discours de la Tragédie" 834). Thus Corneille emphasizes the possibility for a tragedy with a happy ending - thereby justifying Le Cid's later appellation of "tragédie" as opposed to the earlier label of "tragicomédie."

Defining tragicomedy as a tragedy with a happy ending had become particularly widespread by the time Le Cid was published (Herrick 315). After the "Querelle du Cid", however, playwrights tried to adhere strictly to the rules of what would eventually be called the "classical doctrine", and the tragicomedy declined in popularity - or at least the term became less widespread (Herrick 213).

Although categorizing a "genre" according to its ending (sad or happy) has been a popular way to differentiate
between tragedy and tragicomedy, such a definition proves inadequate, especially when one realizes that there are tragicomedies which end badly (Guichemerre 12).

Thus the question remains: how to define this elusive type of drama? Modern theorists in their attempt to resolve this problem can be roughly divided into two categories: those who try to characterize tragicomedy by a catalog of themes (subject matter), and those who attempt to explain the tragicomedy phenomenon in relation to the period: by assessing how, why, and when the "genre" appears.

The studies which fall into the first group follow their predecessors and define tragicomedy in relation to subject matter (i.e., a mix of noble and common people involved in a non-historical/romantic plot), or, as we have seen, as a tragedy which ends well. They trace its origins to the medieval plays, claiming that the term "tragicomedy" is applied in the latter half of the sixteenth century "to almost any survival of the medieval stage, which showed a happy 'dénoeulant'" (Lancaster Tragicomedy 36). The sixteenth century plays in which these origins are most visible resemble medieval morality plays - those which have a moralizing tendency (Lancaster Tragicomedy 36-37). Scholars such as Raymond Lebègue note that, in fact, many Renaissance comedies, tragicomedies, and tragedies are little more than moralities (Lebègue 81). This reaffirms the confusion of the genres during this period. Indeed, at the
end of the sixteenth century, the name "tragicomedy" is "not fully established": some dramas are called "tragedies"; others "comedies" (Lancaster Tragicomedy 70).

The need to examine tragicomedy's nature is apparent here. Many of the modern studies which constitute the second category mentioned above base their definition of tragicomedy on those of their predecessors while claiming to offer a new approach.

One of the most recent of these studies is Nancy Klein Maguire's collection of essays, Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics. Here Maguire admits the problem that theorists have traditionally had with the genre. In the Introduction, she states the goal of the essays: to prove "that tragicomedy, is neither a ...mixture of tragedy and comedy nor a decadent offshoot of tragedy but is rather a genre in its own right, full of generic implication and significance" (1). Maguire attributes many of the difficulties encountered in dealing with tragicomedy to our inability to think beyond the binary and what has already been established: "If we were capable of conceptualizing more freely, we might escape binary structures altogether and thus coin a term which has no relation to either tragedy or comedy" (6).

Such an Introduction seems to promise an innovative definition of tragicomedy, yet, upon reading the essays, it becomes evident that many (if not most) of the theorists do
not truly depart from existing traditional criticism regarding tragicomedy. Guarini is quoted here (in translation) as the model in his definition of tragicomedy:

He who makes a tragicomedy does not intend to compose separately either a tragedy or comedy, **but from the two a third thing** that will be perfect of its kind, and may take from the others the parts that with most verisimilitude can stand together (qtd. in Maguire 11 emphasis added).

Yet a careful reading of this definition shows that tragedy and comedy are still viewed as the privileged parents of tragicomedy. That is, not as a combination or mix of tragedy and comedy since, as already pointed out, tragedy and comedy possess the same basic structure and therefore cannot be combined, but rather that certain elements of both are seen as constituting tragicomedy. Indeed most of the authors of these essays assume a tight relationship between tragedy and comedy and tragicomedy without coming to a definitive conclusion on the specificity of tragicomedy.

Even when an alternative to privileging tragedy and comedy as the models for tragicomedy is given, there is still no new perspective offered. Mimi Still Dixon, in her essay asserts that,

To insist, for example, that tragicomedy is a hybrid form is to mistake its origins; or, alternatively, it is to grant tragedy and comedy logical priority, privilege them, and to apply rationalist notions of aesthetic unity where clearly irrelevant (60).

Although Dixon seems here to break away from other critics, she in fact is referring back to previous theories such as
Lancaster's, which anchors tragicomedy in the medieval theater. She claims the latter to be "tragicomic" - "a serious drama that threatens suffering or death but ends happily" (61). This conclusion offers nothing new to the existing definitions of tragicomedy and fails to differentiate between tragedy and comedy as structures and the elements present in both. Thus her essay seems to go no farther than preceding critical research.

However, even when a clear definition of tragicomedy is lacking among modern theorists, some do at least address the problem of its relation to the time in which it appears. These theorists can be divided into two subgroups: those who link tragicomedy to the period in which it first appears, and those who connect it with our own. (This latter group will be examined later). For the majority of the theorists of the former group the link is strictly political. That is, modern critics have looked at the period in which tragicomedy has appeared and have seen a connection between the production and the political order of the period in which tragicomedy first appears.

For instance, Roger Guichemerre, in his *La Tragi-comédie*, outlines the political upheaval of the time in France: the religious wars of the sixteenth century, the Fronde in the seventeenth century, and foreign wars throughout - as characteristic of the period in which French tragicomedy is prevalent. With such a chaotic atmosphere,
it is no wonder, he claims, that the theatrical works created in such a period echo such unhappiness and misery. The popularity of some of these works attests to a taste for violence and cruelty (173-74).

This political theme is reintroduced in Maguire's collection. Following Guichemerre's lead, Perry Gethner finds a significant link between the political elements (tyranny, peace/war, etc...) found in most of the plays and the period in which these plays appear. He sees French tragicomedy as a potentially subversive genre which raises questions regarding ethical/political issues (love as opposed to duties of the state, for example) (183-84).

Yet since these elements constitute much of the same subject matter for tragedy/comedy, this view of tragicomedy is problematic. Although there is an attempt to link tragicomedy to its period, there is a return to subject matter as the basis for its definition.

Maguire does not really avoid falling into this same trap since she sees tragicomedy as a genre of mourning and celebration. For her, the English (Restoration period) tragicomedy "met the audience's need to mourn the regicide and to celebrate the restoration of Charles II simultaneously" ("Truth" 235). Thus she too draws the conclusion that the political changes of the period encouraged the development and growth of a genre whose elements (i.e. subject matter) reflect those changes.
The contemporary renewed interest in tragicomedy is more than historical, however. Indeed, modern critics such as J.L. Styan, Karl Guthke, and, more recently, David Hirst, among others, maintain that tragicomedy fits our modernity; that modern drama is not tragedy but tragicomedy.\(^\text{23}\)

Although tragicomedy is believed to be the form of modern drama, this does not necessarily mean that these critics assume modern tragicomedy to be the same as that which first emerged during the Baroque. For example, Guthke insists on the opposite. He differentiates between the two — arguing historical definitions for the latter — the same ones offered by many contemporary and modern theorists: mix of noble and common characters/serious and "comic" elements, "a serious play and potentially tragic play ending happily" (11). According to Guthke, this type of tragicomedy had disappeared by 1700 (23). What has replaced it is a new tragicomedy which juxtaposes "tragic fear" and "comic laughter" (25). There is a bittersweet attitude towards life which, for Guthke, is present today — an attitude which prevails in modern tragicomedy (73-75).

Although Guthke argues for a different tragicomedy today than that of the Baroque, he too sees a link between tragicomedy and its period(s). Tragicomedy does 'not' appear in times (and in literary groups or trends) that, by and large, seem to feel secure within the framework of some belief or program. Security, which admits of no skepticism or feeling of relativity concerning one's own philosophical or...
theological position, seems to offer little
ground for the writing of tragicomedy or even
for its appreciation... [for] wherever and
whenever such security becomes the object of
doubt, the historian observes a certain
openness to both (136).

Guthke sees the period(s) of tragicomedy as more than the
sum total of their politics. What is important is a complete
picture of the period(s). This is what Guthke hints at.
However, his treatment of the Baroque tragicomedy is rather
superficial since he goes no further than previous critics.
Also his statement that there is no rapport between the
Baroque tragicomedy and modern tragicomedy is open to
question. Indeed, he draws a parallel between them himself
by insisting that tragicomedy is defined by its elements.
Like most theorists shown here, Guthke does not distinguish
between the serious/tragic and the comic - confusing them
with tragedy and comedy.

In summary, although there is a wide spectrum of
critical hypotheses/theories on the tragicomedy as a genre,
there is no consensus available at present as to its nature.
Modern critics fall into categories of thematic content (a
political theme, for instance, such as that stressed by
Gethner), and historical origins (Lancaster and Still
Dixon). When they address the theoretical aspect, they
inevitably fall into a binary comparison with tragedy and
comedy without distinguishing structure from serious/tragic
and comic elements (content). It is my intention to address
the theoretical aspect of the plays as a formal construct:
bracketing out content, theme, and notions of the comic or tragic in themselves and trying to identify tragicomedy through analysis of the role of the spectator since this is the one major distinctive element of theatre as genre.

The interplay of structure and spectator is a function of the epistemological shift from an episteme of "totality" and hierarchical structure to the individual consciousness and perspective as illustrated by the Cartesian episteme in which man's perspective is the one which organizes the world as object. This notion of perspective is central to this study since it has particular importance for theatre in view of the role the spectator plays. While critics consider the role of the spectator when addressing both tragedy and comedy, it is curiously absent from discussions on tragicomedy. These points will be addressed in detail in the next chapter.

NOTES

1 There is no consensus among critics on the definition of "catharsis." Indeed, virtually every theorist, both contemporary and modern, has commented on the Aristotelian concept. For this reason, only a few will be mentioned here. As Michelle Gellrich points out in her Tragedy and Theory: The Problem of Conflict Since Aristotle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), "catharsis" was often interpreted by Renaissance theorists in the light of moral instruction. She gives examples of two theorists - Francesco Robertello and Vincenzo Maggi: "Robertello views 'Katharsis' as a purging of pity and fear by means of pity and fear, while Maggi thinks that pity and fear, themselves good emotions, remove other perturbations, such as wrath, avarice, and luxury, from the soul" (193).

For Northrop Frye, the Aristotelian notion of "Catharsis" "implies the detachment of the spectator, both from the work of art itself and from the author...In catharsis the emotions are purged by being attached to
objects" (Anatomy 66). Frye believes that catharsis occurs in both tragedy and comedy: "In tragedy, pity and fear, the emotions of moral attraction and repulsion, are raised and cast out...Comedy seems to raise the corresponding emotions...sympathy and ridicule, and cast them out in the same way" (Anatomy 177). Although I don't personally agree with Frye's theory of catharsis in comedy, I mention it here to show the wide diversity of definitions given to the term by theorists.

2 See also H.W. Lawton's Handbook of French Renaissance Dramatic Theory Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1949; and Michael J. Sidnell's Sources, cited in the Bibliography in full for a more complete list of critics of this period and their theories on drama.

3 As Michelle Gellrich points out in her book, cited above, Aristotle's Poetics are both descriptive and prescriptive:"A tragedy [according to Aristotle]...must be a unified totality, its parts so closely related that the removal of any one of them would topple the whole; it must be perspicuous, designed to conform to the limits of what the mind can grasp; the actions of its characters must be intelligible in terms of a moral purpose that is unitary or at least stable; it should avoid the irrational and, if it cannot, try to exclude it from the action of the play. These principles are both prescriptive for the dramatist and, according to Aristotle, descriptive, drawn from an investigation of how existing dramas, especially the best tragedies from fifth-century Greece, operate. In other words, the order residing in such principles is to be sought and cultivated by the aspiring playwright, the practitioner of the art, but it is also objectively present in literary works to which the art of poetry, as a theoretical study, is directed" (5).

4 Interestingly enough, while denying that tragedies have been written since the eighteenth century (see Sartre, Jean-Paul. "On Dramatic Style". Trans. Frank Jellinek. Sartre on Theater. Ed. Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka. New York: Princeton, 1976. 6-29.), Sartre advocates a theatrical perspective which echoes Hegel's views on the tragic: "The people in our plays will be distinct from one another - not as a coward is from a miser or a miser from a brave man, but rather as actions are divergent or clashing, as right may conflict with right." As Sartre understands it, this concept of "right" is inherited from the Greek concept of tragedy and elaborated upon by Hegel. (see Sartre's "Forgers of Myths" in Sartre on Theater 33-43 emphasis added).
See Chapter One of Gellrich's book for a discussion of Bradley's judgment.

For a definition of "Faith", see Hebrews 11:1 of the Bible (New American Standard): "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Note that there are two main branches of Jansenist thought: that of Barcos and Pascal who refuse the world, and that of Arnauld and Nicole - a less extreme view. Obviously, it is the former which is referred to here. For a discussion of both branches of thought, see Sara E. Melzer's Discourses of the Fall: A Study of Pascal's 'Pensées' Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

The acceptance of responsibility for the imperatives of an absent God in light of a lack of knowledge of those imperatives is what differentiates Goldmann's tragic hero from Kierkegaard's man of faith whose faith reflects a knowledge of God's imperatives. His faith causes him to react in assurance to a God with whom he has a relationship as opposed to the blindness of the tragic hero.

I do not mean to suggest here that when a reader comes to a text it is a simple process - that (s)he reads the text as if it is self-evident and "presents" itself as having a certain objective interpretation. Obviously, the number of theories concerning the text and its reader attest to the fact that reading is not a cut and dried process, nor is it my intent to suggest that it is but rather to argue that something quite different occurs with the spectator and theatre that truly makes the spectator a vital part of the creation or "becoming" which is the theatre.

I would like to suggest that filming before a live studio audience, such as used to occur for sitcoms, changes the dynamic. It is obviously, then, not to such "live" performances in front of an audience to which Bennett refers (which would, in any event, be theatre and not television for the audience in the studio) but rather television as a permanent (fixed) pre-recorded medium. Once the performance is filmed and shown (not during the filming before an audience) it becomes fixed and unchangeable - something which doesn't occur in theatre.

It should be remembered that Brecht desired the spectator to be aroused to (political) action. By "participation" here, Sartre means, I think, the Aristotelian sense of identification with the hero...
Unfortunately, Gunn seems to equate this view with Berkeley's without seemingly realizing that he contradicts himself. The problem rests in the difference between the concept of the existence of Absolute Time and its existence (or lack of it) for us. I would maintain that there is a difference between the two. The key rests, I think, in the words "for us."

This concept of memory poses certain restrictions on the spectator of theatre that do not exist for the reader of the novel—or even the spectator of film, given the availability of videos and thus the opportunity for multiple viewings.

It should be remembered that, according to all theorists presented here on the tragic, an effective tragic hero(ine) will accept responsibility for his/her guilt. Therefore, assuming that "Phèdre" is a tragic heroine, the question might not be whether or not she confesses her crime, but rather when.

Such is the case, for instance, in Molière's L'Ecoles des Femmes.

Here the term "contemporary" refers to those critical theorists of the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries.

For a good overview of contemporary theorists and their views on tragicomedy, see both Lawton and Sidnell, cited above.

This view is espoused, for example, by Jacques Peletier du Mans in his Art Poétique (1555) and by Sarasin (1639). (See both Lawton and Sidnell).

There are exceptions—those who, although viewing tragicomedy as a hybrid, do not consider it grotesque. One example is Tirso de Molina (see Sidnell). Another is the French Baroque playwright Jean Mairiet (see the "Préface" to his tragicomedy La Silvanire in Théâtre du XVII Siècle. Vol. I. Ed. Jacques Scherer. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.)

As late as the eighteenth century, Louis-Sebastien Mercier makes a similar complaint and criticizes the mix of extremes. See his Du Théâtre ou Nouvel Essai sur l'Art Dramatique Genève: Slatkine Rpts., 1970.

Marvin Herrick maintains that Aristotle emphasized that "a final happy outcome necessarily emphasized tragic intention rather than tragic deed" (Tragicomedy 51).
22 Here the term "modern" refers to twentieth-century theorists.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF PLAYS

In Chapter Two, the role of the spectator in theatre was addressed. As pointed out by Kuhns, the participation of the spectator - the successful performance of his/her role as spectator - is essentially linked to dramatic structure as given by Aristotle (and repeated by both Kuhns and Abirached): one unified action developed as an argument with a beginning, middle, and end - a structure in which all elements of the drama help the spectator to go "through the right kinds of feelings, beliefs, and affects to the appropriate conclusions" (Kuhns 8-9). This structure is apparent in both tragedy and comedy in which the spectator is taken through a series of logical events of cause and effect to a resolution in which he participates.

If this type of structure is essential to the role of the spectator in both tragedy and comedy, what is the relationship of dramatic structure to the role the spectator plays in tragicomedy? As shown in the previous chapter, a link has been made by theorists between art and its milieu. Although some modern-day critics have attempted to examine tragicomedy in relation to its period, as seen in Chapter Two this connection has been explored primarily on the level of subject matter and not that of structure.

To explore the role the spectator plays in the structure of tragicomedy, it must be examined against the background of the period in which it dominates as a genre:
the Baroque. Although, as pointed out earlier, there are many characteristics to the Baroque: illusion, excess, ambiguity, movement, metamorphosis, extravagance, emphasis of the uncommon/the particular over the common/the universal, the principle characteristic is the dichotomy of appearance and reality.

In theatre as a rule this dichotomy is both evident and obliterated since, following Aristotle, theatre has been viewed as imitation of action and therefore of life/reality since life is action. Yet as repeatedly mentioned, in the Baroque the representation of reality through imitation is problematic.

The first play to be examined here, Jean de Rotrou's *Saint Genest*, illustrates the problematization of representing reality through illusion.¹ What the spectator sees is a play within a play which represents the conversion of Genest - a celebrated actor who plays the role of the Christian martyr Adrien and, in the process, becomes converted to Christianity. Furthermore, one of the "spectators" of the play, Maximin, who was responsible for the arrest and death of Adrien, is portrayed in the play. Interestingly enough it is another "spectator" Dioclétien, the Roman Emperor, who will play out the role of Maximin in "real" life by ordering the arrest and death of Genest - just as Maximin ordered that of Adrien. The role of Adrien, then, becomes Genest's own life and ultimately his death.
The opening Act of a play, according to Aristotle, should set up the complication. Yet in the first Act of Saint Genest there is no real complication. Rather, the tone is set in the first scene by the dream of Valérie (Dioclétien's daughter) - a dream in the form of a nightmare in which she marries a shepherd. She accepts this dream as a presentiment of what is to come - a vision. Her dream - illusion - is set up as reality since it becomes true. However, as it turns out, the shepherd is the man she wanted to marry, Maximin - now a Roman soldier/hero. Valérie's dream confirms both its reality and its fictionality, as she points out: "Mon songe est expliqué; j'épouse en ce grand homme// Un berger, il est vrai, mais qui commande à Rome" (1.3).

Furthermore, the larger part of the first Act is taken up by a discussion on the theatre and the relationship of imitation to truth. Dioclétien, Valérie, Maximin, and Genest discuss the theatre and Genest's acting. Of particular interest are Dioclétien's comments on Genest's ability to create "truth" out of fiction:

Le théâtre aujourd'hui, fameux par ton mérite, // A ce noble plaisir puissamment sollicité, // Et dans l'état qu'il est ne peut, sans être ingrat, // Nier de te devoir son plus brillant éclat; // Avec confusion j'ai vu cent fois tes feintes // Me livrer malgré mol de sensibles atteintes; // J'ai reçu de tes feux de vRaïs ressentiments; //

Par ton art les héros, plutôt ressuscités // Qu'imités en effet et que représentés, // Des
In other words, Genest through imitation or representation communicates truth. Long-dead heros are "ressuscités" rather than "imités" or "représentés." There is nothing new in this discussion since this is the accepted role of the theatre - re-creating what isn't there: reality through imitation.

In his agreement to portray the Christian martyr, Adrien, Genest and his acting troupe will be resurrecting not only the dead martyr, but also the role Maximin played in his arrest and conviction. In a very real sense, then, they will be re-creating his life - with him as spectator. Maximin's own words confirm this, "Oui, crois qu'avec plaisir je serai spectateur// En la même action dont je serai l'acteur" (1.5). He will be not only "spectateur" but also "acteur" through the mediation of another. It is interesting to note the tense of the verb - "serai" instead of "ai été" which would be the normal chronological sequence.

As the curtain opens on the first two scenes of the second Act, the division between the world of the actor and that of the spectator is blurred again as the spectator of Rotrou's play is given a first-hand view of what occurs backstage - in the area beyond the stage before the performance of the play within the play.² Indeed there is a partition which separates the backstage from the stage - a
space which then represents reality for the fiction of the stage but which is still fiction for the real spectators of the play. As Genest dresses he discusses the arrangements for the props with the "décorateur" and practices his lines. While preparing for the role of Adrien, however, Genest himself seems to acknowledge a blurring between truth and fiction:

Dieux, prenez contre moi ma défense et la vôtre, // D'effet comme de nom je me trouve être un autre; // Je feins moins Adrien que je ne le deviens, // Et prends avec son nom des sentiments Chrétien s, // Je sais, pour l'éprouver, que par un long étude // L'art de nous transformer nous passe en habitude; // Mais il semble qu'ici des vérités sans fard // Passent et l'habitude et la force de l'art

(2.2 emphasis added)

Fiction seems to take over reality and become truth. Yet after this admission, he appears to recant, "Mais où va ma pensée, et par quel privilège // Presque insensiblement passé-je au sacrilège, // Et du pouvoir des dieux perds-je le souvenir? // Il s'agit d'imiter et non de devenir" (2.2 emphasis added). Genest attempts to draw strict boundaries between imitating and becoming.

Genest struggles with this issue as he vacillates between the two positions when a Voice, which he assumes to be that of God, tells him: "Poursuis, Genest, ton personnage; // Tu n'imiteras point en vain (2.2 emphasis added). Genest should become his fiction. Indeed God, the ultimate Truth, and as such beyond any stage, is here a Voice in a play - fiction and speaks the language of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
theatre: "personnage", "imiteras." Genest responds, "Qu'entends-je, juste Ciel, et par quelle merveille, // Pour me toucher le cœur, me frappes-tu l'oreille?" (2.3).

However, Genest is not convinced and suspects that this Truth, God's Voice, might be fiction:

God's voice is indeed fiction... for the spectator of Rotrou's play. Genest continues to slip between truth and fiction as the "décourageur", coming to light the candles, interrupts Genest who responds: "Allons, tu m'as distrait d'un rôle glorieux // Que je représentais devant la cour des cieux, // Et de qui l'action est d'importance extrême, // Et n'a pas un objet moindre que le Ciel même" (2.3 emphasis added). Even here - when it's a matter of discovering Truth - he cannot separate himself from the role-player. Genest uses the terminology of fiction: "un rôle", "que je représentais", "l'action." Therefore, is he still playacting - or is life role-acting?

It is important to note that the spectator within the play will have these same difficulties differentiating the role from the reality as the play continues. The first indication of this is Maximin's remarks immediately
preceding the play: remarks in which he states that he will re-live his real feelings through Genest's portrayal of Adrien:

Vous verrez un des miens, d' une insolente audace, // Au mépris de la part qu'il s' acquit en ma grâce, // Au mépris de ses jours, // Affronter le pouvoir de la terre et des cieux, // Et faire à mon amour succéder tant de haine // Que, bien loin d'en souffrir le spectacle avec peine, // Je verrai d'un esprit tranquille et satisfait // De son zèle obstiné le déplorable effet, // Et remourir ce traître après sa sépulture, // Sinon en sa personne, au moins en sa figure (2.4 emphasis added)

Genest will resurrect Adrien and Maximin will respond to his role-playing as if it were reality. These feelings are not a kind of catharsis such as spectators feel at the tragic moment of a tragedy, but rather a tranquil and satisfied feeling to see "Adrien" condemned again and know that he, Maximin, is responsible for it.

Interestingly enough, as the play continues, the reverse will be true of the other spectators in the play. Enthralled with Genest's abilities as an actor, they will take his reality as if it were role-playing - the reverse of Maximin's reaction to it. For example, when Genest begins to speak out of his role, addressing a fellow actor by his real name and adlibbing his lines, causing his fellow actors to become confused, Dioclétien responds by praising Genest for his artful acting: "Voyez avec quel art Genest sait aujourd'hui // Passer de la figure aux sentiments d'autrui" (4.4). Valérie's response echoes that of her father as she
identifies the actor's job as one in which he fools everyone - including himself: "Pour tromper l'auditeur, abuser l'acteur même,/ De son métier, sans doute, est l'adresse suprême" (4.4). Their response to Genest - as an actor rather than as a converted pagan - is particularly interesting in light of his candid words:

Ah! Lentule! en l'ardeur dont mon âme est pressée,// Il faut lever le masque et t'ouvrir ma pensée:// Le Dieu que j'ai hai m'inspire son amour;// Adrien a parlé, Genest parle à son tour.// Ce n'est plus Adrien, c'est Genest qui respire// La grâce du baptême et l'honneur du martyr (4.4 emphasis added)

His words are followed with a vision in which he continues to use theatrical terminology when he names a Heavenly messenger as an actor onstage: "Descends, céleste acteur; tu m'attends, tu m'appelles.// Attends, mon zèle ardent me fournira des ailes;// Du Dieu qui t'a commis dépars-moi les bontés" (4.4).

It should be noted that his role as Adrien is one he's performed many times and has become known for - as Valérie points out in the fifth scene of the first Act: "Mais on vante surtout l'inimitable adresse// Dont tu feins d'un chrétien le zèle et l'allégresse" (1.5). Why is it then that things are different this time? We have no explanation. There is no satisfactory "build-up" for the revelation of his conversion - some intimation - but no cause and effect - derived explanation. His fellow actors have never seen him perform in this manner - adlibbing his lines and leaving the
stage, as is evident by their responses: "Ma replique a manqué; // Ces vers sont ajoutés" (4.4) and "Il les fait sur-le-champ et, sans suivre l'histoire, // Croit couvrir en rentrant son défaut de mémoire" (4.4).

When Genest leaves the stage, he is hidden from view. What occurs behind the curtain which separates fiction from reality? It will be remembered that earlier in the play Genest was seen backstage before the performance. Yet here he is hidden from view. Did something happen there? Is that where the transformation took place? The spectator can only speculate - for upon his return, Genest appears to be fully converted and announces his aspirations to martyrdom - which is, after all, the role he is to play. He has become an oxymoron – a "real actor":

Suprême Majesté, qui jettes dans les âmes, // Avec deux gouttes d'eau, de si sensibles flammes, // Achève tes bontés, représente avec moi // Les saints progrès des coeurs convertis à ta foi! // Faisons voir dans l'amour dont le feu nous consomme, // Toi le pouvoir d'un Dieu, moi le devoir d'un homme; // Toi l'accueil d'un vainqueur sensible au repentir, // Et moi, Seigneur, la force et l'ardeur d'un martyr (4.6 emphasis added)

Here he gives the characteristics of martyrdom: force and ardor, and offers himself as a living (and dying) image of martyrdom. As an oustanding actor, Genest portrayed the lives of others, but as a martyr his life - and ultimately his death would be an image of martyrdom. Genest ceases to mirror Adrien as his life begins to be Adrien's - or at least that of his portrayal of Adrien. Even as he attempts
to establish the difference between fiction and reality, his words undermine his efforts, continuing an endless mirroring between Genest and Adrien, between himself and his role as Adrien: "Ce n'est plus Adrien, c'est Genest qui s'exprime; // Ce jeu n'est plus un jeu, mais une vérité // Où par mon action je suis représenté, // Où moi-même, l'objet et l'acteur de moi-même" (4.6 emphasis added). Genest has ceased playing Adrien the martyr and has become a second Adrien and is, in this sense, playing himself playing Adrien.

As Genest continues to live out Adrien's life and death, his spectators and troupe realize that he's no longer simply role-playing as Adrien but that he is acting on his own. True to the fiction that Genest starts portraying, he is arrested and condemned to death by Dioclétien who, in real life, is mirroring Maximin's life in reality portrayed in fiction. Genest's death is carried out, as noted by the prefect Plancien:

Par votre ordre, Seigneur, ce glorieux acteur, // Des plus fameux héros fameux imitateur, // Du théâtre romain la splendeur et la gloire, // Mais si mauvais acteur dedans sa propre histoire, // Plus entier que jamais en son impétueux, // Et par tous mes efforts en vain sollicité, // A du courroux des dieux contre sa perfidie // Par un acte sanglant fermé la tragédie... (5.6 emphasis added)

As long as Genest acted in fiction he was a good actor, but when it came to his own story, he was a "mauvais acteur dedans sa propre histoire." Making reality of fiction is the
reverse of what theatre should be - and this is what Genest
has done, as pointed out by Maximin, "...il a bien voulu,
par son impiété,// D'une feinte en mourant faire une vérité"
(5.6 emphasis added).

Although there is a pre-transformation Genest and a
post-transformation Genest, the transformation/conversion is
atemporal. There is no specific moment to which the
spectator can point as being the moment of change. It could
have occurred backstage behind the curtain, but one can only
speculate. Except for one or two allusions to Genest's
"real" feelings, nothing builds up to that moment. The
ending in itself is not a surprise since it has already been
acted onstage and is representative of real life since there
is a real Saint Genest. The traditional Aristotelian
structure of build-up to events and empathy with a character
- is absent. Although the play is labelled a "tragédie", and
does possess both the unities of time (since the action
occurs within the time-frame of the play) and of place, the
linear structure expected of tragedy is replaced by a
circularity brought about by an endless mirroring effect:
Genest's life and death is a mirroring of Adrien's life and
death which mirrors the life and death of the real Saint
Genest. When the curtain falls, the actor Genest comes back
for his bows.

Mirroring does not stop with the mirroring of the
action of Saint Genest's life. There are numerous other
mirrorings in the play: Maximin's real-life-ordering of the arrest and conviction of Adrien is mirrored by Dioclétien's arrest and conviction of the actor Genest. As mentioned before, reality mirrors Valérie's vision. There is also a reverse mirroring of Natalie, Adrien's wife as played by Marcelle. As Natalie, Marcelle encouraged Genest as Adrien in his resolve to die a martyr - to live the truth. However, Marcelle goes to Genest and urges him to live a fiction: "Sur la foi de ton Dieu, fondant ton espérance,//À celle de nos dieux donne au moins l'apparence" (5.5 emphasis added).

Characters even mirror each other through dialogue. Of course the most obvious repetition occurs, as already shown, with Genest's shift from "recreating" Adrien to becoming his double: re-living his life and death. As Adrien he states that "J'ai contre les chrétiens servi longtemps vos haines,//Et j'appris leur constance en ordonnant leurs peines." (4.3); as Genest he echoes Adrien,

Tout mon heur consistait à les persécuter:/
........................................................
........................................................
Pour mieux les diffamer et les rendre odieux:
(4.6)

The result of the circularity created by these constant mirrorings is that for the spectator there is no closure. The play asks questions which the spectator cannot answer: What is fiction? What is reality? Is life playacting? Can "acting" determine life and so on? The spectator cannot play
an active part in any kind of resolution. (S)/He is only a spectator - not a participant.

The play imitates the life of an actual historical character - a Saint, and therefore could fit into the category of the Miracle play as an edifying spectacle of the life of a Saint such as Lancaster and Still Dixon claim as the ancestor of tragicomedy - but it is not the subject matter which is of importance here but rather the manner in which the play is structured, with, as pointed out earlier, no logical "build up" of events linked by cause and effect - only an atemporal "conversion." The multiplicity of mirrorings between "reality" and "fiction", their interchangeability, creates a circularity which provides a different relationship between time, action, and memory than that of the linear Classical theatre. There is no past or future - only the present. The connection among past, present, and future, is missing. The elements are not geared towards a definite end ("catharsis" or closure), but only provoke surprise and confusion, denying the bewildered, fascinated spectator his/her traditional role.

In Saint Genest, the mirroring and circularity are emphasized by the unities of action, time, and place - the three main tenets of Classical theatre. However, these unities are treated in such a way as to subvert their intended function in the Classical theatre. Unity of time
and action combine in atemporality and the unity of place—a small, confined space, adds to the mirroring circularity.

The next play to be examined is the exact opposite of Saint Genest as far as structure is concerned. In this play the unities are totally disregarded in favor of wild shifts from different perspectives. In Pichou's Les Folies de Cardenio (1630), Luscinde loves and is loved by Cardenio. Fernant, a rich young nobleman, loved Dorotée but has abandoned her to pursue Luscinde. (Dorotée disguises herself as a shepherd and goes to the forest to live and lament her fate). Luscinde's father, who disapproves of Cardenio, gives Fernant his daughter's hand in marriage. When Fernant is unable to win her consent, he seemingly abandons her—as does Cardenio who believes she has betrayed him. Luscinde goes to a convent and Cardenio leaves for the desert where he goes mad. He meets up with Don Quichot and Sancho Pança who are being sought by a barber and a scholar, also wandering around in the desert, looking for Don Quichot in order to "cure" him of his madness. Eventually Cardenio's sanity returns and the two pairs of lovers are reunited and try to help the barber and scholar with their plan to help Don Quichot who goes off with them, still deluded.

In the first two Acts, the complication is set up: Fernant (who is rich) plots to get Luscinde from Cardenio (who is apparently poor) by asking for her hand from her greedy father (and telling Cardenio he's speaking to him on
his behalf). Luscinde sends Cardenio (who agreed to go on a business trip for Fernant in exchange for his help with Luscinde's father), a message begging his return. Although she assures him that she'll never marry Fernant, when she is standing before the priest with her father and Fernant she is too intimidated to refuse. She faints before the ceremony is completed and a love letter to Cardenio is found on her person. As a result, Fernant seemingly abandons her and upon Luscinde's recovery she vows to spend the rest of her days in a convent.

The third Act opens on Cardenio wandering around in the desert and Fernant planning to search for Luscinde. The main action is interrupted in the fifth scene, however, as Don Quichot and Sancho Pança enter the play. Up to this point, the play's action has proceeded much as it would in a tragedy or comedy: a complication and development of that complication. Now, however, there is a major detour in the play as two characters who have no connection whatsoever with the plot appear for no apparent reason. Furthermore, the very choice of these characters - Don Quichot and Sancho Pança - underscores the intrusion of fiction into "imitated reality." At this point the play becomes "metafiction" which calls into question the truth-value of the play and its function of imitating/representing/simulating truth/reality/nature. Furthermore, not only is Don Quichot a character of "fiction" but one whose delusion is brought
about by the works of fiction he has read. He sees reality through fiction but the end result is not "truth" but "fiction."

This is particularly evident on the level of language. For example, when Don Quichot meets a mad Cardenio, he says:

"Guerrier, qui que tu sois, borne icy tes discours//Et regarde où je puis te donner du secours,//Faut-il forcer d'assaut le chasteau de Zirfée,//Eslevant sur sa perte un illustre trophée?//Le traistre Arcalaus aurait-il bien le front//De m'attendre au combat, t'ayant fait quelque affront? (3.6 emphasis added)"

These names, these deeds, are based on novels of chivalry Don Quichot has read and he interprets Cardenio's problem in light of them. When he cannot see the enemies that Cardenio claims are pursuing him, Don Quichot responds: 

"Sans doute c'est icy la forest enchantée//Que le destin reserve à ma force indomtée" (3.6 emphasis added). This type of fiction imposed on reality occurs again when Don Quichot witnesses Fernant kidnapping Luscinde: "O dieux! c'est Sagripant qui ravit Angelique//Quitte, infidele roy, ce dessein tyrannique" (4.4 emphasis added). Interestingly enough, Sancho makes references to fiction as well when he addresses Dorotée who's pretending to be a princess in need of Don Quichot's help to vanquish an enemy: "Madame, après la mort de ce tyran malin,//Puisque Amadis vous sert, obligez Gandalin//Je me contenteray toujours de l'Isle ferme" (5.2 emphasis added). In this manner, Sancho draws a parallel between Don Quichot and Amadis, himself and
Gandalin, Amadis' squire. The language of both Don Quichot and Sancho points directly to fiction—in keeping with their fictional status in the play. The events in the play, in fact fiction playing at truth, are viewed through the perspective of fiction.

Though less explicit, the dichotomy and/or blurring of truth and fiction is obvious too for the spectator in the split between words and action. For example, although Don Quichot proclaims his great courage and threatens to act against Fernant when he's kidnapping Luscinde: "Si ta desloyauté persiste en cet effort, // N'attend de ma valeur que la honte ou la mort" (4.4), he flees when Fernant makes a move against him. In similar fashion, Don Quichot's actions do not reflect his words when he gives Sancho the love letter to give to Dulcinée and asks him to "...adjouste à mes ecrits // Que ces bois sont touchez de l'effroy de mes cris" (4.7 emphasis added). Interestingly enough, Cardenio's actions do match Don Quichot's words since he is actually driven mad by his love for Luscinde.

Although in these examples there is both a split and blurring between words and action, fiction and reality, the spectator knows more or less what is going on, but his/her perception of what is truth and what fiction is challenged when the object of Don Quichot's love, Dulcinée—who never appears in the play, is referred to by several characters in
conflicting terms. Don Quichot's revelation of his love for Dulcinée meets with a negative response from his squire:

Vous aimez Dulcinée, ô l'admirable choix!// Que sa taille me plaist, que j'admire sa voix!// Ha! qu'elle danse bien! Aucun ne luy dispute// L'avantage qu'elle a d'exceller à la lutte// Vous connaissez Jacquet, le valet de Thibaut:// Il luy cede l'honneur de la course et du saut// Croiriez vous que ses yeux sont bordez d'escarlatte// Et que son teint est doux comme un cuir de savate?// Elle va sans souliers, elle abhorre le fart// Et n'a jamais meslé la nature avec l'art// En fin je veux mourir si tous ceux du village// Ne soupirent d'amour après ce beau visage (3.5 emphasis added)

To which Don Quichot replies, "Prophane, oses-tu bien offencer à mes yeux//Ses appas reverez des mortels et des dieux?" (3.5 emphasis added). When Don Quichot threatens to beat Sancho for this response, Sancho complains: "C'est bien là, le loyer d'un fidele service,// Qui dit la verité sans aucun artifice" (3.5 emphasis added). It is exactly this "verité" which is in question, as Don Quichot maintains: "Nommes-tu verité ces blasphèmes laschez,// Dont la terre est touchée et les cieux sont faschez?" (3.5).

Admittedly Don Quichot's perceptions of reality are problematic, yet so are Sancho Pança's. After all, not only is he also a fictional character but he believes his master has the ability to give him the governorship he promised him - promises he can only keep if he is who he says he is. Furthermore, why should the spectator believe that the truth lies with Sancho - a lowly character?
Upon Sancho's return from delivering Don Quichot's letter to Dulcinée, Don Quichot asks him to tell of his welcome from "cette illustre princesse" and to "figure à mes sens sa royale demeure", to which Sancho replies, "O le rare sejour! l'excellente maison,\ De dont le toict est de chaume et le mur de gason!" (5.1 emphasis added). At this response, Don Quichot raises the question of the credibility of Sancho's senses:

*Je scay bien que ta veue est aisément trompée,\ À de grossiers objets tous les jours occupée,\ Et qu'un palais superbe en ses lambris dorez\ Ne paraist qu'une estable à tes sens égarez\ Aussi ce sot discours ne me met point en peine\ Que fis-tu seulement à l'abord de ma reyne?\ Ne m'avou'ras-tu pas, ayant veu ses attraits,\ Qu'on ne peut resister au pouvoir de leurs traits?\ Que sans idolatrie on peut dresser un temple\ À ce divin objet que mon ame contemple?\ Que l'aurore est moins belle alors que sur les fleurs\ Elle verse au matin sa lumiere et ses pleurs?\ Et qu'on voit dans son sein de si rares merveilles\ Qu'il faut que la nature ait là borné ses veilles?* (5.1 emphasis added)

Don Quichot, then, points the finger at Sancho's senses as being the culprit - preventing him from seeing Dulcinée as she is. In other words, Don Quichot accuses Sancho of being deluded. To Don Quichot's question regarding her great beauty, Sancho replies: "Je vis toute autre chose, et rien de tout cela\ Ne parut à mes yeux alors que je fus là" (5.1 emphasis added). To Don Quichot's claims that "sa bouche est de cynabre peinte,\ Et ...sa face eslance un esclat radieux," that her eyes are "pleins de charmes" and her
complexion "un esmail aussi frais//Qu'en ce plaisant sejour où l'hyver n'est jamais", (5.1), Sancho retorts "En un mot elle est belle estant louche et camuse,//Ayant le front estrait, les sourcils abbaissiez,//Le teint noir, le poil rude et les yeux enfoncez" (5.1 emphasis added). Sancho describes his visit as being quite the opposite from that expected by Don Quichot:

Je la treuvay joyeuse et faisant bonne mine,// Assise mollement sur un sac de farine//Elle me dit: Sancho, cet illustre seigneur,//Sans l'avoir merité, me fait beaucoup d'honneur//Si ma mere eust voulu, je serois mariée//A nostre grand valet qui l'en avoit priée (5.1 emphasis added)

Ultimately Sancho must relay Dulcinée's response to Don Quichot rather than by a return letter since it appears, according to Sancho, that she does not want anymore correspondence from him. The reason for this is clear as Sancho claims to repeat her own words, "...si tu le revois, souviens-toy de luy dire//Qu'il ne m'escrire plus, que je ne sçay pas lire" (5.1 emphasis added). Yet here the spectator is confronted with whether or not to accept Sancho's words as truth in the absence of any evidence. How does (s)he even know that Sancho actually delivered the letter and saw Dulcinée since, to further complicate matters, both the barber and the scholar (who enter the action if the first scene of Act four) have asserted that Dulcinée is simply a figment of Don Quichot's imagination? As the scholar states, "Maintenant il adjouste à son mal ordinaire//L'amour d'une
beauté du tout imaginaire/ Et propose à son ame un fantome
 trompeur, // Pour qui sa passion se nourrit de vapeur" (4.1
 emphasis added) and

Voyez de quelle ardeur cet insensé se pique //
De servir en ce bois cet objet chimerique //

Il dit que sa maistresse est un ange
mortel, // A qui sa passion veut dresser un
autel (4.1 emphasis added)

The barber agrees with the scholar's assessment, calling Don
Quichot a "pauvre aveuglé" (4.1). It is not Dulcinée's
beauty that is in question but her very existence. How is
then Sancho to be believed? Who is telling the "truth"?

Both Don Quichot's and Sancho's abilities to perceive
things clearly are put into question further when Dorotée
goes to Don Quichot as a princess and both believe her.
Sancho, believing that at last he will receive his long-
awaited reward and urges his master to help her: "Voicy
quelques comtez assurément pour moy, //Qui recompenseront mon
service et ma foy // Allez viste, mon maistre, accomplir ce
voyage, // Il est icy besoin d'un genereux courage" (5.2).

When later he witnesses a reunion of Fernant and
Dorotée, Cardenio and Luscinde, Sancho appears to realize
(at least momentarily) that his judgment has been in error:
"Quoy! vous n'estes donc plus cette infante exilée, // Que
l'effort d'un tyran rendoit si desolée // Miserable Sancho,
que ton espoir est faux! // Où sont tant de duchez promis à
tes travaux?" (5.4). At this, Dorotée, who states to Fernant that Sancho is "un pauvre idiot abusé de nos feintes", puts in question once again Sancho's ability to see things clearly as she states: "Escoutez seulement//Comme je flatteray son foible jugement//Sancho, ne croyez point mes promesses frivoles,// Un effet assuré suit toujours mes paroles//Sitost que je seray remise en mes pays..." (5.4 emphasis added).

Yet from here on Sancho is presented as the sole commentator/the outside observer to the illusion going on around him as Don Quichot comes out of the tavern and declares that he's slain the giant who was plaguing Dorotée. Everyone applauds his actions but Sancho: "Que vous me faites rire, ô le plaisant mensonge!//Je meure s'il ne faut que ce soit quelque songe//L'apparence autrement d'avoir fait tout cecy,//Sans avoir veu personne et sans bouger d'icy?" (5.5 emphasis added). Surprised, Don Quichot protests and offers evidence of his feat:

Quoy! de tant de mortels presens à ces merveilles//Toy seul es demeuré sans yeux et sans oreilles?//J'ay contre ce geant si longtemps chamaillé,//Et le bruit de mes coups ne t'a point éveillé,//...........
.................................
.................................
Viens voir combien de sang... (5.5 emphasis added)

Despite the noise and "blood", Sancho is the only one who didn't see what the others apparently saw and heard. To this last he offers an explanation: "Vous verrez à la fin//Que ce
sang épanché sort d'un tonneau de vin" (5.5). Yet after all
that Sancho has claimed - and believed - can his judgment be
trusted? As the others encourage Don Quichot to accompany
Dorotée on her journey to secure her kingdom and leave
together, Sancho remains behind - alone on the stage,
asserting his ability to see things clearly/as they are:

Qu'on ne m'en parle plus, je connay
clairement//Que tout cet appareil est un
déguisement//Mais, si je suis jamais en mon
petit mesnage,//Si je puis une fois retrouver
mon village,//On m'osteroit les yeux, on
pourroit m'escorcher//Pour me faire quitter
l'ombre de son clocher//Au diable soit le
maistre et sa chevalerie!//Ce penible mestier
vient de sa resverie//J'ay tout quitté pour
luy, mes enfans, ma maison,//J'ay souffert
mille maux, j'ay perdu mon grison://O dieux,
que je connay mon esperance vaine,//Que j'ay
mal employé ma jeunesse et ma peine! (5.5
emphasis added)

The spectator is challenged to make sense of it all in
the absence of evidence one way or the other. (S)/He is
constantly presented with conflicting perspectives - a
fragmented picture which (s)/he is not given the means to
put in order. The main action is interrupted with multiple
separate plots coupled with a host of characters which
render any unity problematic. Although the end of a comedy
(or tragedy) should bring resolution, here there are only
loose ends. Linearity is replaced by fragmentation. Despite
the fact that the two pairs of lovers - Luscinde and
Cardenio, Fernant and Dorotée seem to have been reunited,
there is still the same obstacle which started the
complication of the play: that of Luscinde's father. There
is no guarantee that all will end well. Furthermore, the plan to "cure" Don Quichot was never given to the spectator and does not seem to have worked since the characters (except perhaps Sancho) play up to his "folie" and in the end he still believes firmly that he is who he claims to be - a valiant knight. Any resolution, then, has been eclipsed here and the spectator is left with a fragmented picture and unanswered questions which do not allow for satisfactory closure.

In the next play to be examined, Charles Beys' Les Illustres Fous (1653), the structure is destroyed in a manner that varies from that used in Rotrou's Saint Genest, or Pichou's Les Folies de Cardenio - although, as in Saint Genest, the unities are observed. The theme is madness which, as Foucault points out in his Histoire de la Folie à l'Age Classique, often takes centre stage in the theatre of the period: "Dans la littérature du début du XVIIe siècle, elle [la folie] occupe, de préférence, une place médiane; elle forme...le noeud" (47). Yet it is not this theme per se which is interesting but rather the manner in which it is treated in order to destroy the mimetic structure. There is unity of place - in or around an asylum: a confined, crowded space, unity of time - that of the play, and unity of action - the conventional story of lovers who are separated and reunited.
The play's action involves two pairs of lovers: Dom Alfredo and Luciane, and Alfredo's sister - Julie, and Luciane's brother - Dom Alfonte. Alfredo enters the asylum for diversion with his friend Dom Gomez where he is reunited with Luciane (disguised as a man, "Fernand") - who was put into the sanitarium after having gone temporarily insane because of her belief that Alfredo was killed by the robbers who kidnapped her. While looking for a way to get Luciane released from the asylum, Alfredo sees Alfonte being chased by soldiers and runs to his aid. Alfonte tells him that while seeking Alfredo (whom he does not know) to avenge his sister's dishonor, he fell in love with Alfredo's sister, Julie. The two eloped to France where they were separated when Alfonte killed a nobleman who was in love with Julie and was hunted by his relatives. Alfredo introduces himself to Alfonte as "Don Ximante." A Frenchman, Tirinte, who saved Julie from the brother of the man Alfonte murdered, brings her to the sanitarium where he seeks a guide. Alfredo feigns madness to be near Luciane and Tirinte separates them in order to get "Fernand's" help in winning Julie over. Julie and "Fernand" become friends (Luciane knows who Julie is). Alfredo and Luciane are reunited and Luciane/"Fernand" and Julie embrace when Alfonte enters and believes that Julie has been untrue. He accosts "Fernand" and discovers that "he" is his sister, Luciane. He tells Alfredo that he has killed "Fernand" - to which Alfredo vows revenge, telling
Alfonte that he killed his own sister. Luciane comes out from hiding and they are all reunited and leave the asylum. (Dom Pedro, Alfonte's friend, was instrumental in getting Alfrede "admitted" to the asylum and knew that he was not insane).

Yet neither the action nor the characters - which are uni-dimensional, are of interest but rather the multiple "extra" characters which parade through the play: the "fous" with the Concierge as "Master of Ceremonies." These characters do not advance the action of the play. They simply engage in arguments or monologues. All they do is talk, thus creating whole fictive worlds of their own invention. Indeed, the fascinating aspect of this play as opposed to Saint Genest or Les Folies de Cardenio is that it calls into question the concept of the mimetic function of language. The "fous" create their own reality. For example, the philosopher which Alfrede meets declares:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Je creay les Cieux, fis briller la lumiere,} \\
\text{Tiray les Elemens de la masse premiere,} \\
\text{Leur donnay des vertus, calmay leurs differents,} \\
\text{Les separay d'entr'eux, et disposay leurs rangs;} \\
\text{Je mis le feu plus haut que le lieu du Tonnerre,} \\
\text{Je posay l'air sur l'onde, et l'onde sur la terre;} \\
\text{Je rehaussay ma voix, et lors qu'on m'entendit,} \\
\text{L'eau coula, l'air s'émeut, et la terre pendit} \\
\text{... Mortel pense à ton Estre, et songe à ton Autheur;} \\
\text{Dont tu dois à jamais estre l'Adorateur... je voy tous les jours soubs mon obeissance,} \\
\text{Les ouvrages parfaits de ma Toute-puissance (1.4)}
\end{align*}
\]

It is the same for each "fou": "philosophe", "alchimiste", "astrologue", "musicien", "plaideur", "joueur", "comedien,
"poete" - each creating his own "reality" with language which represents it rather than something outside of it. The Astrologer, for instance, who believe's he's the Sun, states:

En cet autre Hemisphere,//Ma soeur, il faut ceder la place a vostre frere;//L'Aurore doit venir; hastez un peu vos pas,//Revenez en ce lieu quand je n'y seray pas//Je commence aujourd'huy d'entrer en la Balance,//Je fay durer mon bruit autant que ton silence,// Apres cet Equinoxe alonge un peu ton cours,// Et fais durer tes nuits plus long-temps que mes jours//Retirons-nous d'icy; cherchons l'autre Tropique,//Et gardons de sortir de la ligne Ecliptique (3.2)

In similar fashion the Musician imagines himself to be Orpheus: "Cherchons mon Euridice, et la tirons des fers// Je me ravis moy mesme, et mes airs admirables//Font cesser en ces lieux, les cris des miserable//L'Enfer ne retentit que de mes chants nouveaux" (1.3), and "Orpee il faut aller, ton Luth est bien d'accord,//Tu peux par ce moyen faire vivre la mort,//Allons donc divertir Euridice malade,//Et resjour Pluton de quelque serenade" (1.3).

Although these "realities" are separate - specific to each "fou" - they conflict when brought into contact with those of the others such as in the exchange among the Alchimiste, the Astrologue, and the Philosophe:

L'ALCHIMISTE. Du Feu dans les fourneaux, du souffre, du salpestre;//Il faut qu'avant la nuit je fasse un coup de maistre,// Que j'engendre de l'or

L'ASTROLOGUE. C'est a faire au Soleil// C'est moy qui d'un pouvoir secret et sans pareil//Le produis, sans souffler au centre de la terre
PHILOSOPHE. Je te feray sentir des coups de mon tonnerre (3.1 emphasis added)

As the argument between the Astrologue and the Philosophe intensifies, it demonstrates that even within madness there is a certain logic:

L'ASTROLOGUE. Est-ce là malheureux comme tu fais la Cour,//Au grand Astre des Cieux, qui te donne le jour?//Reconnais autrement, ingrate creature,//......................................................

Je forme la rose and forge the tonnerre

PHILOSOPHE. Je le lance. Insensé, contre les criminels,//Qui refusent l'Encens qu'on doit à mes autels;//Crains que ta vanité ne fasse quelque injure,//À ce puissant Auteur de toute la Nature//

ASTROLOGUE. Penses-tu, criminel, dire sans insolence,//Que l'on se peut passer de ma douce influence? (3.3 emphasis added).

Each "fou" reacts towards the others from the reality he has created through language.

Although these "fous" are on display - a spectacle - with the Concierge as the Master of Ceremonies, the Concierge himself is not outside the spectacle since he too has his moments of insanity - as described by the Valet:

Maistre, j'ay reconnu que vous estes jaloux,//Depuis quatre ans presque de tous les fous;//Mais savez-vous l'effet de cette phrenesie,//Et ce qu'elle produit dans vostre fantaisie?//Vous parlez Philosophe, Astrologue, Chasseur,//Poete, Musicien, Alchimiste, Plaideur;//Enfin, ce mal en vous réveille des Idées,//Qu'en gouvernant ces fous vous avez possédées,//Puisque ces insensé se trouvent tous en vous,//Je dis que vostre teste, est l'Hospital des fous;//Ce mal vous prend souvent; si nous ne sommes sages,//...............................................

Pour moy, quand je vous voy dans cet

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
and indeed, this change takes place in the third Act - making evident the creation of a "reality" unto its own:
"Ma femme en sa prison escrivoit un poulet,// Pour moy dans mon malheur je ne puis me resoudre;// Elle a ce qu'elle veut, Monsieur, j'ay de la poudre" (3.5 emphasis added).
With this "powder", the Concierge claims to be able to change the forces of Nature and make gold: "Avec ce beau secret je force la Nature;//Je change Mars, Venus, et Saturne et Mercure;//J'en fais de l'or; de l'or on luy fait des habits" (3.5). He even claims to be able to reverse mythology: "Puisque je suis Orphée, et qu'elle est Euridice;//Par ma voix, des damnez j'arreste le supplice" (3.5). As he claims in turn to be chemist, Orpheus, poet ("...je compose seul et les chants et les vers"), and painter ("J'ay finy son pourtrait ...") (3.5), it becomes obvious that he is repeating the insanities he has witnessed. This is confirmed by the Valet's statement that when the Concierge is mad: "Vous parlez Philosophe, ..........Poete, Musicien, Alchimiste...." and "ces insensez se trouvent tous en vous" (1.3). Although the "fous" are isolated each in his own world, they are all "reflected" in the sane/insane Concierge.

As the Concierge himself explains regarding his bouts of madness when, four times a year he finds himself in a
The point is pushed further when it is made clear that not just he but the city's best citizens all come to the asylum at some point or other: "...en ce lieu public, nos meilleurs habitans, //Sont presque tous venus loger de temps en temps" (1.2), creating a city within itself: "Et qu'en mille façons leur Esprit imbécille, //Fait de cet Hospital une assez grande ville" (1.2 emphasis added). The sanitarium is, then, a microcosm of the city. Yet this microcosm is a mirror of an even greater macrocosm than the city - the Universe:

This point is reiterated by Julie as she states that, "Tout le monde en ce lieu peut trouver son exemple, //C'est un miroir vivant où chacun se contemple" (5.4). The parade of "fous" is the mirror in which everyone sees him/herself. This mirror is held up to the spectators by the Concierge who emphasizes that they are the original "fous" - copied by the actors:

Mais après avoir vu dans nos Illustres cages, //Tant d'admirables fous, croyez-vous estre sages? //..................
There is thus created a type of interchangeability - a circularity. Yet this play is also metafiction since, by directly addressing the audience the Concierge destroys the suspension of disbelief.

Both metafiction and metatheatre put in question the mimetic process. Rather than a form of theatre, metatheatre is a device which refers to "plays which are ....'theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized'" (Abel 60-61). However not all plays which are metafiction are metatheatre but only those which problematize theatre as a means of portraying reality. In contrast to tragedy, which is mimetic and therefore claims to represent/simulate "reality" (however defined), through fiction, metatheatre emphasizes the illusionary aspect of theatre (Zebouni "Mimésis" 61-62). Zebouni points out the characteristics of metafiction which put mimesis in question: "mise en abyme,...action disloquée, linéarité problématique, intrusions d'auteur, contradictions évidentes et irréconciliables" ("Mimésis" 163). Although she refers here to the novel, the characteristics Zebouni lists for metafiction are applicable in some form to metatheatre. As she reiterates, all of these elements call attention to themselves and render the notion of mimesis problematic as
language ceases to represent/simulate any reality outside of itself ("Mimésis" 163-64). The permanence of order, indeed the "assumption of an ultimate order", so necessary to tragedy, is nonexistent in metatheatre where "order is something continually improvised by men." Metatheatre capitalizes on the "sense that the world is a projection of human consciousness." It "glorifies the unwillingness of the imagination to regard any image of the world as ultimate" as opposed to tragedy which "glorifies the structure of...the world" (Abel 113). This reflects well the Baroque concept of art, according to Leslie Epstein who points out that Baroque interest is "'not on being, but on happening.'" The Baroque supports the notion that a work of art "is never finished" (213).

Two plays by Gougenot and Georges de Scudéry with the same title - La Comédie des Comédiens, are examples of metatheatrical. Here, as in Beys' play, the action/theme is not important.

In Gougenot's La Comédie des Comédiens (1633), the play opens with one of the actors, Bellerose, explaining to the spectators that the actors can't perform the play they were planning to, the one for which the stage is set (La Comédie des Comédiens), since one of the actors was injured in an argument with another about the roles to be played:

...aujourd'hui, par malheur, deux de nos principaux acteurs se sont esmeus si avant sur ce sujet qu'ils ont passé des paroles aux effets, ou, par une mauvaise rencontre, ils
se trouvent tous deux blessés. C'est,
Messieurs, ce qui m'oblige de vous supplier
très humblement de nous dispenser pour ce
jour du sujet que nous vous avions promis, et
auquel nous nous estions préparés avec autant
de soin que d'affection, vous assurant que
nous la remettons avec plus de regret que
vous en attendiez de plaisir: Ce manquement
serait inutile et mon compliment injurieux se
c'estait pour nous excuser d'une faute qui
nous fust ordinaire; mais je ne croy pas
qu'on nous en puisse reprocher deux
semblables: c'est un accident, et non pas un
dessein. La face de nostre théâtre, qui est
préparé pour notre Comédie des Comédiens, me
démentiroit si je disais autrement (1
emphasis added)

Here the mimetic process is devalued by fiction.

The breakdown of mimesis is seen even more clearly in
Scudéry's La Comédie des Comédiens (1635) where the mimetic
function of the theatre is reversed. In the Prologue, the
audience is addressed * and begged to go along with the
insanity of the actors who insist that they are not in a
theatre but rather the city of Lyon and that all is truly as
it is represented to be. The audience knows the play is
fiction; it is the actors who believe it is real:

Je ne scay (Messieurs) quelle extravagance
est aujourd'hui celle de mes compagnons, mais
elle est bien si grande, que je suis forcé de
croire, que quelque charme leur dérobe la
raison, et le pire que j'y voy, c'est, qu'ils
taschent de me la faire perdre, et à vous
autres aussi. Ils veulent me persuader que
je ne suis point sur un Théâtre; ils disent
que c'est icy la ville de Lion, que voila une
Hostellerie; et que voicy un jeu de paume, où
des Comédiens qui ne sont point nous, et
lesquels nous sommes pourtant, représentent
une Pastoralle, ces insensés ont tous pris
des noms de guerre, et pensent vous estre
inconnus (1)
Mondory, the actor presenting the Prologue, mocks mimetic theatre further when he announces that he has been told that he is "un certain monsieur de Blandimare" although, he says, his name is truly Mondory. He also mocks the unity of time - revealing its absurdity:

la piece qu'ils representent, ne sauroit durer qu'une heure et demie, mais ces insensez assurent, qu'elle en dure vingt et quatre et ces esprits dereglez, appellent cela suivre les regles. Mais s'ils estoient veritables, vous devriez envoyer querir à disner, à souper, et des ictis; jugez si vous ne seriez pas couchez bien chaudement, de dormir dans un jeu de Paume (1)

He ends his Prologue by entreating the spectators not to believe the actors regardless of what they say since all is illusion (the exact reversal of what is normally asked of an audience): "et cependant (Messieurs) ne les croyez pas, quoy qu'ils puissent dire; car je meure s'il y aura rien de veritable" (1 emphasis added). Appearance has taken over reality. To some extent this brings back the idea albeit in a parodic mode that is present in Saint Genest: that "reality" is created through acting.

To further emphasize the fictionality of the theatre, the actors make references to a large corpus of plays and playwrights readily recognizable to the spectator:

Nous avons encor tout ce jeu imprimé, la
Pirame de Theophille, Poeme....................
..................................................
..................................................
..................................................

Nous avons aussi la Sylvie, la Chriseide, et
la Sylvanie, les Follies de Cardenio,
le Infidele Confidente, et la Philis de Scire,
It is finally agreed upon that the play which will be performed is *L'Amour Caché par L'Amour* which begins with a dispute between the "Prologue" and the "Argument" over who is more important and ends with a mutual decision to have neither in the play. The play itself ends with a direct reference by "M. Blandimare" to the spectators: "Il ne vous est pas difficile de remarquer par la satisfaction que tesmoignent nos Spectateurs, que je ne vous ay pas esté du tout inutile" (3.4).

Putting the mimetic process into question creates a distance between the theatre and the spectator, denying him/her the possibility of empathy (with the hero/heroine of tragedy, the lovers of comedy) and therefore the possibility of participating in any closure.

Although it is a play within a play, Corneille's *L'Illusion Comique* (1639) is not metatheatre but metafiction. Here the actors themselves become spectators in the play. Pridamant (Clindor's father) and his friend Dorante seek out the magician Alcandre to find out where Clindor is, after 10 years. Alcandre shows Pridamant fancy clothes and tells him that his son wears them. Pridamant marvels that he wears such clothes. Alcandre tells Pridamant to watch and listen to what he's about to see through

---

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Alcandre's magic as he resurrects the past life of Clindor. At the end of two Acts, Alcandre tells Pridamant that in two years the people he has seen (including his son) have all risen to great heights. Pridamant sees his son killed and grieves. A curtain lifts and everyone is seen counting money. Alcandre explains to Pridamant that they're all "comediens" and that they were practicing a play. Alcandre plays the role of the metteur-en-scène for Corneille's play within a play - although of course ultimately they're all actors (Nelson 50). Pridamant's reality is revealed as illusion as Alcandre shows him - and the spectator, who, up to this point has been seeing everything through Pridamant's eyes - what has "really" transpired. However, what is important here is not the plot of the play within the play, but rather the fact that fiction as painting "reality" is commented on in such a way as to leave the spectator in the dark as to what is actually taking place - until the end, thereby eclipsing any "resolution" and preventing the spectator from functioning in his/her role.

The preceding plays which have been examined at length identify variations in the breakdown of the mimetic process. It is not difficult to find other illustrations of this occurrence: other uses of the same devices and/or other devices (unnecessary characters and events, excessive violence, unexpected conclusions/use of "deus ex machina") since the breakdown takes place in most plays of the period.
Such is the case in many of Alexandre Hardy's plays. In his *Alphée, ou la Justice d'Amour* (1624), the spectator encounters not only a large number of confusing love triangles (Alphée, Daphnis, Corine; Corine, Satyr, Dryad; Dryad, Euriale, Melanie), many of which include unnecessary characters, but also the sudden, unexpected onstage transformations of Daphnis (into a rock), Isandre (into a tree), and Alphée (into a fountain) by Corine. These events, impossible to predict, seem to exist only to surprise, stun, confuse...the spectator.³

These kinds of superfluous occurrences are seen again in another of Hardy's plays, *Cornelle* (1625). Here, just as in the previous example, there are events which seem random. The incidents involving the page and the courtisane and even the end before the reconciliation seem unnecessary to the storyline, existing only for themselves.

In the preceding plays confusion is caused by the multiple and unnecessary characters and unpredictable events.⁴ These shocking and unexpected events are often extremely violent in nature. In Corneille's *Clitandre* (1631), a play with multiple intrigues, Pymante (the spurred lover) chases his love Dorise who blinds him with her hairpin. He stands in full view of the spectator with blood running down his face and her hairpin still lodged in his eye.⁷ In Pichou's *L'Infidèle Confidente* (1631), two
noblemen, Dom Fernand and Dom Pedro, stab a young bourgeoise out of anger on the stage.

Even when the violence forms an integral part of the plot it is often still excessive, as shown in Hardy's Scédase, ou l'Hospitalité Violée (1624). Here Scédase's two daughters, Evexipe and Théane, are raped and murdered (both events shown onstage) by the two men to whom they've extended hospitality. Their bodies are then thrown into a well where their father finds them. When no justice is forthcoming, he kills himself (again onstage) over their bodies. In another of Hardy's plays, Aristoclée (1626), Aristoclée is killed between the two rivals for her affection, Calistene and Straton. Straton then flees and Calistene kills himself over her body. The excessive violence, instead of creating identification in the spectator, distances him/her through repulsion. This violence is often linked with a disturbing ending because it is unexpected as in Hardy's La Force du Sang (1626) and Gesippe (1626) where women are forced to marry those who have abused them. Pichou uses this same idea in his L'Infidèle Confidente (1631) where the young bourgeoise marries the very nobleman who stabbed her and left her to die.

Another device -the "deus ex machina" - is often used to bring about a contrived resolution. Webster's definition is a device in which "a person or thing (as in ... drama)
appears or is introduced suddenly and unexpectedly and provides a contrived solution to an apparently insoluble difficulty" (316 emphasis added). As is evident by this definition, such a conclusion is virtually impossible to predict. The implication inherent in the use of the "deus ex machina" is that the play's structure is insufficient/unable to provide the solution from within, thereby creating the necessity for an outside force to resolve the dilemma (however "forced" the resolution may seem). Although the "deus ex machina" is a device used frequently in comedy, it is (nevertheless) important to realize that it is also used extensively in Baroque drama.

In Hardy's *Alphée ou la Justice d'Amour* (1624), Cupid suddenly comes to the lovers' rescue at the end and sets everything right. Similarly he and Venus intervene unexpectedly at the end of *Corine ou le Silence* (1626) to rectify the lovers' situation. Although the "deus ex machina" is used in the preceding plays to give a definite conclusion, it is sometimes used in Baroque theatre to defer the end to some future time, thus ending the play in a non-conclusion. In Hardy's *Frégonde ou le Chaste Amour* (1626), Frégonde is ordered by the King to marry the Marquis (who attempted to seduce her while her husband was still alive) after a certain mourning period for her dead husband. At the conclusion, everything remains in question since she can always disobey the King.
Although the circumstances are different (the Marquis is not a murderer), this play foreshadows the familiar end of Corneille's *Le Cid* (1637) where Chimène is told to marry Rodrigue in some future time outside of the play. Again, there is no guarantee she'll marry him since nothing is changed in the dilemma she faces in marrying her father's murderer.

This type of deferral occurs also in Rotrou's *Venceslas* (1648) where Cassandre is urged by Venceslas to let bygones be bygones and marry his son and heir to the throne, Ladislas, who murdered her husband (and his brother), Alexandre: "Le sceptre que j'y mets à son crime effacé//Dessous un nouveau règne oublions le passé;//Qu'avec le nom de prince il perde votre haine;//Quand je vous donne un roi, donnez-nous une reine" (5.9). Cassandre resists the suggestion, and once again the problem will presumably be resolved (or will it?) after time has passed. By pointing to some future problematic time, the play throws the spectator off balance, with no definite end/conclusion.

It is worth noting that this type of non-conclusion can also occur without a "deus ex machina" - as seen, for example, in Hardy's *Arsacome, ou l'Amitié des Scythes* (1625). Here the two lovers (Arsacome and Masée) are reunited, but instead of a marriage or death at the conclusion, the play ends on an abrupt note as Arsacome refuses to flee with Masée and announces instead his
intention to meet the invading army in battle. Another example occurs in Desmaret's de Saint-Sorlin's *Les Visionnaires* (1637), where there is every reason to believe a match will be made. Yet at the conclusion, all characters remain **happily** unmarried.

As abundantly illustrated in the above examples, the theatre of the period (1550-1650) partakes of all of the characteristics identified as those of the Baroque and is therefore an integral part of it. Its distinguishing characteristic is the manner in which it illustrates the breakdown of the mimetic process - not only leaving the spectator in a confused state but denying him/her the participatory role of the spectator in traditional theatre.

As mentioned in the Introduction, some modern/"postmodern" critics consider tragicomedy to be a genre which fits the twentieth century, reinforcing the notion that art is linked to its milieu. Although the breakdown of the mimetic process occurs in theatre earlier than in that of the so-called "Postmodern"," it is especially prevalent in this period: a period characterized by an "'awareness of the absence of centers'" (*Preface* A *Postmodern Reader*, 2). There is a recognition "of the final demise of all Authority, of all higher discourse, of all centers" (Bertens 45) - resulting in fragmentation.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in language, shown to be arbitrary and broken. No longer considered to have a
closed, fixed system of reference, it engages in "freeplay" - unrestricted intercourse among language and referents ("signifiers" and "signifieds") which denies any ultimate meanings. According to Derrida, although a closed system ("structure") allows a certain amount of "freeplay" within that system, that "freeplay" is restricted ("Structure" 224). As Derrida explains, "The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay based on a fundamental ground, a reassuring certitude, which is still beyond the reach of the freeplay" ("Structure" 224). This is the case because the center of the structure (and it is difficult to conceive of a structure without a center) has as its own function "not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure...but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit ...the 'freeplay' of the structure" (Derrida 224). As language is liberated from this centered structure, it exceeds its limits/boundaries. It exhibits unrestricted "freeplay", resulting in its own fragmentation. According to Martin Esslin, this fragmentation is characteristic of the Theatre of the Absurd: "In its devaluation of language, the Theatre of the Absurd is in tune with the trend of our time" (297). Because an in-depth examination of modern drama is beyond the scope of this study, only certain aspects of a few plays will be pointed out in order to bring added weight
to the argument that a period seems to determine the form of its art.

In Ionesco's *La Cantatrice Chauve* (performed 1950), for example, sentences follow each other in a non-sequential fashion: "Nous avons bien mangé, ce soir. C'est parce que nous habitons dans les environs de Londres et que notre nom est Smith" (1). Identities are presented as fluid and are put into question as a couple (M. et Mme. Martin) "discover" they're married only to have the maid declare to the spectators that they're not who they believe themselves to be. Here language constantly mocks the belief in ultimate meaning.

Another instance of the problematization of language is found in Beckett's *En Attendant Godot* (performed 1953) in which characters speak of anything and everything but with no stable references. Indeed language is shown to be alien—and meaningless. This is demonstrated, for example, when the characters all bid each other "Adieu" but no one leaves and all continue to wait for someone who never appears onstage. In both of these plays (and others of this "theatre"), the fragmentation of language is made evident. Language is shown to be inadequate for the representation of "reality." There is no "build-up" to a climax and consequently, no "resolution." Indeed, the Theatre of the Absurd doesn't offer solutions or pose questions that can be reduced "to a lesson" (Esslin 305).
Although the Theatre of the Absurd demonstrates the breakdown of the mimetic process through language, there are earlier examples of the breakdown in modern drama. For example, in Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (written 1921), the spectator is confronted with created characters searching for a non-existent author: an inversion of the "norm" in which the author precedes the characters. These characters are fiction come to life - and as such, like other fictional characters, cannot die: "The man will die.... the instrument of creation; the creature will never die!" (74). These constant interruptions of fiction into "reality" - the actors' "reahearsal" of a play - prevents the suspension of disbelief in the spectator.

Another play by the same author, *Tonight We Improvise* (1930?) pushes the theatrical limits past the stage and into the audience (and the lobby during the Intermission), surrounding the real spectators with "spectators" who actively participate in what happens onstage. In this manner fiction and reality are mingled to the point of being virtually indistinguishable.

Examples of plays which tamper with/destroy the mimetic process are not limited to the early part of this century or to the Theatre of the Absurd, however. In Jean Anouilh's *L'Alouette* (performed 1953), for example, the characters comment on the theatre and their roles as such. At the
beginning of the play, Warwick - a British aristocrat - tries to hurry along the trial of Joan of Arc so that she can be judged and burned quickly, but is told by a priest that "il y a toute l'histoire à jouer" (10). At his protest that they will insist on representing all of the battles, he is reassured that "nous ne sommes pas assez nombreux pour jouer les batailles" (12). Later, as Joan is beaten by her father, a priest moves to intercede but is stopped by a fellow priest: "Nous n'y pouvons rien.... Nous ne connaitrons Jeanne qu'au procès. Nous ne pouvons que jouer nos rôles, chacun le sien, bon ou mauvais, tel qu'il est écrit, et à son tour" (41 emphasis added). In this manner theatre is continually mocked as it is shown incapable of portraying "reality": "Evidemment, dans la réalité cela ne s'est pas exactement passé comme ça" (131 emphasis added). Furthermore, at the end of Joan's "life" story - her "histoire" - as she is being burned at the stake, the characters are interrupted by a fellow character who runs in crying "On ne peut pas finir comme ça.....! On n'a pas joué le sacre! On avait dit qu'on jouerait tout! Ce n'est pas juste! Jeanne a droit à jouer le sacre, c'est dans son histoire!" (226). Joan is released and as the curtain falls, the coronation is being performed.

It is not my intent to identify the twentieth-century as Baroque, or even, as some critics have done, "neo-Baroque", but it would seem that there are a number of
common traits between the drama of the French Baroque - commonly referred to as "tragicomedy" - and modern drama. It would seem that in both, theatre as mimesis is put in question through a multiplicity of devices, resulting in subverting the spectator's role in traditional theatre.

NOTES

1 These playwrights (Rotrou, Pichou, and Beys) are chosen both because of popularity with their contemporaries and because their plays illustrate well the devices used in tragicomedy. However, they are not the only plays in this period to illustrate these points since the characteristics and devices mentioned here are fairly common in tragicomedy of the period.

2 This scene has a parallel in Molière's L'Impromptu de Versailles (repr. 1663) where the spectator is afforded a "behind the scenes" view of a "practice" session with his acting troupe.

3 Although Timothy Reiss points out in his Toward Dramatic Illusion: Theatrical Technique and Meaning from Hardy to 'Horace' (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) that language is used as a destabilizing force in Baroque drama, he does not make the connection between the destabilization of the spectator in his/her role and tragicomedy that I do here.

4 Philippe Quinault's La Comédie Sans Comédie (1654) is a defense of comedy and theatre as well, although the spectator is not addressed. In the Prologue, two actors ("Hauteroche" and "La Roque") are discovered to be in love with the two daughters ("Aminte" and "Silvaniere") of a merchant ("LaFleur"). The actors tell LaFleur that they wear magnificent clothes and keep company with nobility. He favors marriage with his daughters - until he discovers they're actors. They beg his indulgence to show him their abilities, defending comedy as encouraging virtues. The rest of the play is a tapestry of other plays: the 2nd Acte is a "Pastorale" (Clomire), the 3rd - a burlesque comedy (Docteur de Verre), the 4th - a tragedy (Clorinde) and the 5th - a "tragicomedy" entitled Armide et Renaud. At the end of this (5th) Acte, LaFleur consents to the marriages and praises theatre and actors ("comediens"). For a partial presentation of these plays and a summary of the others, see Les Contemporains de Molière: Recueil de Comédies Rares ou
The setting is easily recognizable as pastoral and although the temptation may be to categorize such plays in a separate genre under the term "pastoral", I suggest that the important issue to be considered is not the subject matter, but the manner in which it is treated. Hardy's "pastoral" plays are, for the most part, excellent examples of tragicomedy - full of superfluous characters and events shown onstage which confuse and stun the spectator. This is not the case for all pastoral plays, as exemplified, for instance, in Claude de Bassecourt's Tragé-comédie Pastoralle (1594) where most of the action is recounted rather than shown. (See Bassecourt, Claude de. Tragé-comédie Pastoralle. Ed. Gustave Charlier. Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1931.)

Such is the case for many of Hardy's plays, including Corine, ou le Silence (1626), Felsisme (1626), Le Triomphe d'Amour (1626), and Gesippe, ou les Deux Amis (1626), as well as Jean de Schelandre's Tyr et Sidon (1628), Jean Mairet's La Sylvie (1628), Auvey's La Madonte (1632), Jean de Rotrou's Laure Perscuteur (1637), and La Belle Alphrède (1639), and Paul Scarron's L'Ecolier de Salamangu, ou les Ennemis Généreux (1655). All of these plays have complicated plots with many characters and events which often seem random at best. I do not include them in the text since plot summaries (given in the Appendix) demonstrate my point well enough.

An earlier example of eye-gouging occurs toward the end of the sixteenth-century in Robert Garnier's La Troade. Here Hécube avenges herself on Polymester for killing her son, by killing his children in front of him and then blinding him - both occurring onstage. I do not include this example in the text because the emphasis here is on unexpected sudden onstage violence. Another eye-gouging occurs (though not onstage) in Garnier's Les Juifves.

Although the examples given here are of French plays, there are many English plays of the period in which onstage excessive - and unexpected- violence occurs which deserve mention. John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (1633) contains shocking onstage violence with the portrayal of the "hero's" (Giovanni) murder of his sister/lover and the offering of her dripping heart to his rival. There are certainly examples to be found in Shakespeare's dramas as well. In King Lear the Earl of Gloucester is blinded onstage, and in Titus Andronicus, Titus' hand is severed onstage (Both of the heroine's hands are severed as well and her tongue cut out - although the spectator does not see either act done).
There is some disagreement among critics as to what the temporal parameters of the "Postmodern" era are. Some place its origins as early as 1875, others immediately following World War II, while still others as beginning in the 50's and 60's. For these theories and others, see A Postmodern Reader. Ed. Joseph Natoli and Linda Hutcheon. New York: State University New York Press, 1993.
CONCLUSION

The thrust behind this study is the observation that certain art forms, and more specifically certain "genres" dominate in certain periods. The most popular genre of the period called Baroque in the France of (1550-1650) is so-called "tragicomedy." This study has attempted to determine its specificity, if any, in light of the absence of any critical consensus as to its nature. The most popular definition identifies tragicomedy in relation to its name: viewing it as a mixture of tragedy and comedy. This definition deviates from the Aristotelian model (a model which dominates the theory of the theatre at that period) and where tragedy and comedy are kept strictly separate. In fact the reality is quite often that it is not a mix of tragedy and comedy which is meant but rather a combination of serious/"tragic" and "comic" elements. As a matter of fact, in the seventeenth century tragicomedy is also defined as a tragedy which ends well.

In addition to the connection made between tragedy and comedy and tragicomedy, some critics identify tragicomedy according to content or theme: a non-historical/romantic plot conditioned by a political climate and/or involving "earthbound" characters who cling desperately to worldly existence - noting in particular the excessive violence, multiple and often unnecessary characters and events as being characteristic of the genre.

129
This study, on the other hand, is founded on the premise that these definitions do not reveal anything about tragicomedy as such since all of these elements can be found in tragedy and/or comedy. In certain of Shakespeare's tragedies there are both "tragic" and "comic" elements as illustrated by King Lear which contains multiple characters as well as an important subplot portraying Gloucester and his sons Edgar and Edmund - while clearly remaining a tragedy. Furthermore, the violence that is said to be one of the dominant characteristics of tragicomedy is a necessary component of any tragedy.

Rather than looking at tragicomedy as a mix of two different genres, or concentrating on characteristics as such, this study attempted to look at tragicomedy as theatre in order to identify, within the genre, its specificity, if any. Consequently, in order to differentiate tragicomedy it has been necessary to determine what constitutes tragedy and comedy in traditional theatre. As stated earlier, theatre's difference from other genres lies in the importance of the spectator in the theatrical event. The spectator's role is an active one - different from either that of the reader of narrative who has to go through a narrator or that of the spectator of film who sees through the eye of the camera since the theatre presents a living performance (by actors). Theatre is presence. It is immediacy in that the time is the
present and the spectator interacts with a living immediate image.

In tragedy the spectator must be able to identify with the hero/heroine and fear that his/her situation could be that of the spectator's own in order to experience **catharsis**. All of the elements should be focused towards leading to the tragic **moment**. The structure of tragedy, then, must be well-constructed in order to build to a climax and settle to an appropriate conclusion. There must be a logical sequence of events of cause and effect, guiding the **spectator** to predict possible outcomes. Although it is not identification with a hero/heroine as in the tragic which is needed in the **comic** but rather emotional distance, the **structure** of comedy is the same as that of tragedy: a series of events which the spectator can follow as they develop gradually, leading to a resolution (in comedy the "epiphany"). In tragedy/comedy the spectator is led to **anticipate** in order to derive meaning and to arrive at **catharsis/"epiphany."** If the tragedy/comedy is successful, the spectator will participate in this resolution. The spectator is the locus of meaning. Although tragedy and comedy differ in content and function, they possess a basic common **linear** structure which takes the spectator through a logical series of events to a conclusion.

Since the spectator's role is so vital to the function of tragedy and comedy, what is his/her role in tragicomedy?
If tragicomedy is to be differentiated from tragedy/comedy, it is the premise of this analysis that it is in this particular aspect of theatre that its specificity is to be identified. Indeed, whereas in tragedy and comedy the spectator is made to participate in closure, this study finds that in tragicomedy (s)/he is denied this role.

In order to understand why at a certain period—in this case the Baroque—a specific "genre" dominates, it was necessary to look to the intellectual milieu of the period—following in the footsteps of tragedy theoreticians (Benjamin, Steiner, Reiss, among others) who claim that the prevalence of tragedy in certain periods is a function of the intellectual milieu in which it appears. Consequently, this study began with an attempt at identification of the intellectual milieu of the Baroque—a milieu, as identified by Foucault and Reiss as one where an epistemological shift occurs between one order and another. It is at this crossroads between two different epistememes that tragicomedy dominates. This is a period of transition: from a world envisioned as a totality where everything is linked in a circularity of "ressemblance", and where reaching Truth of essences is considered to be possible— to the episteme which displaces it: that dominated by the possibility of attaining knowledge of phenomena as truth (modern science). There is a shift, then, from the notion of Truth found in the word/world to that illustrated by Descartes' Cogito.
where knowledge is founded in the individual consciousness: a positing of a subject that can attain knowledge of the world as object. The locus of meaning moves from the world/Nature to the subject/individual consciousness.

The period which is being identified here (the Baroque) is characterized by the "impossibility" of attaining Truth while at the same time not yet attaining knowledge. The dominant current in ideas at that period is scepticism as illustrated by Montaigne's "Que sais-je?". This in turn explains the characteristics of the Baroque: illusion, metamorphosis, excess, ambiguity, dominance of appearance over reality, emphasis of the uncommon/the particular over the common/the universal, movement, fragmentation, extravagance.... All these characteristics are to be found in tragicomedy as well but in this case the end result is a disruption of the traditional structure and function of theatre by denying the spectator his/her traditional participatory role. In this study some of these devices have been identified: the circularity of mirroring in Rotrou's *Saint Genest* where the unities contribute to the breakdown of the linear structure, the fragmentation found in Pichou's *Les Folies de Cardenio*, the creation of whole worlds through language in Beys' *Les Illustres Fous*, metafiction and metatheatre as in Gougenot's and Scudéry's *La Comédie des Comédiens* and Corneille's *L'Illusion Comique*, among others. In these plays the role of the spectator is destabilized.
(S)/He is prevented from constructing a coherent synthesis and conferring meaning on what occurs onstage.

The conclusion reached in this study is that neither content nor form as mixture of tragedy/comedy differentiates tragicomedy but rather its denial of the role the spectator is supposed to play in traditional theatre.

It is interesting to note that in this age - characterized as "Postmodern": described as fragmented, decentered, chaotic,...theorists claim that tragicomedy is the dominant form of modern theatre. Although tragicomedy is not identified by these critics as it is done here, this analysis agrees with their theory that tragicomedy fits our modernity characterized by some as incoherent and fragmented: where spectacles like The Rocky Horror Picture Show and MTV define popular entertainment.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Works


Secondary Works


Bray, René. La Formation de la Doctrine Classique en France. Lausanne: Librairie Payot and Cie, 1931.


Dixon, Mimi Still. "Tragicomic Recognitions: Medieval Miracles and Shakespearean Romance". Renaissance


________________________. Toward Dramatic Illusion: Theatrical Technique and Meaning from Hardy to 'Horace'. N.p.: Yale University, 1971.


APPENDIX: PLOT SUMMARIES

Anouilh, Jean. L'Alouette

This play is the story of Joan of Arc - but the interesting thing is that it is constantly interrupted by characters in a manner that breaks the suspension of disbelief in the spectator. At the end of the play, as the heroine is about to be burned at the stake, there are protests that the "coronation scene" hasn't been played. Joan of Arc is removed from the stake and the missing scene is performed as the curtain falls.

Auvray, Jean. La Madonte

This play is based on an episode in Honoré d'Urfé's L'Astrée in which Madonte, the heroine, and her lover, Damon, are betrayed by Madonte's nursemaid, Leriane, who also loves Damon. In order to drive a wedge between the two lovers, she convinces Damon's rival, Thersandre, that Madonte returns his love and gives him Madonte's ring as proof. The two men duel onstage and both are injured. Damon throws himself into the river where two fishermen find his body. They are confronted by a hermit who sees the body (which they have attempted to bury) and accuses them of the murder. Damon's servant, Haladin, sees the body move and the hermit swears he'll revive him and the two carry his body to the hermitage. Meanwhile, Leriane has persuaded her niece, Ormante, to seduce Damon - which she has done (It is unclear when exactly this occurred). As a result, she is pregnant. Leriane takes Ormante's baby and shows it to the King, claiming that it is the child of Madonte and Thersandre. (The penalty for sexual immorality is death). Madonte and Thersandre deny the charge, but are to be executed - until Thersandre persuades the King to allow arms to decide the matter of guilt or innocence. Damon hears the news and after much vacillation decides to go to Madonte's aid. He disguises himself as "le chevalier au tigre" and offers to fight on Madonte's behalf. Damon is forced to fight Leriane's two nephews, Leotaris and his brother, who are fighting on their aunt's behalf. Damon wins the battle and Ormante admits to being the mother of the child. Leriane's guilt is revealed and the King orders her put in prison to await execution. Damon laments falling in love with Madonte again - but a Voice speaks to him telling him to keep hope. Haladin tells Damon that a cavalier is approaching, maligning women. Damon challenges the cavalier, Argantee, to a duel. Thersandre joins him and Damon hears Madonte call out Thersandre's name as
Thersandre dies. Damon and Madonte then recognize each other (Madonte is dressed as a shepherdess). Thersandre expresses his happiness that the two are reunited. Damon expresses his wish to consummate their love.

Beys, Charles. *Les Illustres Fous*

There are several characters of import: Julie, who loves and is loved by Dom Alfonte, Luciane's brother; Julie's brother, Dom Alfredo who loves and is loved by Luciane; Tirinte, a French gentleman who loves Julie; Dom Gomez - Dom Alfredo's confidante, and Dom Pedro, Dom Alfonte's friend. The play opens with Dom Gomez' suggestion to Dom Alfredo that they enter the hospital (insane asylum) for diversion. The audience discovers that Luciane and Alfredo were running away together when she was kidnapped by robbers (She had been dressed as a man and had helped fight them but had been discovered when she became tired). Alfredo's life was spared. Upon entering the asylum, Alfredo sees Luciane who has gone insane - as a result of her belief that he is dead - and does not recognize him. She faints, and upon coming around they exchange stories of their escapes. The "chief" of the robbers had had pity on her and had put her in the asylum. Dom Alfonte comes to the asylum looking for the one who took his sister. In his pursuit of Alfredo (whom he does not know personally), he went to his house and fell in love with Alfredo's sister, Julie, and took her away with him. (Upon hearing this, Dom Alfredo wants revenge). Alfonte had to flee after killing a Frenchman who was interested in Julie. Alfredo introduces himself to Alfonte as "Dom Ximante". He asks Dom Pedro to arrange his lodging in the hospital. (As an added intrigue, Dom Pedro's sister, Ermiante, loves Dom Alfredo). Alfredo feigns insanity in order to be locked up so he can see Luciane who is still disguised as a chevalier under the name of "Fernand". Luciane's "insanity" leads her to claim she's a woman and she and Dom Alfredo (also feigning insanity) claim they're in love. A French gentleman, Tirinte, comes to see Luciane and she is torn from Dom Alfredo who reveals that he was only feigning insanity - to no avail. Tirinte asks Luciane/"Fernand" to intercede for him with Julie, whom he rescued from the brother of the Frenchman Dom Alfonte killed. Julie reveals her identity to Luciane and tells her of her relationship with Dom Alfonte. Dom Alfredo and Luciane are reunited as are Julie and Dom Alfredo as brother and sister. As Julie hugs Luciane (who is still in male "drag"), Dom Alfonte becomes outraged, believing that the two are lovers.
Dom Alfrede tries to explain but Dom Alfonte refuses to listen. He attacks Luciane, recognizes her and reconciliation occurs. Luciane reveals that "Dom Ximante" is really Dom Alfrede. Alfonte pretends he's killed "Fernand" (Luciane). Horrified, Alfrede reveals her true identity as Alfonte's sister, swearing revenge on Alfonte. Luciane appears and Alfonte gives her to Alfrede who reciprocates by giving him Julie. The intrigue is fairly complex, and the presence and active participation of the other inhabitants of the asylum render it even more complicated. There are scenes in which the only action occurs between/among the inhabitants of the asylum with no reference whatsoever to the major characters. Such is the case, for example, in Act III when an Astrologer (who believes he's the Sun) and a philosopher (who reveals that he is Jupiter) argue about who created the Universe.

Corneille, Pierre. Le Cid

Chimène, daughter of Don Gomez, loves Rodrigue, son of Don Diégue. However, the Infante, Dona Urraque, loves him, too. Don Gomez is jealous of Don Diégue because the King, Don Fernand, has made him governor of the prince - a high honor which Don Gomez believes he's earned. The two men argue and Gomez slaps Diégue who, because of his advanced age, asks Rodrigue to avenge his honor by a duel with Gomez. Despite his despair, Rodrigue agrees, realizing that he'll lose Chimène whether he wins the duel or not. He accosts the Comte (Gomez) and the two argue and agree to duel. Chimène hears that her father and Rodrigue will duel and the Infante hopes that Rodrigue will emerge victorious: Such a victory against such an able adversary as Chimène's father would prove that Rodrigue was capable of performing great feats worthy of the Infante. Don Fernand is angry over Gomez' slight of Don Diégue but he regrets the Comte's death when he hears of it. Chimène appears before him to plead justice for her father's death at Rodrigue's hands. Don Diégue pleads for his son. Don Fernand responds that he'll consider the merits of both cases and decide. Rodrigue goes to Chimène's house to seek his death at her hands. Don Sanche, Rodrigue's rival, offers to be Chimène's avenger. She considers this a last resort and will consider his offer only if the King will not grant her request for Rodrigue's death. Chimène is still in love with Rodrigue but she owes his death to her father and her honor. When Rodrigue tells her to kill him, she admits she cannot - but she must still pursue his death, though she promises that her own will follow his. Don Diégue counsels his son to win the King's
favor by fighting against the Moors. Chimène learns that Rodrigue is responsible for the capture of the two Kings of the enemy and that he has become a celebrated hero of Castille. The Infante urges her to forget her plea for justice since it would rob the country of a great hero. Rather, let her cease to love him - that would be punishment enough. Chimène refuses this course of action: she ceased to have a choice when Rodrigue killed her father. Don Fernand welcomes Rodrigue as "le Cid", the name given him by the conquered enemy. He assures him that he only consoles Chimène now - and will not lend an ear to her pleas for his death. Upon hearing that Chimène seeks an audience with him to ask for justice again, Don Fernand asks Rodrigue to leave and decides to prove that Chimène really loves him still. When she arrives, he tells her that her quest for vengeance is at an end - that Rodrigue is dead. Chimène turns pale and almost faints. Don Fernand reassures her that he still lives - but confronts her about her feelings. She tries to pass it off as fainting for joy upon hearing of his death. When the King insists that her sorrow was visible, she says it was because if Rodrigue died a hero then she had lost her vengeance. She desires Rodrigue's death, but not a glorious one! Chimène urges a recourse to arms: that the King's cavaliers be told that whoever kills Rodrigue in combat will marry her. Don Fernand wishes to toy with the law and excuse Rodrigue from participating since he's so valuable to the state, but Don Diègue insists he not be favored in this way. Don Fernand agrees to allow Rodrigue to fight - once - against whomever Chimène chooses, but again Diègue insists that the field be open. Don Sanche presses to be the one chosen. All agree and Don Fernand says whoever wins will receive Chimène's hand. Rodrigue tells Chimène that he plans to allow Don Sanche to kill him. Chimène urges him to defend his honor and to keep her from having to marry Sanche. The Infante still loves Rodrigue, but now as the Cid - the hero of Castille. Chimène bemoans her fate: to lose either way and be forced to marry either her father's assassin or Rodrigue's. Sanche enters with a sword and Chimène assumes Rodrigue is dead. She blasts Sanche who can't get a word in - and begs the King to allow her to finish her days in a convent mourning her father and her lover. Diègue and Fernand tell her Rodrigue is alive. Sanche tells how Rodrigue beat him but wouldn't kill him since he risked his life on Chimène's behalf. The Infante and Fernand both urge Chimène to accept Rodrigue as her husband. Rodrigue comes to offer his head to her - as long as she kills him herself. Chimène will obey the King's command, but questions
whether he'll be able to live with it, knowing he ordered her to wed her father's assassin. Fernand responds that Rodrigue won her in combat but that she can take one year to mourn her father. In the meantime Rodrigue must go back to the Moors and do battle. He must hope in time, his King and his courage to vanquish Chimène's point of honor. Rodrigue agrees.

__________. Clitandre

Alcandre, King of Scotland, has a favorite courtier, Rosidor, who loves and is loved by Caliste who in turn is loved by Clitandre, the favorite courtier of the King's son, Floridan. Dorise is Caliste's rival and plots to kill her. She in turn is loved by Pymante who plots to kill Rosidor using Clitandre's men, Géronte and Lycaste whom he's corrupted. Pymante has one of Clitandre's men write a note in Clitandre's handwriting, challenging Rosidor and Pymante waits with Clitandre's men, disguised. Meanwhile Dorise tells Caliste that she has seen Rosidor with another woman, Hippolyte, and convinces her to spy on them. Dorise then ambushed Caliste and attempts to kill her. Both Caliste and Rosidor escape their attackers, but Rosidor is wounded while killing Clitandre's men. Both Pymante and Dorise flee but Pymante sees Dorise later, disguised and hiding in a cave, and makes a pass at her. He chases her and she blinds him with a hairpin. He rages at her and swears revenge. The Prince, Floridan, witnesses Pymante chasing Dorise. He steps in to prevent her murder and Pymante tries to kill him but is prevented by Dorise. Their guilt is discovered and they go to the King to see justice done (Clitandre has been arrested by the King for the attempt on Rosidor's life). Clitandre is released. Pymante is unrepentant and is arrested. The Prince obtains Dorise's pardon, desiring to give her in marriage to Clitandre as recompense for his troubles. The King seconds the idea, but Clitandre is not interested. Both Clitandre and Dorise are reconciled to Rosidor. The King gives them until Rosidor is healed to fall in love so there can be a double wedding with Rosidor and Caliste.

__________. L'Illusion Comique

Pridamant, Clindor's father, and Dorante, Pridamant's friend, seek out the magician, Alcandre, to help Pridamant find out where his son is. It's been ten years since he's seen him. Alcandre shows Pridamant fancy clothes and tells him that Clindor wears them. Pridamant is amazed at the finery. Alcandre tells
Pridamant to watch and listen and not to leave the grotto without him. Pridamant sees Matamore, a Gascon captain, and Clindor discussing Matamore's love of Isabelle - whom Clindor loves also. Adraste, who also loves Isabelle, proclaims his love to her only to be spurned. She flirts with Matamore, though she only loves Clindor. Lyse, Isabelle's domestic, admits that she herself loves Clindor. Isabelle's father, Géronte, tells her he has chosen Adraste as her husband. She asks him to choose another. Matamore confronts Isabelle and Clindor when they're talking about their love for each other and threatens Clindor who manages to reconcile with him. Matamore ends up giving Isabelle to Clindor. Adraste interrupts with a mob of brigands. Clindor injures Adraste and Géronte orders Clindor's arrest. Clindor succumbs to the crowd and Pridamant laments to Alcandre that his son is dead. Alcandre reassures him. Lyse goes to Isabelle and tells her that she has a plan to spring Clindor from prison: Lyse has seduced the jailer and he is on their side and will help them. Isabelle and Lyse and the jailer release Clindor. The latter profess their love to the women they love. Alcandre tells Pridamant that in two years they have risen to great heights and he will show them in their splendor. Isabelle and Lyse are talking in the garden about Clindor's infidelity with Princess Rosine (whom he's supposed to meet) - wife of their benefactor, Prince Florilame. Isabelle is there to confront Clindor. Clindor vows he still loves her, but that this passion for the princess has him in its grip. Isabelle tries to get him to change his course of action - if not for her, for the sake of the prince who's been so good to him. Isabelle's love and concern for him convert him and he has a change of heart. Eraste, one of the prince's men, comes and stabs Clindor to avenge the prince's and princess' honor. Isabelle dies of grief in the arms of Lyse. The curtain falls on the scene of the garden and the dead bodies of Clindor and Isabelle. Alcandre and Pridamant leave the grotto. Pridamant is grief-stricken and desires to join Clindor in death. The curtain lifts and all the characters are seen counting money. Pridamant wonders that money is counted among the dead and that both the assassins and their victims are seen here side by side with no enmity on either part. Alcandre explains that they are all actors, practicing a play! Clindor has a good profession as an actor. When Pridamant rebels at this idea, Alcandre explains that the theatre is now quite popular - well-loved by well-respected people and pays well. Pridamant is reconciled to this idea. Alcandre tells him to believe only his eyes (to see that Clindor prospers). Pridamant
asks Alcandre what kind of payment he'd like. He replies that in giving him pleasure he received his payment.

Gougenot. La Comédie des Comédiens

The play open with Bellerose explaining to the spectators that the troupe can't do the play they were to do and for which the stage was prepared since the actors were arguing about roles and had an "accident" (One of them supposedly broke his leg). For the first two acts, the actors discuss each others' acting abilities and the function of comedy: to correct manners and to set a good example. Yet even here they are all playing roles - some as valets who decide to become comediens. They begin the inner play: Filame, a young gentleman, is robbed. Caliste, a young woman, sees him from the window and gives him money. Caliste is loved by both Symandre and Trasile, an old man. Although Caliste loves Filame, she is encouraged by her governess, Flaminie, to return Symandre's affections. Hounded relentlessly by Flaminie, Caliste beats her. Clarinde, a young woman betrayed in love by Symandre, disguises herself as a young man - "Floridor". She/He presents him with verses regarding his betrayal and he is troubled. Flaminie, angered by Caliste's treatment of her, arranges her revenge. She will let Symandre and Argant, a friend of his, in at the back door so Caliste will be surprised with Filame in her bedroom. While Caliste and Filame are talking and kissing, Argant and Symandre rush in. Caliste, fearing for Filame's life, pretends to be grateful for their arrival and asks for Symandre's sword that she might kill Filame herself. Symandre gives her his sword and she promptly gives it to Filame. In the third act of this inner play (the fifth act of the entire play), Symandre's father, Cristome, and Symandre's valet, Faustin, discuss Symandre's flighty behavior with Floridor and lament his treatment of Clarinde. Symandre and Clarinde duel but are separated by Symandre's father. Caliste confronts Flaminie for her part in the treachery and gives her leave to go elsewhere. Floridor/Clarinde laments her betrayal by Symandre. She sees Caliste who tells her she loves Symandre only as a friend. Clarinde sees the jewel at her neck and asks her where she got it. Caliste explains she was kidnapped as a child by Turks and that she and her governess were sold to a Frenchman with no family. The jewels were given to her by her "father" from her governess. Upon his death, he commended Caliste to the care of his friend, Trasile. Floridor/Clarinde tells Caliste that she knows her real
identity. Cristome is told Caliste's story, sees the jewel and a mark on her right arm, and knows she's his daughter, Perside - Symandre's sister! Floridor/Clarinde confronts Symandre and shows him the same design on jewelry he gave her. He begs her forgiveness for his treatment of her and they are reconciled. Filame asks for Caliste's hand. Trasile asks to be a father to her but she declines since she's found her real one!

Hardy, Alexandre. Alphée, ou la Justice d'Amour

Isandre is an old shepherd who has been warned by the Oracle that the marriage of his only daughter, Alphée, would bring great trouble to his house. He decides to keep her a recluse. She falls for Daphnis who returns her love. However, Corine, a middle-aged sorceress, loves Daphnis and becomes jealous. She tells Isandre about the two lovers. A Satyr loves Corine. He gives her flowers but a fly in them stings her and she rejects him. A Dryad loves the Satyr and she is loved in turn by Euriale who is loved by Melanie. Daphnis confronts Corine with her treachery and she transforms him into a rock. Isandre and Alphée run to see what has happened and Corine changes Isandre into a tree and Alphée into a fountain. The community (including a new character, Coridon, and Euriale) confront Corine who asks for help from the Satyr. He puts his demons at her disposal when suddenly a noise is heard behind the theatre and Cupid comes to the rescue. He changes Isandre, Daphnis and Alphée back. Corine begs forgiveness for her jealousy. Cupid unites her with Isandre; Daphnis with Alphée; and Euriale with Melanie. All are reconciled but the Satyr who is chased from the scene (The Dryad had already rejected him). The three couples will be married. Cupid requires pigeon sacrifices to him and Venus. A Chorus and a troupe of Satyrs are included in the cast of characters.

________. Aristoclée, ou le Mariage Infortuné

Straton, a young gentleman, loves Aristoclée who loves and is loved by Calistene. Straton asks her father, Teophane, for her hand in marriage. Straton is rich; Aristoclée is not. Teophane declares himself to be neutral: He'll allow Aristoclée to decide. She publicly states her preference for Calistene over Straton. Straton arranges an ambush with his friends and makes the others think he wants to reconcile. He has Aristoclée forcibly taken. She is killed between Calistene and Straton as they fight. Straton flees the scene and Calistene kills himself on Aristoclée's
scene and Callistene kills himself on Aristocleée's body.

Arsacome, ou l'Amitié des Scythes

Leucanor, King of Bosphore, has an only daughter, Masée, whom he gives in marriage to the Prince of the Malliens, Adimache - but the Ambassador of the Scythes, Arsacome, loves and is loved by her. Unfortunately, he has no money. Arsacome is spurned and in his rage he declares war against the Bosphorans. He charges his friends with two tasks: bringing him the head of the King, and getting Masée from Adimache. One friend, Loncate, murders Leucanor in Mars' temple. The murder is reported to Adimache. Macente, another of Arsacome's friends, gets Masée. This too is reported to Adimache. The ghost of Leucanor appears to Adimache, spurring him on to avenge his murder. Arsacome, who had believed Macente to be dead, is reunited to him and Masée - who reminds him he killed her father. Arsacome says he was only the instrument of the will of others. Masée is reconciled to this idea. A messenger comes in to tell them the enemy is near. Loncate suggests Arsacome and Masée flee but Arsacome refuses. He'll go to meet the enemy.

Corine, ou Le Silence

Corine and Melite are two shepherdesses who love Caliste who doesn't return their love. As a result, he tries to escape by giving them several tasks to perform: the one who picks the loveliest bouquet of flowers will win his love (He says the bouquets look the same); the one who brings him water to slake his thirst first will win his love (He tries to escape while they run to get water). Finally he says they must remain silent: the first to speak will lose him. Arcas is a shepherd who loves Melite. He goes to her father, Tityre, who gives permission to marry her. Meanwhile, a Satyr who also loves Melite goes to an old sorceress, Merope, and enlists her aid. Merope tells him that Melite will be bathing in a fountain late that evening. The Satyr attempts to rape her. Arcas, who also found out from Merope where Melite would be, rescues her and the Satyr receives a beating from both Arcas and Merope (who also turns him into a tree). Corine's father, Moelibée, and Tityre consult Merope because their daughters aren't speaking. The Oracle speaks and Cupid and Venus enter. Cupid punishes Caliste for fleeing love. He is beaten but doesn't die because Venus intervenes. Cupid and Venus reveal their identities to Caliste - and Cupid makes him choose one
of the women (Caliste chooses Corine). The priestess, Mopse, Moelibée and Tityre argue. Cupid joins Caliste and Corine, and Arcas and Melite and changes the Satyr back. All of the couples are reconciled with each other and their fathers, and the Satyr asks forgiveness. Venus orders the couples to have children. After thanking the gods properly at their altars, the couples will live happily ever after.

__________ Cornélie

Alphonse d'Est, Duc of Ferrare, sleeps with Cornélie, sister of Jean Bentivole, Seigneur of Boulogne, with the promise to marry her. She gets pregnant and has a son. She gives the child to a woman servant who, mistaking him for a gentleman of the Duc's household, gives the child to a Spanish cavalier, Don Juan, who takes him home and gets him a nurse. A friend of Don Juan's, Don Anthoine, comes upon a duel between Bentivole and Alphonse and assists the latter who gives him his jeweled ribbon in gratitude. Cornélie, meanwhile, flees from her brother's house and goes to Don Juan's where she's taken in and there recognizes her son. Cornélie is persuaded by the nurse to leave (out of fear of death or loss of honor), so she takes her child and goes to a hermitage. Santistevan, Don Juan's page, plans to ravish Cornélie. Don Anthoine, Don Juan, Bentivole, and Alphonse return. When they arrive at the house, the page begs mercy and tells them that Cornélie is upstairs - but a Courtesan is in the bed, claiming to be Cornélie! The men chase her away and separate to look for Cornélie. Alphonse passes by the hermitage when hunting and sees the child. The hermit sends out the mother - Cornélie. She and Alphonse are reunited. Alphonse suggests that they play a trick on Bentivole and the others. Cornélie hides and Alphonse tells them he's in love with someone other than Cornélie. Then Cornélie comes out and they are all reunited. Alphonse and Cornélie will marry.

__________ Felismene

Don Felix loves Felismene and she loves him. However, she's not rich and Don Anthoine, his father, wants to send him away to make a better match. Don Felix opposes this idea at first, but gives in because of his father's wrath. He gets to Germany and falls in love with Célie, the Emperor's relative. Felismene hears what's happened and she goes, disguised as a man, to find out for herself. She serves Don Felix who uses her to deliver love letters to Célie who does not return his love. Rather, Célie falls for Felismene and
upon rejection dies of apoplexy. Don Felix is accused of poisoning her. Adolphe, a German cavalier, was jealous of Don Felix and now takes his men and goes after him. Meanwhile Felismene is in the company of shepherds, disguised as one of them. She hears fighting and realizes Don Felix is alone. She runs to fight by his side while the shepherds flee. She fatally wounds two men (including Adolphe). She reveals her identity to Don Felix and tells him that she was with him at the Court. He admits his unworthiness. They reconcile and pledge loyalty in front of the shepherds. Don Felix takes Felismene to bed.

Fregonde, ou le Chaste Amour

The Marquis de Cotron is a young man caught out in bad weather while hunting. He and his friend, Comte Ludovic, take shelter at Dom Yuan's - husband of Fregonde. The Marquis falls for her. She resists and wants the Marquis to leave. Her husband accuses her of being ungracious. (The Marquis is responsible for saving Dom Yuan's honor in his trial and for his winning his lawsuit). The Marquis wins the government of Calabre and Dom Yuan dies in a battle against the Turks. Dom Yuan's ghost comes to tell Fregonde that he died and to marry the Marquis, but she says she'll enter a convent. The King (Alphonse) hears of this and calls her. He'll allow her to mourn Dom Yuan and then she must marry the Marquis. She submits to his will. (No marriage takes place within the play, however).

Gesippe ou les Deux Amis

Tite, a young Roman nobleman, is good friends with Gesippe, a young Athenian nobleman about to marry a young Athenian, Sophronie. Tite sees her and falls for her. He decides to leave Athens in order not to intrude on his friend's relationship. Gesippe finds out and offers his first night with Sophronie to Tite who, after much protest, accepts his offer. When Sophronie discovers the deception she is outraged - as is her father, Aristide. Jupiter is consulted and it is decided that Sophronie should belong to Tite. Sophronie hates Gesippe for what he did to her. She accepts her fate and Tite takes her to Rome. She comes to love him. Gesippe loses his fortune and goes to Rome. There he meets up with two bandits fighting. He intervenes but not in time and one dies. He is accused of murder. Tite recognizes him, and the robber, feeling remorseful, confesses to the crime. Gesippe is
liberated and Tite gives him his sister, Fulvie, in marriage.

La Force du Sang

Pizare has a dream that his daughter, Leocadie, is raped. He and his wife, Estefanie, take a walk with her one night. A young nobleman, Alphonse, and his two friends Fernande, and Roderic, plan to take advantage of a young woman. Alphonse states that his desire requires a woman who's unwilling - and his desire never lasts, once quenched. His friends say he can kidnap a woman, enjoy her, and then set her free - without peril. So he and his friends take a walk. Alphonse sees Leocadie and accosts her parents and kidnaps her. In Act II the rape has occurred. (Leocadie fainted and Alphonse raped her). Alphonse comments on how much he's enjoyed her. Leocadie is mortified and wishes he'd killed her. She manages to see a bit of her surroundings before he blind-folds her and sends her back home. She returns to her parents. They comfort her and reassure her that no one will know of her disgrace. Dom Inique, Alphonse's father, tells his son that he needs to show his military prowess. Leocadie tells her mother that she's pregnant. She is devastated and tells her mother that she'll hate the child but her mother says the child will also be a part of her and so she'll love it. Her mother will act as mid-wife and no one will know. Alphonse is tortured by the memory of what he's done while serving in battle. Seven years pass. Leocadie's son, Ludovic, is injured and Dom Inique finds him and helps him. He takes him home and recognizes his resemblance to his family. Leocadie fears the worst at her son's disappearance, but the nurse tells her he's alright. Leocadie goes to Dom Inique's house and recognizes certain surroundings. She tells Alphonse's mother, Leonore, about the rape. Leonore says Alphonse will marry Leocadie. She shows Alphonse a portrait of a hideously ugly woman and tells him his marriage with her is arranged. Alphonse, horrified, tells his mother that as long as the woman is beautiful he doesn't care whom he marries. Alphonse is confronted by Leocadie - who faints upon seeing him. Everyone confronts him with his crime. He is repentant and will marry Leocadie if she will forgive him and forget the past. She happily tells him he's already forgiven and his crime is forgotten.

Scédase, ou l'Hospitalité Violée

Scédase has two beautiful daughters, Evexipe and Théane. During his absence they give shelter to two
young Spartans, Charilas and Euriblade. These men rape Scédase's daughters, kill them and throw their bodies into a well. (The rapes and murders are plotted in advance and carried out onstage). Scédase returns with a presentiment of disaster. Upon discovery of the bodies of his daughters, he sets out to get justice from the King of Sparta, Agésilas. Because no one actually saw the young men suspected by Scédase commit the crime, justice is not served. Scédase returns home and kills himself on the bodies of his daughters. (This suicide occurs onstage).

Le Triomphe d'Amour

Atys and Cephée are young shepherds both in love with Clytie, Phaedime's daughter. She loves Cephée but Atys asks for her hand and since he's richer than Cephée, her father grants her hand to him. Clytie wants Cephée to kidnap her and elope. But a Satyr also in love with Clytie takes Cephée's place and kidnaps her with the help of another Satyr. One of them hides her in a desert while the one who loves her is captured by Cephée. Cephée finally rescues Clytie and they consult Pan who sides with Atys and Phaedime and gives Clytie to Atys. Cephée rebels and calls on Cupid who appears and annuls Pan's judgment, marrying Cephée and Clytie, and Atys with Melice whom he'd abandoned for Clytie. There are many minor characters - among them Melice, and the priests Montan and Philire.

La Sylvie

Florestan, Prince of Candie, loves the Princess Méliphile of Sicily after seeing her portrait. He goes secretly to find her in Sicily where her brother, Thélame, plays at being a shepherd in order to live freely in love with a shepherdess, Sylvie. She is chased by Philène, a shepherd whom she hates. Philène tells Sylvie's father, Damon, about her love for Thélame. Her father scolds her for loving foolishly and even goes so far as to enlist the aid of Dorise (a shepherdess who loves Philène). She pretends to have something in her eye, which Thélame blows on to remove. Sylvie sees this and believes he's betrayed her. The King of Sicily is told of his son's (Thélame's) love for Sylvie and is determined he'll marry the Infante de Chypre. His son remains stubbornly against it and the King resolves to kill Sylvie, but his Chancellor advises against it so he decides instead to punish both Sylvie and Thélame with an enchantment which is like madness. Each believe the other is dead and mourns. The King regrets his actions and offers Méliphile's hand in
marriage to any valiant cavalier who can break the enchantment. Florestan arrives on the scene and Philène and Dorise tell him what's happened. He chases the Demons (represented by spectres and a voice), breaks the enchanted mirror and delivers the two who are then married by command of the Oracle and consent of the King. Florestan marries Mélimyphilé and Philène marries Dorise.

Pichou. Les Folies de Cardenio

Fernant, a young nobleman, has abandoned Dorothée for Luscinde who loves and is loved by Cardenio. Cardenio laments the fact that Luscinde's father opposes the match. Fernant, who is richer than Cardenio, offers to talk to him if Cardenio will go in his place on a business trip. Delighted, Cardenio agrees. He tells Luscinde of their good fortune in having such a good friend, but she is suspicious of Fernant's motives - rightly so, since Fernant takes advantage of Cardenio's absence to ask her father for Luscinde's hand in marriage - to which her father agrees. Luscinde sends a letter to Cardenio, asking him to return and save her from this undesired marriage. She tells Cardenio, upon his return, that she'll die rather than be unfaithful and agree to the marriage. However, in front of the priest and her father (and Fernant), she agrees out of fear and timidity - then promptly faints. On her person is found a letter avowing her love for Cardenio. Outraged, Fernant leaves. Upon coming around, Luscinde, remorseful for her weakness which she sees Cardenio saw, resolves to spend the rest of her days in a convent. (Cardenio, doubting Luscinde's courage, hid behind a curtain to observe her response. When she agreed to the match, he promptly left - so he does not know she still loves only him). Cardenio wanders around in the desert in madness and meets Don Quichot and Sancho Pança. Claiming that he is fleeing enemies, Cardenio comes running out of the woods. Quichot, believing this is some new adventure - someone in need of his help who is being pursued by demons and evil spirits, takes his sword and challenges the air to a duel. Cardenio, still mad, turns on Sancho and then runs off. He then meets a scholar and a barber, wandering around in the desert looking for Quichot to help him out of his madness. Cardenio mistakes the barber for Luscinde and the scholar for Fernant and caresses one and attacks the other. When he leaves, the two men decide to follow him and try to help him as well. He sees them, but has returned to sanity. He apologizes for his actions, and asks them why they are there. They explain about Quichot - whom Cardenio also
remembers having seen. He offers to go with them, when
he sees a handsome shepherd lamenting. He realizes it's
Dorotée who is lamenting Fernant's infidelity. She
fills him in on the details of what he missed upon
leaving Luscinde's house: she really does love him!
The scholar and barber ask her help in order to aid
Quichot. She agrees. Meanwhile, Fernant and his friends
(Don Felix and Don Gusman) plan to kidnap Luscinde from
the convent in which she's staying. Don Quichot gives a
love letter to Sancho to deliver to his lady love,
Dulcinée. Sancho does so, and returns to report that he
has accomplished his mission. He describes Dulcinée in
very unflattering terms - as a peasant girl - in direct
contrast to Quichot's description. As they are arguing,
Fernant approaches with his men and Luscinde who is
pleading mercy. Quichot attempts to intervene but is
threatened and runs away and Sancho is beaten in his
stead. Fernant and the others go on their way. Dorotée
goes to Quichot and tells him that she is a princess in
need of his aid and that there is a nobleman who is
stirring up trouble in her lands. Quichot tells her to
lead the way. They go to a tavern - that Quichot takes
for a château. Fernant and the others arrive at this
same tavern. They unmask themselves and Luscinde sees
who her captors are. Her voice is heard by Cardenio in
the tavern and he comes out and they are reunited. He
and Fernant prepare to fight, but Dorotée begs Fernant
to kill her first. Her tears and love move him and re-
ignite his passion. He gives Luscinde to Cardenio and
begs them to be friends. He and Dorotée are reunited.
Quichot exits the tavern with something like blood on
his blade, and the scholar and barber affirm that he
killed Dorotée's enemy. Sancho maintains that he only
attacked some casks of wine and that the wine spilled
out and got on his blade. Quichot says to Dorotée that
she can now be at ease, but she asks him to return to
her kingdom with her to be sure that all is set right
since there could still be those in revolt. He agrees
and they set off. Sancho is left on the stage alone and
he declares that all is fantasy and that if he ever
sees his home again that he won't leave it for his
master and his crazy ideas.

---

L'Infidèle Confidente

The cast of characters are as follows: two noble
brothers: Dom Fernand (the elder) and Dom Pedro;
Cephalie, their sister; their mother; a member of their
rival house and bitter enemy, Lisanor; his love Lorise
(a bourgeoise) and her father Dom Alonse; Lisanor's
servant, Francisque; Ferdinand (a judge) and his
daughter. Lisanor is courting Lorise. Her father
(Alonse) discovers the courtship and fears dishonor so he places her in the home of Dom Fernand and Dom Pedro. Lorise confides in their sister, Cephalie. She sends Lisanor a letter by Cephalie asking him to find her at midnight at the brothers' house where she'd wait for him at a window of the garden. Cephalie loves Lisanor also and she writes him a letter declaring her love and encloses her portrait with it. Lisanor discovers that she is the sister of his enemies and doubts her sincerity. But he goes to the rendez-vous and Cephalie declares her love for him. Lisanor's house and household are destroyed by fire by his enemies. He flees with his servant, Francisque, to the lodge of a friend. He awaits Cephalie there. Lorise is suspicious and spies on them. Lisanor and Cephalie flee together. Lorise tells Cephalie's mother what has happened. Cephalie's brothers go after them. They find Lisanor (Francisque falls into a well) and capture him after a fierce struggle and take him to be guarded by the concierge of a nearby house. Francisque escapes the well. Cephalie is also captured and taken to the same lodging as Lisanor. They bribe the concierge into helping them. They go to Lisbon. Cephalie's mother and brothers and Lorise go to see Lisanor and Cephalie and discover they've escaped. In their fury, the brothers stab Lorise. She is cared for by their mother who fears for the reputation of her house. The brothers abandon Lorise for dead and spread the rumor, aided by their mother, that Lisanor killed her. Lorise is cured and, dressed as a pilgrim, makes her way through the deserts aimlessly lamenting her fate. She meets up with Francisque who tells her that Lisanor plans to duel with Fernand and Pedro because of the rumor. She interprets this to mean that Lisanor still loves her and she heads for Portugal. The King has forbidden anyone to aid Lisanor - yet a cavalier all in black comes to fight on his side. The King desires to know who it is. Lorise is revealed. Lisanor asks for her pardon - but he's already married to Cephalie. Lorise is devastated. The brothers admit their guilt and Fernand avows his love to Lorise who accepts it. Cephalie brings the daughter of Ferdinand, the first judge, out and Dom Pedro declares his love for her and she accepts. All will be happily married.

Pirandello, Luigi. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*

The play is not divided into acts or scenes. The play is reminiscent of Molière's *L'Impromptu de Versailles* with the "play" being a rehearsal. Everyone arrives and prepares for the rehearsal of a play by Pirandello (whom the Director doesn't like). As they are
161

rehearsing, six characters come in - looking for an "author". Their realities are fixed but after their creation, the author wouldn't put their drama on the stage. They convince the director to let them play out their realities for the actors and the director who turn into spectators. The drama of the characters is: the "father" pushed the "mother" to go off with another man by whom she had children. The "father" discovers one of them, the "stepdaughter", and watches her as a child at school. Later, when her "mother" sews for the dressmaker, "Mme. Pace", the "stepdaughter" begins to prostitute herself. The "father" is almost one of her clients when the "mother" rushes in and reveals everything. The "father" insists that they all come to his house where the "mother" sees her long-lost "son". The "little girl" (of the second family of the "mother") drowns and the "boy" - another child - kills himself. The "mother" grieves and the "stepdaughter" flees. This is their drama - the one they're doomed forever to play. At the conclusion, the director and actors all flee the stage, leaving only the characters.

_________________. Tonight We Improvise

This is a very interesting play - not because of plot because there isn't much of one, but because of the structure. The play opens with disturbances behind the curtain. Dr. Hinkfuss is the theatrical director and he begs the audience to pretend the disturbances are an "involuntary prologue". (Here there are reminders of Gougenot's and Scudéry's La Comédie des Comédiens). There are various people in the audience who speak up and further confuse the lines between what is "real" and what isn't. The actors revolt against the director who declares that it is all a pretense for the audience. The second Act takes place in the lobby where the characters/actors (It's difficult to tell the difference since the actors are playing both actors and characters) mingle with the audience. The action is constantly interrupted by Hinkfuss or actors who get out of character and complain that they can't perform their roles properly. At the end Hinkfuss again addresses the audience - asking them to excuse the "impertinences and "inconveniences" of the evening and promising that all will go well "tomorrow night".

Rotrou, Jean de. La Belle Alphrêde

Alphrêde loves Rodolphe who did love her, but has betrayed her with Isabelle, an English woman. Alphrêde is pregnant and Rodolphe is going to marry Isabelle. When the play opens, Alphrêde and Cléandré, her
confidante, are looking at a shipwreck. Alphrède is
telling her her troubles when she is interrupted by
Rodolphe and Ferrande (his confidant) being chased by
Arabs and fighting them (swordplay). Alphrède, and
Cléandre help chase the Arabs away. Rodolphe asks who
his benefactor is. Alphrède turns a sword on him and
reveals her identity and reveals her pregnancy.
Rodolphe tries to explain his position: he can't help
himself! They are captured by surprise by the Arabs.
Amintas, Alphrède's father, is their leader! His son
(his brother) is Acaste. Amintas has had them captured
because he has heard that his daughter is still
alive...He confirms this with Ferrande. He prepares to
test Alphrède. He'll make her believe she's about to
die. Amintas finds out from Ferrande why Alphrède is
there: that she was following an unfaithful lover to
England when they were caught in a storm and forced to
return. After giving her a hard time, Amintas reveals
his identity to Alphrède. She asks that he allow her to
go persuade Isabelle not to marry Rodolphe. (She
doesn't tell Amintas or Acaste of her pregnancy).
Amintas tells her how he came to be there with Acaste:
They were slaves to be sold. Alphrède was bought by a
foreign woman who took her to Calais. When the woman
died, Alphrède returned to Barcelona. Amintas and
Acaste were bought by a woman who married Amintas. (She
died). Alphrède persuades Ferrande to tell Rodolphe and
Cléandre that she was discovered by Amintas to be a
woman; that she resisted his advances and he killed her
in a rage; that he repented and asked her forgiveness
and that she granted it on condition that he free the
two of them. Rodolphe is horrified; Cléandre berates
him. Rodolphe is freed by Amintas. He vows revenge on
Acaste. Eurilas, Isabelle's father, fights off
Isabelle's suitors. Alphrède and Acaste are masked and
fight with them. (Alphrède is disguised as a man,
"Cléomède".) They go to free Isabelle and her sister,
Orante. Alphrède tells them she's come to announce
Rodolphe's death. Isabelle mourns. Acaste falls for
Isabelle and Orante has fallen for "Cléomède". Alphrède
asks Orante's help to get Isabelle and Acaste together.
Orante agrees if "Cléomède" will love her! Orante talks
to Isabelle who willingly returns Acaste's love after
her father decides they should marry. Ferrande will
give Acaste a note from Rodolphe - a duel proposal.
Orante is aware that "Cléomède" doesn't love her. A
ballet is held to celebrate Acaste's and Isabelle's
marriage. (The ballet is held onstage). Ferrande drops
a note to Acaste. Acaste faces Rodolphe but doesn't
want to fight him. Rodolphe admits that he only has
feelings for Alphrède and has since her death. Isabelle
comes to tell him the same thing - that she only loves
Acaste, not him. Alphrède is called forth and Rodolphe begs her forgiveness. They pledge their love and fidelity.

Laure Persécutée

Orantée, Prince of Hungary, is in love with Laure, a woman of unknown background. The King orders his son's arrest since he will not give up his love for her (Orantée is engaged to the Infanta Porcie of Poland). The King orders Laure's death. Laure learns of it through Octave, Orantée's confidant with whom Laure's confidante, Lydie, is in love. Octave persuades Laure to disguise herself as a page. With this disguise, she goes to see the Prince. The King makes a deal with the Prince that if he (the King) can show Laure's unfaithfulness, the Prince will do as he commands. The Prince agrees. When the King leaves, Orantée tells Laure to go to the King, since he doesn't know her, and pretend to be someone else and show him her charms. Octave agrees to help the King fool the Prince - in exchange for Laure with whom he's secretly in love. In the meantime, Laure goes to the King, pretending to be "Eliante", a young woman who's been assaulted and who has come to ask vengeance of the King. The King falls for her and arranges a secret rendezvous with her, thinking he'll fool Orantée this way, but Laure and Orantée think they'll fool him. Orantée enters and tells the King "Eliante's" real identity. Octave talks Lydie into pretending to be Laure and to talk love to him. He tells Lydie that while they're at the window, fooling the King, he'll lead Orantée to Laure and they can be together. Laure sees Octave and asks him how the King reacted to "Eliante". He has no idea what she's talking about. Of course, both Orantée and the King see Lydie dressed as Laure and talking of love to Octave. Orantée is furious and heart-broken. He confronts Laure with her betrayal and she's heart-broken since she doesn't understand Orantée's anger. Orantée calls on Laure, pretending to be Octave, and tells her why the Prince is so angry. Laure is confused and suspects some treachery. They discuss the situation and Lydie tells her part. She thought she was helping them but she sees that Octave was behind it all. Octave enters and Orantée is ready to kill him. Laure requests his pardon on behalf of Lydie. Octave tells them that the Infanta is on her way (A letter sent to her was supposed to delay her). Orantée proposes that he and Laure marry right away - which they do. Laure's servant, Clidamas, hints to Laure that the mystery of her birth will soon be revealed and that she is no commoner. Lydie echoes these sentiments. Laure promises to unite Lydie and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Octave. Laure goes to the Infanta and tells of her love for someone of greater rank than herself and of the father's opposition. She asks for the Infanta's aid, which she willingly gives. She asks who Laure's lover is. Orantée reveals himself. Clidamas enters with a letter from the Infanta's mother (dead) who said that she should read it when she went to another kingdom to marry. The Infanta remembers that her mother told her to do all that was in a letter that might someday come to her. The letter tells her she has a sister. Clidamas fills in the blanks: their father had a bad dream that someday the child would pit father against son. So he ordered that upon her birth the child would be killed. The mother gave the child to Clidamas to raise - and told her husband that the child was dead. Laure is that child! Laure and the Infanta are reunited. The King enters. The Infanta asks his blessing on Laure's and Orantée's marriage. He's furious, but when Laure's identity is revealed he is reconciled to the idea. He asks for the Infanta's hand in marriage and Lydie and Octave are reconciled and will marry.

Saint-Genest

Valérie, daughter of the Roman Emperor, Dioclétien, has had a recurring dream in which she's the wife of a shepherd. Her servant, Camille, dismisses her fears - reminding her that when her father married her mother (of a lower social rank than he), it didn't lower his rank any. (Valérie's fears are based on historical evidence of dreams as predictions of the future, and her knowledge of her father's tendency to act on a whim. Maximin returns from battle and his father welcomes him. It is clear that Valérie has feelings for him. Much to her delight, he gives her hand in marriage to Maximin as his bride. At first Maximin hesitates to accept, revealing his humble origins as a shepherd. However, Dioclétien tells of his own humble heritage and lack of birth and Maximin is reconciled to the idea. Genest enters, wishing to entertain Dioclétien and the others. After much discussion of roles he could play, it is decided (by Valérie) that he should perform a role for which he has become very celebrated: that of a Christian martyr, Adrien. Maximin, who played a major role in the arrest and conviction of the real Adrien, agrees to see himself represented onstage. Genest is seen backstage discussing preparations for the play with the "décorateur" and practicing his lines. (Marcelle, who will play his wife, Natalie, also comes in and goes over some of her lines with him). Genest is left alone and he begins to sense that he is beginning to become Adrien rather than just portraying
him. A Voice is heard assuring him that he will become a Christian. He vacillates between belief and scepticism. Dioclétien, Valérie, and Maximin await the beginning of the play. Genest plays Adrien the martyr. One character, "Flavie", tries to re-convert Adrien, warning him of his fate. Dioclétien, Valérie and Maximin believe that Genest has surpassed himself. They talk about the art of acting and illusion. "Maximin" (as portrayed onstage) condemns Adrien and a jailer is given charge of him. Natalie speaks to Adrien - She's been a Christian all along and has simply waited for his conversion. She feigns being on Flavie's side, but encourages Adrien to be strong in the faith. The play is interrupted as the crowd becomes rowdy and Dioclétien must quiet them. Adrien asks Flavie to see Natalie without his chains. Natalie believes Adrien has renounced his faith and she blames him. Adrien explains and Natalie asks forgiveness for judging him harshly. Genest begins to speak for himself. Marcelle has no idea what her lines are since he is adlibbing. Dioclétien and Valérie marvel at the "realism" of Genest's performance. (After adlibbing he goes behind the curtain - interpreted by one fellow actor, Lentule, as being motivated by having forgotten his lines). Valérie says Genest's acting would pass for truth and the prefect, Plancien, states that either the spectacle is true or nothing false was ever better imitated. Genest returns and declares he is no longer speaking fiction. Dioclétien becomes angry - as do his other "spectators." Dioclétien declare that Genest will die as well as anyone else who has blasphemed the gods as he has. His fellow actors beg mercy, vehemently denying any part of his blasphemy. They attempt to get clemency for him since, if he dies, so perishes their way of life (He is their chief). Marcelle goes to him to get him to recant - to no avail. Dioclétien blesses the marriage of Maximin and Valérie (who pleads mercy on behalf of the actors). Plancien announces the death of Genest. (He was tortured and decapitated). Valérie pities his fate, but Maximin says his crime was voluntary: He wanted to make a truth out of fiction.

--- Venceslas

Venceslas, King of Poland, has two sons - Ladislas (the elder) and Alexandre (the younger). Ladislas is in love with Cassandre, Duchess of Cunisberg and hates Féderic, Duc of Curlande and favorite of the King because he believes that he is his rival. Théodore, the Infanta, believes Cassandre to be her rival since she loves Féderic. Cassandre hates Ladislas, believing him to be a petty tyrant. Ladislas finally goes to the King to
try to unite Cassandre and Féderic if that is what Féderic wants, but has a change of heart and, as Féderic is gaining Cassandre's hand, goes to her house at night and stabs whom he believes to be Féderic. When Ladislas goes to tell his sister, Théodore, about it, she is grief-stricken. Ladislas goes to tell his father that he has killed Féderic who has come to tell them that Cassandre desires an audience with the King. They are shocked to see Féderic alive and even more so when Cassandre enters, weeping, to tell them that Alexandre is dead. Ladislas killed his own brother! Alexandre was his true rival. Féderic simply spoke for him in his place. Cassandre demands revenge for the man whom she was to marry. Féderic loves Théodore who asks him to request Ladislas' pardon of the King. Venceslas is torn between his love for Ladislas as his son and the demands of his duty as King to administer justice. Cassandre adds her voice to Théodore's to ask for pardon since Théodore and the Kingdom want Ladislas pardoned (She won't act against the common good). Féderic makes his request to Venceslas who has promised to give him anything he asks for. In order not to betray his duty as King, he passes his sceptre to Ladislas. In this manner, Venceslas can be a father and not a King. Féderic and Ladislas are reconciled and Ladislas gives Théodore and Féderic to each other. Ladislas wants Cassandre but she refuses him. Venceslas intercedes, saying a new reign and new King should inspire everyone to forget the past - that time will heal all wounds. Cassandre doesn't agree, but Ladislas asks her to at least allow him to hope. Venceslas calls everyone to pay last respects to Alexandre and tells Ladislas to rule well.

Saint-Sorlin, Desmarets de. Les Visionnaires

The cast of characters are as follows: Artabaze - the Captain; Amidor - extravagant poet; Filidan - in love with the idea of being in love; Phalante - rich eccentric; Melisse - in love with Alexander the Great; Hesperice - her sister who thinks everyone loves her; Sestiane - their sister who is in love with comedy; Alcidon - father of Melisse, Hesperice, and Sestiane; Lysandre - Alcidon's relative. Amidor tells of a poem he wrote regarding a beautiful woman (though she's not beautiful according to his description). Filidan hears it and imagines that he's in love with the woman. Phalante loves Melisse but she loves Alexander the Great - a hero from history. Sestiane wants Amidor to write a comedy, but he decides instead on a tragedy. Artabaze boasts of his great "feats" in battle (much like a Don Quixote) and runs across Melisse who
mistakes him for Alexander (He thinks she's practicing the tragedy Amidor is writing and he says his one line). Alcidon promises his daughters to all four men (Amidor, Artabaze, Filidan, and Phalante). In the end, however, none of his daughters wish to marry and neither do any of the men (except Phalante who is waiting for the death of his relatives in order to receive his inheritance).

Scarron, Paul. *L'Ecolier de Salamanque, ou les Ennemis Genereux*

The Count, Dom Louis, and Cassandre are all brothers and sister. Cassandre loves and is loved by Dom Pedre de Cespede (*l'Ecolier*). His sister is Leonore who loves and is loved by the Count. Pedre's and Leonore's father is Dom Felix de Cespede. Leonore is furious and devastated that the Count wants a mistress and not a wife. Dom Felix discovers the Count in Leonore's bedroom and demands satisfaction. He has her servant, Béatrix, write to her brother and tell him he's needed to avenge the honor of his family. Meanwhile, Dom Louis, who knows of his sister's relationship with Dom Pedre, hires brigands to kill him. Pedre fights them and the Count comes to his aid. Dom Louis dies and the Count discovers that he fought against his own brother! He is honor-bound to avenge his death - but has given his word to Pedre that he'll have asylum in his house. Pedre is allowed to leave but has to return when he discovers that he has a rendez-vous which prevents him from leaving town immediately. The Count says he has a secret meeting to attend, and Pedre offers to go with him - to his sister's house as he later discovers! He sees his father who demands revenge. Pedre is in the same predicament that the Count is in, however. Nevertheless, the two men will fight. Dom Felix has his son arrested, Cassandre and the Count leave together. Felix sends brigands after the Count, but since the Count got Pedre out of prison, Pedre aids him. Pedre's valet, Crispin, is in jail with the leader of the brigands and they exchange stories not knowing each other's identities. The Count and Pedre fight, Pedre loses his sword and has to get another. The Count kills one of the brigands and throws the bloody body in the river so he won't be accused of murder. When he returns, Cassandre, Leonore, and Dom Felix all want revenge because they believe the Count killed Dom Pedre. Dom Felix orders the Count arrested; Pedre shows up. The Count will marry Leonore and he gives Cassandre to Dom Pedre since, he discovers, they love each other.
Schelandre, Jean de. *Tyr et Sidon*

This play is divided into two "journées." On the first, Léonte, the son of Pharnabaze, King of Tyr, and brother to Cassandre (elder daughter of Pharnabaze) and Méliane, is captured by Sidon. Belcar, the son of Abdolmir, King of Sidon, is captured by Tyr and wounded. (Léonte is foolish and impetuous). Cassandre and Méliane nurse Belcar back to health. Cassandre spurns him - He's the enemy, but Méliane tells him she'll aid him. She falls in love with him. Zorote, an old Sidonian, is married to Philoline, a young woman. Tharside is his sister. The two women meet Léonte and his page, Timadon, at a Ball in Léonte's honor. Léonte wants to seduce Philoline and gets Timadon to get in good with Tharside who tells him all about Zorote. In order to get Philoline, Zorote should be drunk - so they dress up a Page to pretend to be a girl to seduce a drunken Zorote and Léonte will climb up to Philoline's window by a ladder. He is killed by a soldier, La Ruyne, who was hired by Zorote. Almodice, the nanny of Méliane and Cassandre, decides to help Méliane in her love for Belcar - not knowing that Cassandre, to whom she feels close because she nursed her as a child, loves him too! Abdolomin hears of Léonte's death and fears for Belcar's safety.

On the second day, Almodice tells Méliane of the dangers of giving up virtue (Belcar loves Méliane, too). Cassandre, in despair over her unrequited love for Belcar, tries to kill herself. Almodice stops her. She had tried to dissuade her from her love for Belcar by reminding her of her duty, but finally agrees to do all she can to help her - in order to keep Cassandre alive. Zorote is arrested to be taken to Tyr. Almodice attempts to get Belcar to try to seduce Méliane and so anger her. Méliane does get angry. Belcar is taken to the King who has just heard about Léonte. Méliane is torn between love for her brother and love for Belcar. Almodice tries to dissuade Méliane from loving Belcar. Belcar is arrested. Cassandre grieves. A guard/soldier tries to comfort her by telling her that Léonte's death will be avenged. Almodice sees Cassandre's state and tells her she's planning to put a veil on Cassandre and put her on a boat with Belcar. (Almodice had told Méliane that Belcar would be smuggled out in a boat). Méliane is told that Belcar is gone! Two fishermen find the body of Cassandre with a dagger she used to kill herself. Méliane is grieving over the loss of Belcar to Cassandre when she finds her sister's body. She is ready to commit suicide herself when Pharnabaze, her father, finds her over the body, holding the dagger, and supposes she's killed her sister. He orders her
arrested and he is her accuser. He dispenses with due process and orders her to be executed. Almodice is found and the truth is revealed. (She tells how Cassandre was rejected by Belcar on the boat and how she killed herself and fell overboard). Belcar returns and tells Méliane he loves her. The execution is aborted by Pharnabaze. He orders Belcar to be brought to him. Pharnabazé pardons him and allows the marriage of Belcar and Méliane. The Kingdoms of Tyr and Sidon will know peace. Zorote and Almodice are executed.

Scudéry, Georges de. La Comédie des Comédiens

In the Prologue, the audience is addressed: They are begged to go along with the insanity of the players who insist that they are not in the theatre, but in the city of Lyon and that everything is as it is represented to be. Also, although the play only lasts one hour and thirty minutes, the players say it lasts twenty-four hours! Le Beau Soleil, one of the characters, talks of how women "comédiens" are believed to be morally loose. Comedies are discussed and the honorable profession of being an actor - as well as the way one must portray all the necessary emotions. Many plays and playwrights are mentioned - including Scudéry's. M. de Blandimare is a character who is asked to become a member of the troupe. The interior play is L'Amour Caché par l'Amour, a "tragicomédie pastorale."

The Plot Summary and the Prologue argue over each being the only necessary part. Pirandre loves Melisse who loves him, but he believes she's an ingrate and has offered his love to Isomene who loves and is loved by Florintor. However, Isomene must fake loving Pirandre and Florintor must pretend to love Melisse. They all enter into double entendres with the real addressees listening. Taraminte, Florintor's father, and Lusimant, Melisse's uncle, arrange for their children to marry and Alphange, Pirandre's father, and Alliante, Isomene's mother, arrange for their children to marry. When they tell their children, their reactions are despair. Florintor and Isomene will die rather than be untrue to each other and they agree to meet at a secret place. The relatives of all four are puzzled by their children's unhappiness and decide to meet at the same place. Melisse and Pirandre also go - separately - to lament their fate. The relatives hide and listen. Florintor and Isomene debate who will kill themselves first and ultimately decide to drown together. Melisse and Pirandre intervene and tell them they won't stand in the way of their happiness. Melisse and Pirandre are reunited. All of their relatives come forth and tell them they are not obstacles to their love either. M. de
Blandimare addresses the spectators and comedy in general at the end of the play.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear*

King Lear of Britain has three daughters: Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia. Their suitors are: the King of France, Duke of Burgundy, Duke of Albany and Duke of Cornwall. Lear plans to give each of his daughters one-third of his kingdom — and a suitor. Yet he asks each how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan loudly proclaim their love for their father, but Cordelia protests that as much as she loves her father, she must love the man who will become her husband even more and that she will not flatter her father as her sisters have done. Lear is outraged and disowns Cordelia. The Earl of Kent tries to intervene and is banished. The Duke of Albany receives Goneril as his wife; the Duke of Cornwall — Regan. Cordelia is left for either the Duke of Burgundy or the King of France. The Duke renounces his claim since she has no dowry now, but the King claims her as she is. Meanwhile, the Earl of Gloucester, who has two sons: legitimate Edgar and illegitimate Edmund, is about to experience trickery at the hands of his son Edmund who throws suspicion on Edgar as the one who is plotting against his father's life. Edmund tells Edgar that his life is in danger (Gloucester has put a proclamation out for his death on sight). Edgar pretends insanity. At Goneril's castle, King Lear and his men are turned out — because Goneril says there are too many of them. Lear is furious. In disguise, Kent serves Lear. Lear goes to Regan's and she tries to get him to make peace with Goneril. Goneril and her husband arrive. Lear is refused sanctuary with his men and they are put out in the storm. Lear goes mad. They run into Edgar, acting like a madman. Gloucester helps Lear and his men, despite edicts by Cornwall not to do so... upon dire punishment. He tells Edmund he's helping them and has even received a letter — a friend in Dover will meet them and welcome them. Edmund denounces his father to Cornwall. Gloucester is seized and his eyes are put out onstage by Cornwall and witnessed by Goneril and Regan. Cornwall is attacked by a servant trying to prevent the deed. The servant is killed, but Cornwall is fatally wounded. Gloucester is led by Edgar who doesn't reveal his identity. A war is brewing. Regan wants Edmund, but so does Goneril who wants him to kill her husband. Edgar kills Oswald, Goneril's steward, who tries to murder Gloucester — and reads the letter to Edmund from Goneril. He will see to it that the Duke of Albany gets it. (The Duke of Albany favored Lear and so is being
acted against by Goneril and the others). War breaks out. France is against England. Lear is rescued and nursed back to health by Cordelia. His sanity returns; he asks her pardon. She and Lear are taken prisoner. Edmund orders her execution. Edgar gave a letter to Albany which says he'll come forth with evidence that Edmund is the traitor. He reveals everything. Edgar and Edmund fight and Edmund is fatally wounded. He confesses and tells that Cordelia is under sentence of death - to be hanged. Goneril poisoned Regan and then killed herself (Their shame in loving Edmund was made public). Lear returns with Cordelia dead in his arms. As he grieves his loss, he dies as well. Kent and Edgar are rewarded for their loyalty and service. Gloucester understood that his treatment was due to Edmund and not Edgar and he and Edgar were reconciled - though not onstage.
VITA

Jeri Laureen Lowe was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on May 1, 1967. She attended Pineville High School and graduated in 1985. For her bachelor's degree she graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, in May 1989 with a double major in French and Foreign Service. A year later, she began her graduate studies at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she received both her master's degree and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French. While in graduate school she was a Teaching Assistant and later an Instructor in the French Department at LSU. To date she has presented two papers: one in 1995 at the 1995 Louisiana State University Graduate Conference on Languages and Literature entitled "Theory and Practice of/in the French Baroque Theatre", the other in 1996 at The Sixteenth Annual Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures entitled "Viewpoint(s) in French Baroque Drama".
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Jeri Laureen Lowe

Major Field: French

Title of Dissertation: Tragicomedy: An Attempt at Classification

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

April 19, 1999