

1973

Corneille's Early Comedies: A Study In Dramatic Development

Raymond Joseph Fournier

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses>

Recommended Citation

Fournier, Raymond Joseph, "Corneille's Early Comedies: A Study In Dramatic Development" (1973). *Digitized Theses*. 647.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/647>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

The author of this thesis has granted The University of Western Ontario a non-exclusive license to reproduce and distribute copies of this thesis to users of Western Libraries. Copyright remains with the author.

Electronic theses and dissertations available in The University of Western Ontario's institutional repository (Scholarship@Western) are solely for the purpose of private study and research. They may not be copied or reproduced, except as permitted by copyright laws, without written authority of the copyright owner. Any commercial use or publication is strictly prohibited.

The original copyright license attesting to these terms and signed by the author of this thesis may be found in the original print version of the thesis, held by Western Libraries.

The thesis approval page signed by the examining committee may also be found in the original print version of the thesis held in Western Libraries.

Please contact Western Libraries for further information:

E-mail: libadmin@uwo.ca

Telephone: (519) 661-2111 Ext. 84796

Web site: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/>

CORNEILLE'S EARLY COMEDIES: A STUDY IN DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT

by

Raymond Joseph Fournier

Department of French

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

/

Faculty of Graduate Studies

The University of Western Ontario

London, Canada

November, 1972

© Raymond Joseph Fournier 1972

ABSTRACT

CORNEILLE'S EARLY COMEDIES: A STUDY IN DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT

This thesis attempts to show that the early comedies of Corneille--Mélite to L'Illusion--form a continuum containing in germ the foundations of his tragic production. From one play to the next, he perfected his technique to the degree found in Le Cid, a play which can not therefore be viewed as a saltus in Corneille's theatre, nor be separated from those works preceding it.

While adopting a similar evolutionary approach, Doubrovsky, in Corneille et la dialectique du héros (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), superimposes the anachronistically determinist format of the Hegelian dialectic. In this dissertation, each play is examined in chronological order and solely from within in order to expose the development of a variety of elements leading to the early tragedies.

The introduction presents a statement of the problem and the aims of the thesis. In each of the next seven chapters, the structure, characters, ethic, and pathetic elements are analysed. The dramatic structure is examined for continuity, plausibility, adherence to the rules of unity, and the organizational rôle of the characters. Relatively disjointed in Mélite, the structure becomes more cohesive; events and conduct are better justified to the point where, in La Galerie, the protagonists not only create, but resolve their own problems; La Suivante is Corneille's first 'regular' play; and L'Illusion perfects the dénouement, achieving greater mystification of the audience.

The behaviour of the characters in the face of problems, and the

rôle of reason and will in their psychological mechanism reveal increased ability to overcome obstacles and to assert their individuality. Self-determination becomes progressively evident, the will being used at times egotistically (Alidor in La Place royale), but also altruistically (Isabelle, Clindor, and Lyse in L'Illusion) foreshadowing the wilful heroes of the tragedies.

In analysing the ethic, the code of conduct prevalent in the society of each play, and the characters' position in relation to this code are examined to establish what direction the author was taking from play to play, and whether it led to the tragedies. The tendencies observed beginning with Mélie and increasingly noticeable in the following works, where the social structure becomes more complex, point towards the générosité found in the tragedies. This code appears to be collapsing in society itself, especially that of La Suivante, but continues to develop in the principal characters.

The examination of pathos entails a study of the tone of each work, the part which the pathetic occupies, its distribution, sustention, and intensity in order to observe developments and the particular propensities Corneille shows. Although attenuated, the comedies from Mélie to L'Illusion contain more and longer pathetic segments. Indeed, the conflict in La Suivante, and the confrontation of two intransigent figures in La Place royale approach the tragic, while the third level of L'Illusion is in fact a little tragedy.

The last chapter summarizes the conclusions of the thesis. All four components studied show developmental trends towards the tragedies. As witnessed in L'Illusion, Corneille has acquired great ability in the

arrangement of his materials, and seems able to create and dissipate pathos at will. The characters gain greater depth and independence, and their conduct prefigures that of the tragic heroes. Viewed in this light, Le Cid then appears as a further and excellent development of the gradually expanding horizons of the comedies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER I - Introduction	1
CHAPTER II - <u>Mélite</u>	14
CHAPTER III - <u>Clitandre</u>	52
CHAPTER IV - <u>La Veuve</u>	91
CHAPTER V - <u>La Galerie du palais</u>	133
CHAPTER VI - <u>La Suivante</u>	178
CHAPTER VII - <u>La Place royale</u>	227
CHAPTER VIII - <u>L'illusion comique</u>	278
CHAPTER IX - Conclusion	336
BIBLIOGRAPHY	353
VITA	363

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation our main concern will be to show that within Pierre Corneille's early comedies, from Méliste to L'illusion comique, a definite evolution of dramatic technique occurs, leading to his tragedies and bridging the gap between these two genres. We will also demonstrate that already in these plays, is found much of the author's greatness and originality as seen in his later plays; that in the building of his dramatic structure, Corneille made ample use of his own works, progressing at first haltingly and then more rapidly towards what eventually became the Cornelian play as first exemplified in Le Cid.

In spite of increasing realization in recent years of the importance of Corneille's early plays, a quick look at the bibliographical works of D. C. Cabeen and J. Brody,¹ and of A. Cioranescu² will nevertheless reveal a noticeable deficiency in regard to research done on these plays. What study there has been of these plays alone has been limited to excellent critical editions³ or to a very few articles, with

¹"Corneille", A Critical Bibliography of French Literature: The Seventeenth Century (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1961), III, 195-225.

²"Corneille", Bibliographie de littérature française du dix-septième siècle (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965), I, 605-636.

³Namely, Méliste, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre (Genève: Droz, 1950); Clitandre, ed. R. L. Wagner (Genève: Droz, 1949); La Veuve, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre (Genève: Droz, 1954); La Galerie du palais, ed. Thomas B. Rudmose-Brown (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920); La Place royale, ed. Jean-Claude Brunon (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1962); L'illusion comique, ed. J. Marks (Manchester: Manchester

the exception of the monumental study of Louis Rivaille.⁴ In the present as in the past, critics of the complete theatre of Corneille often seem to hurry over this period in order to arrive at Le Cid, with at best only a cursory glance at, a brief description or analysis, or even a complete dismissal of the previous plays.⁵ This time the works of Octave Nadal⁶ and of Serge Doubrovsky⁷ provide the exception, and we shall return shortly to these two theses as well as to that of Rivaille.

This critical attitude was begun by Corneille himself in the Examens to these plays and was fostered over a great many years by comments such as that by La Bruyère,⁸ Voltaire⁹ and also by Sainte-

University Press, 1944); L'illusion comique, ed. Robert Garapon, rev. ed. (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1965).

⁴Les Débuts de Pierre Corneille (Paris: Boivin, 1936).

⁵To name only a few: Emile Faguet, En lisant Corneille (Paris: Hachette, 1914), pp. 80-94; Gustave Lanson, Corneille (Paris: Hachette, 1898), pp. 48-56; Valdemar Vedel, Deux Classiques français vus par un critique étranger, trans. E. Cornet (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1935), pp. 71-77; Maurice Descotes, Les Grands Rôles du théâtre de Corneille (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 6-7; André Stegmann, L'Héroïsme cornélien. Genèse et signification. Vol. II, L'Europe intellectuelle et le théâtre (1580-1650). Signification de l'héroïsme cornélien (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968), p. 571, hereafter called L'Héroïsme cornélien.

⁶Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille (Paris: Gallimard, 1948).

⁷Corneille et la dialectique du héros (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

⁸"Ses premières comédies sont sèches, languissantes, et ne laissaient pas espérer qu'il dût ensuite aller si loin." Oeuvres complètes, ed. Julien Benda, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 83.

⁹"Nous commençons ce recueil [of Corneille's theatre] par la Médée parce que, dans ce poème, on peut entrevoir déjà le germe des grandes qui brillent dans les autres pièces. Nous rejetons à une autre place

Beuve.¹⁰ As a result of such points of view, Mélie, Corneille's first play, has been looked upon as a mere poetic expression of the author's love for a young lady of Rouen, and the subsequent plays as a product of the public success of the first. Successful though these plays might have been, critics saw them only as the initial attempts of a young man whose triumphal Le Cid was to begin his career as a great playwright of excellent tragedies. The gap that separates comedy from tragedy was rarely bridged: Corneille the writer of tragedies was seldom discerned in his earlier plays.

It would be unfair to include all critics in this category, for indeed some have had insights into this question. Most often it is in the Place royale that this transition is found and here mainly in the character of Alidor, the supposed primitive mold of the Cornelian hero.¹¹ However, one character--Alidor--would be insufficient as a link between the early comedies and the tragedies that followed. Certain critics have implied the existence of this link and others

les six premières comédies, dans lesquelles il n'y a presque rien qui fasse apercevoir les grands talents de Corneille." Oeuvres complètes, ed. Louis Moland (Paris: Garnier, 1880), XXXI, 180.

¹⁰"Le Cid est . . . un beau commencement,--le commencement d'un homme, le recommencement d'une poésie et l'ouverture d'un grand siècle." Nouveaux Lundis (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1867), VII, 256.

¹¹For example, Jules Lemaitre, "Pierre Corneille," in Louis Petit de Julleville, Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897), IV, 268; Léon Lemonnier, Corneille (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1945), p. 54; H. C. Lancaster, A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929), I, ii, 613; Antoine Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVII^e siècle (Paris: del Duca, 1962), I, 497; Jean Schlumberger, Plaisir à Corneille (Paris: Gallimard, 1936), p. 40.

have perceived this in the characters of Amarante¹² (La Suivante) and Matamore¹³ (L'illusion comique).

The rôle of realism when discussed at all, has suffered a similar fate. It has been studied within certain isolated plays and sometimes in series of plays, but only from the point of view of descriptive realism, without any attempt to show the development of psychological realism.¹⁴ Georges Couton treats this last aspect, but too briefly, devoting only ten lines to this subject.¹⁵ He admits its presence in plays other than La Galerie du palais and La Place royale, and concedes that it is found in the later tragedies.

Generally speaking, realism may be described as the effort in art to approximate reality, to imitate the objects and circumstances of the environment, for example, the faithful reproduction of modes of speech, of styles of dress, of society with the interrelationships of its various components, etc. Psychological realism is the imitation in art of the behaviour and motivation of people in the true to life situations and environment just mentioned. For the playwright then,

¹²Auguste Dorchain, Pierre Corneille (Paris: Garnier, 1918), p. 116; Vedel, op. cit., p. 75.

¹³Robert Brasillach, Corneille (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1938), p. 101; Georges Couton, Corneille (Paris: Hatier, 1967), p. 41. Couton rejects, on p. 27 of the same work, the idea that Alidor announces the Cornelian ethic and looks upon him as nothing more than a Don Juan, an idea which we can not accept.

¹⁴Lemonnier, op. cit., p. 47; Brasillach, op. cit., p. 88, who calls it "réalisme magique" and who insists on explaining the work through the author; Vedel, op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁵Op. cit., p. 28.

psychological realism would be the reproduction, in his characters, of what he has experienced personally, in his reading, and in his observations of others as being authentic modes of feeling and behaviour in particular circumstances.

That Corneille attached great importance to psychological realism and to realism in general is clear. In his Discours de l'utilité et des parties du poème dramatique, he says:

Le poète doit considérer l'âge, la dignité, la naissance, l'emploi et le pays de ceux qu'il introduit: il faut qu'il sache ce qu'on doit à sa patrie, à ses parents, à ses amis, à son roi; quel est l'office d'un magistrat, ou d'un général d'armée, afin qu'il puisse y conformer ceux qu'il veut faire aimer aux spectateurs, et en éloigner ceux qu'il leur veut faire haïr; car c'est une maxime infaillible que, pour bien réussir, il faut intéresser l'auditoire pour les premiers acteurs.¹⁶

This concern continues, for in his Discours des trois unités: d'action de jour, et de lieu he states: "Le poème dramatique est une imitation, ou pour en mieux parler, un portrait des actions des hommes; et il est hors de doute que les portraits sont d'autant plus excellents qu'ils ressemblent mieux à l'original."¹⁷ This same preoccupation is evident in the Au Lecteur to La Veuve: "La comédie n'est qu'un portrait de nos actions et de nos discours, et la perfection des portraits consiste en la ressemblance".¹⁸

¹⁶Oeuvres, ed. Marty-Laveaux, Les Grands Ecrivains de la France (Paris: Hachette, 1862-1868), I, 36. All subsequent quotations from Corneille, unless otherwise indicated, will be from this edition and will be footnoted as follows: M.-L., the volume number, and the page number, except for quotations from the plays themselves which will be followed immediately by the line number and, where the earlier editions of these plays contain important differences, the variant.

¹⁷M.-L., I, 113.

¹⁸M.-L., I, 377.

We are convinced that Corneille, as early as Mélie, strove for realism, devoting special attention to the social context and the language of his characters. This concern on the part of the author becomes particularly evident in La Galerie du palais where a more studied psychological realism accentuates even more the effort to achieve truth and naturalness. Psychological realism finally takes precedence in La Place royale and will, from this point onwards, establish a more solid link with the heroic psychology which will form the backbone of Cornelian tragedy. We do not intend to devote any particular segment of this dissertation to the study of psychological realism as such, but we hope, however, that it will emerge implicitly from the detailed study of the characters and the interaction between these characters.

The study of the evolution of the female characters has also been neglected. One may even say that there is a psychological gap between Mélie, of the play by that name, and Angélique of La Place royale. In fact, female characters, from Mélie to La Place royale have gradually taken on greater depth and more individuality: there has been a development in the deepening of feelings in general which leads to those profound feelings of the tragedies.

We will not deal with Corneille's social ambitions, the influence of the Jesuits on Corneille, nor the possible sociological and literary sources of his plays. We recognize the full value of these perspectives, but, as we have already pointed out, it is our contention that Corneille, to a much larger extent than has been admitted, found in his own plays the materials to erect new plays. He kept certain elements

he deemed desirable and excluded others he considered inappropriate or unacceptable to the dramatic framework he was consciously or unconsciously constructing.

Are we not, however, tilting at windmills since in Rivaille's conclusion we find a similar point of view; since the very works of Nadal and Doubrovsky seem to demonstrate our own conclusion concerning evolution? Rivaille concludes that:

Dans les pièces de sa jeunesse germe donc tout ce qui fera l'originalité de son oeuvre, la force de son théâtre, son succès auprès de ses contemporains et sa grandeur devant la postérité. Que le drame moral cesse d'être unilatéral,--comme il l'est encore dans La Place royale, où Alidor seul est perçu de l'intérieur, tandis qu'Angélique n'est vue, le plus souvent, que de l'extérieur,--que chacun des deux adversaires laisse voir le drame profond qui déchire son âme,--comme le feront déjà Rodrigue et Chimène,--et alors naîtra la plus haute forme de l'art de Corneille, le véritable drame cornélien.¹⁹

The problem is not to be found in this observation, but in the pages that precede it, in Rivaille's "goût . . . excessif de l'analyse" where "il divise à l'infini son objet."²⁰ He examines one after another "la forme dramatique," "les sujets," "les personnages," "l'action," "le pathétique," "le comique," "l'agrément," "l'intérêt," etc.--he examines them so minutely and in such isolation one from the other that the final synthesis scarcely seems to derive from the analysis. Also, the unity of the work in general as well as that of each play is shattered: "Examinant une demi-douzaine de pièces à tous

¹⁹ Op. cit., p. 771.

²⁰ René Bray, "Compte rendu de Louis Rivaille: Les Débuts de Pierre Corneille," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XCIX (1938), 100.

les points de vues possibles, il les a décomposées en un scintillement innombrable d'aspects qui ne laisse même plus avoir une vision claire de chacune."²¹

We can not agree with Rivaille when he says that gradually, in the first six plays, the characters pass from a love which they express "avec flamme et enthousiasme" to nothing more than a "souvenir glacé".²² One wonders how Rivaille would explain what we consider to be the very moving and tender love of Rodrigue and Chimène in Le Cid. He exaggerates the extent to which the comic is present in the comedies, especially in the character of Alidor. To René Bray's question,--"n'y a-t-il pas [in Alidor] plus de pathétique que de comique?"²³--we can only reply in the affirmative. Another objection one can level at Rivaille is his omission of L'Illusion comique which directly precedes Le Cid, for its absence undermines the conclusions reached.

The work of Octave Nadal also appears to present the solution to our question. The study is centered on the theme of love, but its scope goes far beyond its title to treat the general psychology of the characters in the whole theatre of Corneille. It contains a study of the theories of love found in society between 1600 and 1630 and their demonstration on the stage between 1620 and 1630. In our opinion,

²¹R. Caillois, "Résurrection de Corneille," Nouvelle Revue française, LI (1938), 659.

²²Op. cit., p. 755.

²³Op. cit., p. 100.

however, as in that of Georges May, "on sent quelquefois que les maîtres de la Sorbonne ont poussé Nadal vers l'histoire littéraire et la consultation de pièces obscures des contemporains de Corneille."²⁴ Although this type of work is necessary to fill a gap in Cornelian studies, it is a type of criticism which begins with externals, such as literary sources, and goes on to explain the works on this basis. As we have said before in this introduction, our approach will be one of internal criticism, a study of the works themselves, believing that the author's sources are to be found to a large extent in his own works. We also feel that possibly as a result of Nadal's approach, his analysis of the plays themselves, the early ones at least, is not emphasized enough, and therefore is insufficient. Nadal says of the characters of the early comedies that they have "des caractères divers mais tous sortis de la même lignée,"²⁵ and later²⁶ divides them into two groups based on two characters of L'Astrée, Céladon and Hylas. We do not object to these general groupings, but the individuality of these characters is, to our mind, not sufficiently demonstrated. Angélique (La Place royale) is presented solely as a pretext for Alidor's thoughts and actions²⁷ while surely she has her own personality. Hippolyte (La Galerie du palais) is inserted into the group of "amants

²⁴"Sept Années d'études cornéliennes," *Romanic Review*, XLIII (1952), 287.

²⁵Op. cit., p. 68.

²⁶Ibid., p. 79.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 109-114.

volages"²⁸ and is dismissed in two statements which are applicable to the whole group. Likewise, Amarante (La Suivante) and Eraste (Mélite) are quickly glossed over with no word on their rôle. As for Alidor, Nadal writes:

Non seulement Alidor décide de s'affranchir de l'humiliation qu'entraîne l'esclavage de la passion . . . mais encore il semble souhaiter pour celle qu'il aime une punition et une guérison semblables. Cela n'est pas une preuve de peu d'amour . . . C'est déjà, et plus qu'une ascèse amoureuse, une volonté de faire remonter l'amour à sa source, de lui restituer sa gratuité absolue.²⁹

We do not agree with Nadal's idea, but with Doubrovsky's rebuttal:

Nous écarterons tout de suite la suggestion ingénieuse, proposée par Corneille lui-même et reprise par certains critiques, qu'Alidor . . . chercherait, par de mauvais chemins, un noble but, qu'il ne veut non seulement "le bien de la personne aimée", mais le retour de l'amour à sa source impérieuse et authentique. En réalité, appliquer la justification de l'auteur, . . . c'est se laisser abuser. Loin d'être un Céladon dévoyé, en quête du parfait amour, Alidor ne saurait chercher la perfection de l'amour, pour la bonne raison que celle-ci n'est pas à établir, mais qu'elle est déjà donnée. . .³⁰

If Alidor did not have a very profound love for Angélique, he would not feel as dependent as he does.

We also believe that the approach chosen by Nadal, though unlike that of Rivaille, breaks the unity and harmony of each play. Presenting a general psychological evolution (which needs elaboration) from comedy to tragedy, the technical evolution and the general develop-

²⁸ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 111.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 63.

ment from one play to the next have been neglected.

With Doubrovsky's work, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, we find an approach, a chronological one, which we welcome. Also acceptable is a statement by Doubrovsky that "un sens intime et ultime habite l'oeuvre, un sens qu'il faut interroger lui-même et lui seul."³¹ The weakness from our point of view as well as that of H. T. Barnwell lies in the fact that Doubrovsky's book "is in fact a total denial of his methodological assertion, because he reads his Corneille by the light of the Hegelian dialectic of Master and Slave and with the aid of so-called 'new criticism', phenomenological and existential, stemming from Bachelard and Sartre."³² Resulting from this is the use of specialized philosophical jargon, very often to the detriment of clarity. He further states that there exists "par avance, une norme de vérité, qui n'est autre que l'oeuvre elle-même;"³³ that to reach this "vérité", it is necessary to place oneself in the "vraie perspective", which is "celle qui, pour s'assurer une prise maxima, met son objet en perspective."³⁴ Jacques Truchet rightly wonders:

Où réside exactement cette vérité? Nous avons affaire à des pièces de théâtre; il faut donc, pourrions-nous dire à M. Doubrovsky, qu'elle soit ou dans les paroles . . . , ou dans les personnages, ou dans la conduite de la pièce . . . Est-elle donc dans les paroles? C'est

³¹Ibid., p. 15.

³²"Review of Corneille et la dialectique du héros by Serge Doubrovsky," French Studies, XIX (1965), 409.

³³Op. cit., p. 17.

³⁴Ibid., p. 19.

très suspect, car elles ne sont jamais que les paroles de personnages. Dans les personnages? C'est surtout de ce côté que s'oriente le livre . . . Mais ces personnages, que seraient-ils par eux-mêmes, s'ils n'étaient pris dans une action? M. Doubrovsky a tendance³⁵ à ne pas tenir un compte suffisant de la conduite même des pièces.

Doubrovsky's approach requires, as he says himself, that we give assent to the plays being treated as a whole. But he has left gaps in his development by excluding from his study Clitandre, Médée, and the later comedies. The omission of Médée and of L'Illusion comique is serious because they were produced between the early comedies and Le Cid, and can not but contribute to the dialectical development from the comic to the tragic and heroic. We do not dispute that one cycle ends with La Place royale,³⁶ and that another begins with Le Cid,³⁷ but a study of Médée and L'Illusion comique would explain the dialectical evolution between these two cycles. If the early plays, according to Doubrovsky, were to be an essential part of a dialectical development towards tragedy, then to neglect Médée and L'Illusion comique is to weaken considerably his basic approach. And if, for us, the early plays were to provide Corneille with sources for his later ones, then we can not completely disregard them either.

Our approach will be a chronological one, with the aim of preserving the harmony within each play and of showing the evolution from

³⁵"Compte rendu de Corneille et la dialectique du héros par Serge Doubrovsky," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, LXV (1965), 509.

³⁶Doubrovsky, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁷Which is implied in *ibid.*, p. 528, no. 61.

one play to the next as well as the progression towards the ideas and techniques of the tragedies. We think it useful also to include, in the study of the action, a brief résumé of the plot of each play studied in this work in order to facilitate recall and to avoid confusion, on the part of the reader, which might be detrimental to the development of the thesis.

CHAPTER II

MELITE

The study of Corneille's first play, Mélite ou les fausses lettres, reveals that from the beginning there are dramatic elements which will be of importance in the author's evolution as a playwright and that his bent was already to a serious form of writing. This play, he says in his Examen, was his "coup d'essai, et elle n'a garde d'être dans les règles".¹ He has not adhered to the unity of time, as he himself points out: "Il doit s'être passé huit ou quinze jours entre le premier et le second [act], et autant entre le second et le troisième".² Nor is there strict unity of place although his common sense had given him "assez d'aversion de cet horrible dérèglement qui mettoit Paris, Rome, et Constantinople sur le même théâtre, pour réduire le mien dans une seule ville",³ thereby already showing a tendency towards concentration of the action in a limited place.

As for the unity of action, Corneille states, in his Discours du poème dramatique, that "dans les comédies de ce premier volume, j'ai presque toujours établi deux amants en bonne intelligence; je les ai réunis par l'éclaircissement de cette même fourbe qui les séparoit".⁴ A somewhat more accurate description of what he has done in Mélite is found in the Examen: "Ce sens commun . . . m'avoit fait trouver

¹M.-L., I, 137.

²M.-L., I, 140.

³M.-L., I, 138.

⁴M.-L., I, 30.

l'unité d'action pour brouiller quatre amants par un seul intrigue".⁵

As a brief description of the action shows, there are not four lovers but five, and initially not one pair of lovers, but two, Eraste-Mélite and Philandre-Cloris, who until the beginning of the play have been pursuing their sentimental affairs separately. A fifth character, Tircis, who is Cloris' brother and Eraste's friend, enters and through his relationship with Cloris and Eraste provides a superficial link between the two plots. Very quickly he supplants Eraste, the two now becoming rivals. This new situation also provides the necessary impetus to the convergence of the two plots. Jealous of Tircis, Eraste arranges to send to Philandre false letters (a common device found in plays of the period),⁶ in which Mélite supposedly declares her love to the latter. Philandre, persuaded by the letters and Eraste's arguments, abandons Cloris in favour of Mélite and becomes Tircis' rival. Now the two first sets of relationships have broken down. The new couple consisting of Tircis-Mélite will suffer a similar fate.

Unable to contain his vanity, Philandre shows the letters to Tircis who falls immediately into despair and retreats to the home of his friend Lisis. The latter, wishing to test Mélite, informs her of Tircis' death whereupon she faints thus demonstrating her loyalty to Tircis. Having learned of the deaths of Mélite and Tircis, Eraste is gripped by remorse and goes mad (another traditional device).⁷ Mean-

⁵M.-L., I, 138.

⁶G. L. Van Roosbroeck, The Genesis of Corneille's "Mélite" (Vinton, Iowa: Kruse, [1920]), pp. 18-21.

⁷Ibid.

while Lisis tells Mélite that her lover is alive and the latter, no obstacle remaining, returns to marry her. Having been brought back to his senses by Mélite's nurse, Eraste seeks out the young lovers in order to confess his crime and obtain forgiveness, and receives the hand of Cloris, the play ending in the disjunction of the first two pairs of lovers--Eraste-Mélite and Philandre-Cloris--, the formation of two new ones--Tircis-Mélite and Eraste-Cloris--, excluding Philandre, the lover who seemed most accepted by his mistress. The only instance where the above quotations from the Discours and the Examen can be justified is in the group of Tircis-Mélite which breaks down through Eraste's ruse and is reconstituted by the elucidation of this ruse.

If Corneille had in fact done what he said he had done, the action of this play would have been unified. However, in the first act we are presented with two plots, one involving Eraste, Mélite and Tircis, the other Philandre and Cloris. The first is given in enough relief to enable us to see that it is the principal while the other is the sub-plot. While Eraste's duplicity finally links them, it is unfortunate that they are disengaged at the end. Corneille himself, in his Examen of this play, points out that the fifth act is more or less useless.⁸ The primary action has ended and this last act serves only to complete the secondary and to satisfy the convention of having all principal characters married at the end, going as far as to have Tircis suggest

⁸M.-L., I, 140.

that the nurse give herself to Philandre. Nor is the exposition well done: after a captivating opening, informative for the main plot, we pass suddenly and without preparation to the scene of badinage between Cloris and Philandre. We are left to wonder what importance this scene has to the main action and how they are linked. The passage from one plot to another results in the stage being totally empty for a moment, followed by the beginning of a scene from the other plot which develops in a completely different place. Also there is no reference to Lisis, a character who, though appearing only briefly, plays a major rôle in reuniting Mélite and Tircis.

The progress of the action is halting, in part because of the way the sub-plot has been handled, but also because the main plot consists of a "suite de tableaux".⁹ Corneille presents the various elements of the action separately, chooses two which he confronts, then shows what situation or problem is produced. Rivaille says: "Il tient à marquer avec précision le point de départ et le point d'arrivée, mais il néglige de montrer le passage de l'un à l'autre".¹⁰ He goes on to say that there are no indications as to why Tircis, the enemy of love, falls in love with Mélite at first sight; why Mélite, indifferent to the most flattering adorations, suddenly falls in love with Tircis; why Philandre turns away from such tangible love as Cloris gives him for a more problematic one. We can not agree with Rivaille that there are no reasons given for these developments and we will discuss them

⁹Rivaille, op. cit., p. 143.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 142.

when studying the characters.¹¹ However, we do agree with Rivaille when he points out that we are not told what preparations Tircis makes to test Mélite or how he obtains the help of Lisis to do so. Corneille has generally attempted to give reasons for these elements of the action, but it is true that he should have done so in greater detail and more completely, as he will do in later plays.

The motive power behind the action is found in the rôle of Eraste, where Corneille has expressed more clearly reasons for behaviour as well as means used to arrive at an end. It is Eraste's desire to have Tircis see Mélite that starts the action. Because Tircis and Mélite have fallen in love with one another, Eraste, out of jealousy, attempts to separate them by subterfuge. To accomplish this deceit he acquires Cliton's help. Furthermore and to the same end, he will abuse Philandre's credulity, trusting that the latter will destroy the relationship between Tircis and Mélite, which is in fact what happens, temporarily at least. But from this point on the motive power passes from Eraste to Lisis and we have already seen that the latter's rôle is not very well delineated. Once again, then, we can say that events are not well linked to one another, Corneille having been seemingly attracted only to certain parts of the story, enriching these parts to the detriment of the remainder and of a well-developed action, an area which he will soon seek to improve.

Action in the sense of physical movement is minimal in this play. As Rivaille correctly indicates,¹² the characters' chief preoccupation

¹¹See below, pp. 21-37.

¹²Op. cit., p. 130.

is the exchange and discussion of ideas. The only movement to be found within given scenes is in the commotion surrounding Eraste's and Cliton's setting up of the subterfuge where there are a number of stage directions by the author indicating a variety of movements by the characters, in the quarrel between Philandre and Tircis with the former's running away, in Mélite's fainting and in the ensuing fuss of those surrounding her, and in the scenes of Eraste's madness. For Corneille, the main interest of his play apparently lies in what the characters say rather than in what they do, in their ideas rather than in their actions. Corneille has neglected the typical rhythm of baroque tradition in favour of the spoken word which he apparently felt was a more relevant device for the portrayal of psychological reactions. Eight years later, at the beginning of his tragic production (the adventure of Médée excluded), Corneille will continue to emphasize the spoken word and pay little attention to physical action on the stage. At the same time, he will maintain his own dramatic theory, while never explained as such, as well as the new criteria of a neo-classical dramatic framework.

Our study of the action in Mélite revealed that at the centre of the play reigns Mélite and about her are three young men who, attracted to her because of her physical beauty, have fallen in love with her and, as a result, are rivals, one of whom loves and then jilts another young lady to become so. The psychological context of the play can be found in the recurrence of certain words at the rhyme.¹³ The name

¹³As this is not a study of the style of Corneille, we have deliberately limited ourselves to this stylistic device, believing

Mélite, almost synonymous with love, is found nineteen times at the rhyme, the words beauté and belle nine and eight times respectively with more specific reference to visage twelve times, to yeux seven times, to appas six times, and the rhyming couplet belle-elle four times. Feelings are revealed through words like amour (13 times) and affection (13 times), the rhyming couplet amour-jour (6 times),--jour indicating in one way or another the importance of time in love,--introducing terms of the language of love such as âme (13 times), flamme (13 times), maîtresse (13 times), and the couplet âme-flamme (10 times). The interplay of love and rivalry is indicated by the words moi (15 times) and toi (11 times) and by the confrontation of moi and toi in rhyming couplets (7 times). The couplet moi-foi (5 times) expresses the importance of constancy and commitment on the part of the lovers, while the word vie (11 times), which is always linked to the theme of love and sometimes to the word envie to form a couplet (6 times), indicates the seriousness of this constancy and commitment.

Evidently, there is little emphasis on so-called characteristic Cornelian words: gloire does not appear at all until the edition of 1660 and then only once; vertu and devoir only once each while estime appears twice at the rhyme. However, there is some consideration for one's mérite, which we meet six times, although it is not always easy to know what constitutes mérite, be it wealth, beauty or some higher undefined quality. There is also some concern for raison, which is

that words in positions of stress are particularly significant of the author's meaning. As an example of this method, see Guy Michaud, L'Oeuvre et ses techniques (Paris: Nizet, 1957).

present seven times, and seems an important faculty to have and to retain.

The predominance of the words noted above indicates that the play is mainly concerned with love and a study of the characters will confirm this viewpoint.

Mélite is the focal character in the play which bears her name. Despite the fact that she appears in fewer scenes and has fewer lines than Cloris, her influence permeates the play, an influence which is at first felt through her physical appearance. Her beauty is such that, according to Eraste,

Le jour qu'elle naquit, Vénus, bien qu'immortelle,
Pensa mourir de honte en la voyant si belle;
Les Grâces, à l'envi, descendirent des cieus,
Pour se donner l'honneur d'accompagner ses yeux;
Et l'Amour, qui ne put entrer dans son courage,
Voulut obstinément loger sur son visage. (vv. 73-78)

There are constant references to "ses regards" (v. 9, variant vv. 1-2), "son oeil" (v. 13; v. 481), "son visage" (v. 78; v. 193), and "appas" (v. 132; v. 200). The initial spell which she casts is physical and irresistible, "Elle a sur tous mes sens une entière puissance" (v. 5), says Eraste and this is confirmed by Tircis' immediate reaction upon seeing her. He is instantly enamoured and, as we already suspect, will remain so, for she has a ". . . je ne sais quoi / Qui ne peut consentir que l'on demeure à soi" (vv. 215-216). Love is viewed as initiated by external attractions compounded by an indefinable quality which remains an unexplained mystery.¹⁴ (This mysterious origin will never be

¹⁴For Pascal too, in an indirect comment on this aspect in Corneille's theatre, the origin of love is mysterious and its effects

denied by Corneille.) It would indeed be surprising that Tircis, who tends somewhat towards misogyny, should fall in love simply because of Mélite's appearance. A greater force is necessary, a "je ne sais quoi" which Mélite radiates.

Similarly Mélite's initial attraction to Tircis is sudden and the reasons for it are described only in vague terms such as "perfections" (v. 383), "rares qualités" (v. 717), "mérite" (v. 1132). Although these traits are undefined, we know at least that they have no financial implications as they do for Mélite's nurse. In fact, for the latter, wealth is the most important attribute that a young lady should seek in a prospective husband. She reprimands Mélite for not paying more attention to Eraste and for allowing such a rich young man to escape from her grasp in favour of Tircis who is less rich (IV, 1). But Mélite is now stricken with love. Previously, she would have had more regard for such arguments, because her view of love was more practical, much like Tircis' attitude before he met Mélite. We learn from Cloris that Mélite "aime le change" (v. 967) and that she received other suitors, Damon, Aristandre, Gêronte, as well as Eraste (vv. 963-964). The latter informs us that "Cet accès favorable, ouvert et libre à tous" (v. 35) causes much of his suffering. This unexclusive atti-

powerful: "Qui voudra connaître à plein la vanité de l'homme n'a qu'à considérer les causes et les effets de l'amour. La cause en est un je ne sais quoi. Corneille. Et les effets en sont effroyables. Ce je ne sais quoi, si peu de chose qu'on ne peut le reconnaître, remue toute la terre, les princes, les armées, le monde entier. Le nez de Cléopâtre s'il eût été plus court toute la face de la terre aurait changé." Oeuvres complètes, ed. Louis Lafuma, L'Intégrale (Paris: Seuil, 1963), p. 549.

tude towards her admirers (which we will meet again later with Phylis in La Place royale) was undoubtedly generated under the nurse's guidance, for the latter, in Act IV, scene 1, having noticed that her pupil has apparently forgotten what she has been taught, repeats her lesson:

Une fille qui voit et que voit la jeunesse
 Ne s'y doit gouverner qu'avec beaucoup d'adresse;
 Le dédain lui messied . . .
 . . . il lui faut complaire à tout le monde,
 Faire qu'aux vœux de tous l'apparence réponde,
 Et sans embarrasser son cœur de leurs amours,
 Leur faire bonne mine, et souffrir leur discours.
 Qu'à part ils pensent tous avoir la préférence,
 Et paroissent ensemble entrer en concurrence;
 Que tout l'extérieur de son visage égal,
 Ne rende aucun jaloux du bonheur d'un rival;
 Sans donner à pas un aucun lieu de se plaindre
 Et qu'elle cède enfin, puisqu'il faut qu'elle cède,
 A qui paiera le mieux le bien qu'elle possède.

(vv. 1087-1089; 1095-1102; 1104; 1107-1108)

Mélite has previously acted, at least in part, in accordance with these principles. As we have seen. Cloris informs us that Mélite has practised deception in order to keep a number of suitors around her. But we also know that she does consider aspects other than the purely financial which the nurse teaches. The positive attraction of a rich person may be counteracted by a totally unattractive trait. For instance, Eraste has been courting her for two years; yet all his wealth is not enough to make her give in to marriage. Mélite demonstrates judgement in this particular matter, for, recognizing that Eraste has many fine qualities, she also realizes that he is eaten

by jealousy and uncivil in his demand that she frequent only him,
and asserts her independence:

Laissez en liberté mes inclinations.
Qui vous a fait censeur de mes affections?
Est-ce à votre chagrin que j'en dois rendre conte.

(vv. 431-433)

Nevertheless, Mélite is just towards him: if Tircis were to behave in the same fashion as Eraste she would treat him in the same way. Her frankness, sincerity and self-esteem are qualities which, after the initial attraction, probably endear her all the more to Tircis who readily acknowledges that she is not only "belle" and "jolie", but also "honnête" (v. 777).

Mélite's approach to marriage, then, is first of all pragmatic. She welcomes all suitors, trying to please them all at the same time, until she has had the opportunity to choose one who will satisfy her criteria. This attitude to marriage changes entirely when she meets Tircis. Love then comes rapidly, and becomes exclusive and, if not all-powerful, at least potent enough to cause Mélite to overlook the bienséances. She admits her love to Tircis before the proper period of courtship elapses because "tes rares qualités / Dispensent mon devoir de ces formalités" (vv. 717-718). She is experiencing love, its magnetism and its energy. Financial considerations are no longer of any consequence: only "mérite" based on "rares qualités" are worthy of attention. Furthermore, constancy is founded on the promise, for Mélite, having exchanged declarations of love with Tircis, rests assured that Tircis does indeed love her. The exercise of her will is

directed towards the stability of her relationship with Tircis, the pursuit of its improvement and the denial of all attacks against his fidelity. Even words to the contrary from Tircis' sister (albeit misunderstood) can not shake her conviction (vv. 1184-1188). Love becomes more demanding: Mélite expects the same fidelity from Tircis; she has given her word to Tircis and will keep it; the latter will therefore do the same. Not only is she firm in her belief, but aggressively defends it as well, as is evidenced in her reaction to Cloris' repeated accusation (Act IV, scene 2) that she has forsaken Tircis for Philandre.

From pragmatic and deceiving her approach to marriage evolves to a sincere and sentimental one in Act IV, scenes 3 and 4. On hearing that Tircis has died of despair as a result of her 'infidelity', Mélite faints. And the extent of her swoon is such that the nurse believes that Mélite too is dying. Love has complete possession of her: "On en a vu l'effet, lorsque ta fausse mort / A fait sur tous mes sens un véritable effort" (vv. 1637-1638). Unable to control her emotions, she is equally unable to rise above this misfortune to face it defiantly in the knowledge that she was completely loyal to her lover. Accustomed to playing at love, her reaction is to escape when confronted with the ultimate danger of true love. Her reason and judgement seem to be totally possessed by her love and therefore deprive Mélite of some of the basic qualities to be found later in the psychology of Corneille's female characters.

Nevertheless, some qualities which we might not have foreseen in

Mélite emerge from this experience. Her loyalty and love have certainly been proved. On finding out that the forger of letters is Eraste she easily pardons him. In spite of Tircis' credulity and questioning of her love for him without having determined the validity of the letters, she forgives him. These are some of the qualities, along with the earlier ones of independence, sincerity and self-esteem, which Corneille will gradually study and present in greater depth as his career progresses. Here, however, they lack their full value and impact, for Mélite is not acting out of principle, but because she is in love. One wonders whether she has learned anything about the powers of love from her recent experience. If her forgiveness of her lover's gullibility is laudable, it is rather sudden. What assurance has she that he will not fail her again? The fact that she urges Cloris to do the same in pardoning Philandre only adds to our scepticism. Reason has become the reason of love, for Mélite seems to look naively and blindly upon love as the panacea of bad situations.

Tircis' attitude to love is similar to that of Mélite, except that what is a pragmatic view in her case only appears to be so in his, and is, in fact, a cynical one (and as we shall see¹⁵ one that bears similarities to that of Alidor in La Place royale). In the first scene of the play where Eraste and Tircis are debating the merits of love, the latter decries marriage as a usurper of freedom, a generator of boredom and a creator of cuckolds, if it is based on beauty and sentimentality. "Une beauté mérite qu'on l'adore" (v. 82), but

¹⁵In the character study on Alidor, beginning on p. 242.

not to the extent of marriage. Where the heart is concerned, Tircis champions hypocrisy and change:

Ces visages d'éclat sont bons à cajoler,
 J'aime à remplir de feux ma bouche en leur présence;
 Il faut feindre des maux, demander guérison,
 Donner sur le phébus, promettre des miracles;
 Jurer qu'on brisera toute sorte d'obstacles,
 Mais du vent et cela doivent être tout un. (vv. 59; 61; 64-67)

Such "folles amours" (v. 119) that lead to marriage produce "quelques bonnes nuits" (v. 120, variant) followed soon by "bien de mauvais jours" (v. 120). He will not relinquish his freedom for such meagre rewards as "s'attacher pour jamais aux côtés d'une femme" (v. 101) and "Perdre pour des enfants le repos de son âme" (v. 102). It is contrary to reason to cherish such slavery (v. 104).

When Eraste, who has apparently followed a similar path previously (v. 69), points out to him that even libertins such as Tircis fall into the trap, the latter replies that if he does marry it will be for a more solid and durable reason:

Si Doris me vouloit, toute laide qu'elle est,
 Je l'estimerois plus qu'Aminte et qu'Hippolyte;
 Son revenu chez moi tiendrait lieu de mérite:
 La laideur est trop belle étant teinte en argent.
 Et tu ne peux trouver de si douces caresses
 Dont le goût dure autant que celui des richesses.

(vv. 112-114; 124, variant v. 2; 125-126)

"Ce sont là propos ordinaires chez ceux qui vivent dans les nuages, et

se prennent pour des esprits réalistes."¹⁶ As we soon see, confirming this statement by A. Adam and the accuracy of Eraste's warning, Tircis, upon seeing Mélite for the first time, is completely dazzled and falls in love. Pretending to be a loyal friend, he keeps this new development from Eraste and promises that he will write a poem about Eraste's love which will not contain any of his own sentiments. Once alone, however, a few of the words which he utters are disquieting and even unscrupulous:

En matière d'amour rien n'oblige à tenir,
Et les meilleurs amis, lorsque son feu les presse
Font bientôt vanité d'oublier leur promesse. (vv. 248-250)

In the terms of the play, this is in fact an accepted principle in matters of love. When Eraste presents himself to Mélite to seek forgiveness for his crime, she rules: "En fait d'amour la fraude est légitime" (v. 1743), reminding the reader that in the case of Tircis, his adoption of this rule demonstrated the extent to which love has encroached upon his former code; his values have changed and loyalty to love is now of prime importance.

Weakly Tircis attempts to continue a worldly façade, but his love is too strong and evident, as Cloris is the first to notice: ". . . c'est contre ton gré que l'amour te surmonte" (v. 532). There is a conflict established here between love and will, not the will to remain true to his former beliefs, but that of keeping up the appearance of loyalty to them against the desire to express his newfound

¹⁶Adam, op. cit., I, 481.

feelings. But the quotation shows that this last wish is winning out and we shall soon see will working with love towards the furtherance of the latter. Tircis also says to his sister that he does not want to betray his friendship with Eraste; but this too is a feint for his real fear is that Eraste's wealth will be an insurmountable obstacle in his effort to gain Mélite's love, and he wishes to avoid the ridicule that a premature claim to her affection would bring upon him. Reassured by his sister that Eraste has no hold on Mélite, Tircis loses what scruples he might have had, now seeing the way clear to approach Mélite, the object of his passion.

Equally as vigorously as he has denied its possibility, he defends his new-found love for Mélite in Act III, scene 2, where Philandre, having received the false letters, calls into doubt Mélite's love for Tircis. Before these letters are revealed, nothing that Philandre says can shake Tircis' belief in Mélite, for he has "sa parole et sa foi" (v. 809). As with Mélite the promise suffices. However, once the letters are produced, Tircis shows remarkable gullibility and lack of presence of mind in failing to have the slightest doubt as to their origin. The only justification possible, which we suspect here and which we are given later, is that love blinded him: "Si j'eusse moins aimé, j'eusse été moins sensible" (v. 1650, variant v. 3). This trait shows the overwhelming power of love on Tircis, creating a sharp contrast with the proponent of reason we met in Act I, scene 1 ("La raison en tous lieux est également forte" [v. 129]), and is emphasized by Tircis' monologue (Act III, scene 3). So enraged is he at being deceived by Mélite and supplanted by the cowardly and fickle

Philandre that he loses control of his reason: "Mais que par ces transports ma raison est surprise" (v. 882, variant v. 6). His distress causes him to become confused and disillusioned which in turn lead him to despair. His passion has so completely possessed him that the only solution to his suffering which he can conceive is death: "Mon âme par dépit, tâche d'abandonner / Un corps que sa raison sut si mal gouverner" (v. 920, variant vv. 6-7). Once Cloris is aware of what has happened she tries to bring her brother back to his senses: "Apprends aussi de moi que ta raison s'égare" (v. 955), but to no avail. Her "fou de frère" (v. 1010) is too obsessed to regain his judgement and to assess reasonably his position. Thus, like Mélite, Tircis illustrates a passionate attitude to love.

A similar reaction is more strongly exemplified by Eraste. When the play opens, Eraste is under the spell of love and recognizes its power over him:

Un seul de ses regards me séduit et me pipe,
Et d'un tel ascendant maîtrise ma raison,
Que je chéris mon mal, et fuis ma guérison.

(v. 9, variant v. 1; v. 11, variant vv. 1-2)

Lacking the self-control necessary to extricate himself from this hopeless situation, he unreasonably applies his will (here, subservient to passion)¹⁷ to the pursuit of Mélite in the knowledge that "si je suis

¹⁷ Paul Bénichou, in his Morales du grand siècle (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 25, explains that will, in the Cornelian hero, is not only exercised in the repression of certain passions, but also in the pursuit of passions, and that will sometimes actually means "le désir lui-même en tant qu'il porte à l'action".

un fou, j'ai bien raison de l'être" (v. 134). The word "fou" is prophetic, for upon learning that he has been supplanted by Tircis as Mélite's lover, he becomes jealous to the point of anger and distraction:

. . . hélas, où me réduit
Ce mouvement bouillant dont l'ardeur me séduit!
Quel transport dérégulé! . . . (v. 445, variant vv. 15-17)

He has momentarily lost grip of his self-control. However, having recovered his composure he resorts to the subterfuge of false letters. His determination and perseverance in regaining and advancing his former position with Mélite show the degree to which his passion controls him. So possessed is he by it that, when he learns that he has caused the death of Mélite, he becomes raving mad. This device is commonplace in plays of the period,¹⁸ but it nevertheless serves to illustrate the ascendancy of love. When the nurse is in the process of rehabilitating him, he realizes that, alone, his reason is powerless to restore him to his former self.

All three characters we have studied began by having a pragmatic attitude (though differing in degree and quality) towards the relationship between man and woman, as well as demonstrating self-control and relative independence of thought and action. Likewise, their positions were completely altered by the advent of love which gradually modified their ability to reason and their will-power, directing their application solely to the possession of the object of their desires, even-

¹⁸Adam, op. cit., I, 478-479.

tually subjugating them altogether. Confronted by this force, human reason, in their case, proved to be impotent. Love became so possessive and pervasive that if an obstacle prevented its fulfilment the characters could hardly deal with the situation and reacted by swooning, seeking death or becoming mad. They were incapable of looking at the problem calmly in order to seek a reasonable solution. In each case an outside agent resolved the difficulty: Lisis for Tircis and Mélite, and the nurse for Eraste. Passionate though these characters become, their portrayal remains within the limits of reality to the extent that they typify young people who are inexperienced in affairs of the heart and who, encountering true love for the first time, are overwhelmed by its potency. The importance given to amour-passion will not diminish in Corneille's tragic works. However, amour-passion will rarely become the dominating sentiment of the principal characters. Though giving it a rôle in the tragedies, Corneille will counteract its force by sustaining the heroic with elements other than sentimental.

If we return to Mélite and, this time, consider two other characters, namely Cloris and Philandre, we notice that they are of quite a different sort. When we first meet them (Act I, scene 4) they are engaged in gentle amorous badinage, light-hearted and happy in their mutual love, for they are about to be married. They are apparently deeply involved with one another; this time each possesses the object desired and with the proximity of marriage no obstacle is foreseen. But, as P. J. Yarrow has already noted,¹⁹ it is this seemingly sincere

¹⁹ Corneille (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 63.

love which proves hollow. Philandre, the champion of fidelity--"Ta beauté te répond de ma persévérance, / Et ma foi qui t'en donne une entière assurance" (vv. 269-270)--is in fact fickle, for, believing that Mélite loves him, he deserts Cloris. His motives are not of the highest order: in Act II, scene 6, Eraste provides Philandre with reasons for loving Mélite rather than Cloris: her beauty (v. 621) and her wealth (v. 631). Philandre of course protests and feigns continuing loyalty, but Eraste is quick to see this sham: "Il a beau déguiser, il a goûté l'amorce" (v. 647). There is no conflict in Philandre's mind; self-interest prevails without a struggle. He can say that

. . . Mélite ainsi qu'une Déesse
Est de tous nos desirs souveraine maîtresse,
Dispose de nos coeurs, force nos volontés, (vv. 755-757)

but if another woman more beautiful and rich than Mélite came along, the latter's power over his will would quickly disappear and he would jilt her too. All his expressions of tenderness were but empty words; he did not love Cloris. It is tempting to say that Philandre is only putting into effect the precepts uttered earlier by Tircis, but this is not the case. Philandre is not interested in the game of love for its own sake, he is actually looking for a partner in marriage. And while Tircis said that he would marry for money, it was only under the condition that he must marry, and this is not at all Philandre's situation.

Philandre's selfishness is confirmed in Act V, scene 3. Having discovered that the letters were false and that Mélite still loves

Tircis, he attempts to regain Cloris' favours. Unable to do so he pours out threats against the one to whom he had sworn eternal love:

Adieu; je ne veux plus avoir d'autre espérance,
Sinon qu'un jour le ciel te fera ressentir
De tant de cruautés le juste repentir. (vv. 1592-1594)

These are empty words of love followed by equally empty words of vengeance.

Cloris is, of all the characters in the play, eventually the one that foreshadows the most, in certain respects, some of the characters found in the tragedies of Corneille, such as Rodrigue (in Le Cid) and Horace (in Horace), for, like them, she is not dominated by her love, and her reason continues to function. Her personality develops in a manner opposite to those of the first three characters studied. When she first appears, there are already indications that this development will take place. For example, flattery does not seem to impress her:

Une fausse louange est un blâme secret:
Epargne-moi de grâce, et songe, plus discret,
Qu'étant belle à tes yeux, plus outre je n'aspire.

(v. 283; v. 284, variant vv. 1-2)

Also, she recognizes that she is not perfect (v. 265, variant v. 2) and that Philandre has faults too (v. 298), demonstrating, as well, enough self-assurance to believe that her attractions are sufficient to sustain Philandre's interest: "J'ai trop de vanité pour croire que Philandre / Trouve encore après moi qui puisse le surprendre." (vv. 337-338). But it is necessary to remember that the tone of these

entire scenes (Act I, scenes 4 and 5) is light-hearted and gay, that the scenes themselves are ones of happy flirtation and banter in the context of an impending marriage to which there is no apparent obstacle, qualifications which, we believe, are essential to avoid taking the previous indications too literally. Cloris' affection for Philandre does not overwhelm her, but she does love him.

In Act III, scene 5, when she discovers that her lover has betrayed her, she remains composed and assesses the situation lucidly:

Un volage me quitte, et je le quitte aussi:
 Je l'obligerois trop de m'en mettre en souci.
 Pour perdre des amants, celles qui s'en affligent
 Donnent trop d'avantage à ceux qui les négligent.

(vv. 981-984)

She will not hold him back. Mélite will soon realize that she herself has not gained and that Cloris has not lost much. Her only regret is that her brother can not look at the situation in the same light. Indeed, Cloris' rôle in relation to Tircis' love is that of confidante. We have seen that she was quick to notice that he had fallen in love and quick to discover the name of his mistress. Discerning Tircis' timidity, she encourages him, by shrewd counsel, to continue his quest for Mélite. Her first reaction to Philandre and Mélite's betrayal is to advise Tircis as to the slight value of a woman who is so flighty and so indiscriminate in the choice of a lover such as Philandre. It would be incorrect to say, with Rivaille,²⁰ that Cloris' former rela-

²⁰Op. cit., p. 121.

tionship with Philandre was only a distraction and that she leaves him without regret. She did in fact love Philandre and she does regret his disloyalty; witness her monologue in Act III, scene 5, where she says that she will seek vengeance both on her former lover and on Mélite by showing the latter the letters, demonstrating thereby Philandre's indiscretion in not guarding them more dearly. In addition she clearly states later that she loved Philandre too much (v. 1570). Contrary to what Rivaille says, it would be accurate to speak of Cloris' rationality in not allowing herself to be overcome and possessed by love, and of her courage in directly facing such a difficult situation. She emerges from her experience a wiser person:

Ta sottise m'instruit, et par là je vois bien
 Qu'un visage commun, et fait comme le mien,
 N'a point assez d'appas, ni de chaîne assez forte,
 Pour tenir en devoir un homme de ta sorte. (vv. 1577-1580)

When Mélite and Tircis attempt to reconcile Philandre and Cloris, the latter objects: "Pour la première fois, il me dupe qui veut, / Mais pour une seconde, il m'attrape qui peut" (vv. 1681-1682). Although she was in love at the beginning, she now refuses to expose herself to deceit by one she already knows to be fickle. Unlike Tircis and Mélite she has shown total self-control in not allowing her love to blind her and to keep her from foreseeing the possible dangers inherent in continuing her relationship with Philandre.

She is true to this principle to the end despite Corneille's desire to have this play end happily in the marriage of Eraste and Cloris as well as that of Mélite and Tircis. Her brother's consent to

this marriage is not enough: "On me donnera bien le loisir que j'y pense" (v. 1788), she says, for, after her experience with Philandre, she will not rush headlong into marriage with someone she knows even less, demonstrating thereby an individuality and an independence not found in the other major characters.

Certainly, reason has been depicted predominantly as weak in this play. No sooner does a character boast of its universal force than he succumbs to a stronger power. Equally impotent is will-power directed first towards the application of reasonable principles, then, along with reason, re-channelled towards the pursuit of the more potent interest (and it is precisely this aspect that Corneille will develop at length in his tragedies), and finally crushed altogether. The one exception is, of course, Cloris in whom reason, will, courage and independence triumph; it is a qualified triumph though, because she was undoubtedly not as thoroughly smitten in the first place as the other characters. But the character of Cloris is a composite one which looks ahead to the tragedies: she possesses some of the passion found in *Mélite* and a greater control of reason than the Infante of *Le Cid*. As in the case of Chimène (*Le Cid*), Corneille will try to strike a balance of these two elements, elements which are too categorically opposed in this comedy.

Even Cloris, however, is not totally independent, for she, like *Mélite*, is subject to parental authority which, if not a predominant element in this play as it will be in later plays, nevertheless looms in the background. It is not sufficient for the young lovers to decide to marry; they must have parental consent. In order to marry

Philandre, it was necessary for Cloris to obtain Tircis' permission (v. 327), Tircis being the substitute parent; similarly, she must do so again at the end of the play (v. 1771) concerning her suggested marriage to Eraste. And Mélite too must seek approval from her mother to marry Tircis. The parent has complete authority in this matter as Tircis says to his sister who is urging him to pursue his suit: "Mais il faut redouter une mère . . . / Sa puissance pourtant sur elle est absolue" (v. 556, variant vv. 3-4). But it is not only an absolute rule where the parent dictates to the offspring; it is also a question of the latter's obedience to the parent. As we have just seen Cloris fulfills this duty twice in the course of the play, and she does so willingly: "Tu sais qu'en tel sujet ce fut toujours de toi / Que mon affection voulut prendre la loi" (vv. 1773-1774). It is Mélite's duty to accept as spouse the man chosen by her mother, a duty to which a temporary exception is made in the case of Tircis:

Je dois tout à ma mère, et pour tout autre amant
 Je voudrois tout remettre à son commandement;
 Mais attendre pour toi l'effet de sa puissance,
 Sans te rien témoigner que par obéissance,
 Tircis, ce seroit trop: tes rares qualités
 Dispensent mon devoir de ces formalités. (vv. 713-718)

In expressing her love to Tircis before seeking her mother's acquiescence, Mélite transgresses the rule, but only temporarily, for she intends to obtain permission. Later (Act IV, scene 2), the nurse succinctly reminds Mélite of the consequences of disobeying her mother: "Si ta mère le sait" (v. 1149).

Unlike the tyrannical parents of tradition, Tircis and the mother

of Mélite are indulgent, especially the former:

Tu sais bien que jamais je ne te fus contraire
 j'y consens
 Bien sûr que mon avis s'accommode à ton sens.

(vv. 1772; 1777-1778)

The latter, however, does not accede so readily. This does not mean that she is not an excellent mother, for she is in fact looking for the best possible husband for her daughter. Unlike Mélite, who is strongly influenced by love, she can look at the prospect more objectively, this trait making her appear to be a "mère obstinée" (v. 1643). Although she wants Mélite to marry well, she also considers her daughter's happiness and preferences; thus she does not just fully exercise her parental power, but is also influenced by her parental concern and even love. Concerning the possible union of Mélite and Eraste, Cloris says to Tircis:

Crois que déjà l'affaire en seroit résolue,
 Et qu'il auroit de quoi se contenter,
 Si sa mère étoit femme à la violenter. (vv. 560-562)

It was feared that Mélite's mother would reject Tircis' suit because he was not as rich as Eraste.²¹ But she is open to pity and can not bear to see her daughter suffer:

. . . à force de pleurs
 Mon amour et mes soins, aidés de mes douleurs,

²¹ Georges Couton, op. cit., p. 16, correctly observes that, already in this play, "le thème de la mal mariée s'esquisse: il tiendra une large place dans le théâtre cornélien".

Ont fléchi la rigueur d'une mère obstinée,
Et gagné cet aveu qui fait notre hyménée. (vv. 1641-1644)

Realizing the value of love as well as the importance of material assets for the well-being of a household, she provides a balanced view of marriage and a check to the possible blindness of her daughter's love. It is the rôle of the parent concerned with the welfare of his child, a rôle that Corneille will expand (for example, in L'Illusion comique, Le Cid, Horace), and where the child's actions reflect the teachings of the parent.

The nurse, ancestor of Corneille's suivantes and gouvernantes, an intermediary between mother and daughter, presents the material side of this balanced viewpoint, but in a cynical fashion similar to that of Tircis at the beginning of the play. As we have seen, wealth and social standing are her main concern with regard to Mélite's marriage. When the latter shows a preference for Tircis over Eraste, the nurse reprimands her for putting mérite and vertu above her own criteria, thus satisfying what Corneille calls "cette démangeaison qu'Horace attribue aux vieilles gens de faire des leçons aux jeunes".²² She looks upon Eraste, who fulfills her prerequisites, as a sort of protégé. It is thanks to her care and attention that he regains his sanity. The scheming nurse, in so doing, has an ulterior motive: she has not given up the idea of a union between Eraste and Mélite, for when she brings the two together again her intention is not that Eraste seek forgiveness for his crime, but rather that he duel with Tircis for

²²M.-L., p. 19.

the right to Mélite:

Vois toi-même un rival qui, la main à l'épée,
Vient quereller sa place à faux titre occupée,
Et ne peut endurer qu'on enlève son bien,
Sans l'acheter au prix de son sang ou du tien.

(v. 1707, variant vv. 9-12)

Although a comic character, there is always a note of bitterness in what she says. Here she is seeking, through Eraste, revenge on Tircis who has scuttled her plans for Mélite, thereby indeed betraying the one she is to serve. Eraste's confession and the ensuing pardon given him by the two lovers once again destroy her strategy. Never at a loss, the match-maker proposes that Eraste marry Cloris (v. 1951), to which suggestion Cloris intimates she will ultimately give her consent. Despite the success of her last scheme, the nurse is not immune from the vengeful banter of Tircis who tells her to give herself to Philandre (v. 1808). Offended at being linked with this cowardly and fickle character,²³ the nurse launches into a diatribe against the young lovers. Realizing that the latter have ignored her and gone, her invective turns to vengeance: "Allez, je vais vous faire à ce soir telle niche / Qu'au lieu de labourer, vous lairrez tout en friche" (v. 1819, variant vv. 1-2). Perhaps Tircis' final statement is closer

²³We agree with R. J. Nelson in his Corneille: His Heroes and Their World (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), p. 36, that this union is justified by the lack of merit of both the nurse and Philandre, and not with Lawrence E. Harvey, "The Dénouement of Mélite and the Role of the Nourrice," Modern Language Notes, LXXI (March 1956), 200-203, for whom the nurse and Philandre are excluded from the happy ending of the other main characters because of the former's false loves. Moreover, as we have seen, Eraste and Cloris are not on the same level as Mélite and Tircis.

to the truth than he realizes, for Philandre's last words were also vengeful (vv. 1597-1598; 1599, variant v. 1). Whereas we feel that his words are but empty threats, those of the nurse end the play on a sinister note, for we know of her ingenuity and of her basically cynical and unscrupulous character, whose bitterness we will again meet in her more noble counterpart in La Suivante.

The two other auxiliary characters, Lisis and Cliton, are not mere utilities; although they are not developed to any extent, they do have some personality. Lisis, having seen Tircis' despondency, shows himself a real friend, for he apparently takes it upon himself to find out what Mélite's true feeling is for Tircis by announcing that the latter is dead (vv. 1223-1231). As we have seen by Mélite's reaction, he plays his rôle perfectly. And later, in Act IV, scene 10, he shows himself to be kind, helpful, gay and witty.

It is through Cliton, a neighbour of Mélite, that Eraste conveys the false letters to Philandre. We learn from Eraste that "pour n'être qu'un maraud, il est assez subtil" (v. 449, variant v. 31). Cliton's ingenuity is assisted by his unscrupulousness, for he is one of these "âmes du commun" (v. 586) who give their services and loyalty to whoever gives the most money, and "Quand ils sont éblouis de ce traître métal, / Ils ne distinguent plus le bien d'avec le mal" (v. 586, variant vv. 4-5). If we do not sympathize with this piece of trickery, we do find him sympathetic when he discovers the results of Eraste's "fourbe maudite, / Dont je fus à regret le damnable instrument" (vv. 1256-1257).

In studying Mélite, it becomes evident that Corneille is pres-

enting characters with two major, and after all in the context of the time, traditional values: wealth and love, for in the "art de conclure les mariages, s'il importe d'unir les coeurs, il ne faut pas oublier d'assortir les fortunes".²⁴ Later plays will show evolution of values. The characters in this play value wealth and all the benefits that are derived from it: security, social position, freedom to indulge more easily in desired pleasures. Cliton will serve whoever gives him the most money. The nurse extols the virtues of Eraste's wealth to her pupil whose finances are not wanting. Nor is Mélite's mother insensitive to the benefits it can bring her daughter. Philandre jilts Cloris in part for Mélite's riches. And Tircis will initially marry only for money.

Riches are indeed powerful, for they make marriage bearable, provide stability and comfort, furnish Eraste with the means to obtain the help of Cliton in separating Tircis and Mélite, but can also be an apparently insurmountable barrier as in the case of Tircis. Appreciated by all and coveted by the unprivileged, affluence is closely linked with love in that once the lover has acquired it or has been reassured that it is no longer an obstacle, he can concern himself with securing another possession, that is, the object of his love. Concerning Mélite, Eraste says that "le souverain bien n'est qu'à la posséder" (v. 72) while later Tircis, having received assurances of Mélite's love for him, refers to himself as "possesseur" (v. 776). Although in this case the concept of possession of a loved one is as

²⁴Couton, op. cit., p. 15.

physical and materialistic as that of possession of wealth, the principle is elevated by two factors: the higher attributes of the object (here we agree with Doubrovsky)²⁵ and the fact that love is reciprocal. We have seen the rôle that mérite plays in Mélite's opinion of Tircis, and at the end of his sonnet Tircis shows that he too uses this criterion: "Elle a tout le mérite" (v. 494). Eraste also is a man of some merit, for does not the nurse say that Tircis is "Son ami plus intime" (v. 1116, variant v. 3)? However, during the play, Eraste's jealousy and its effects demean him, but at the end, he is pardoned and this restores him to his proper place, which evidently is not on the same level as that of Tircis or Mélite, for he is coupled with Cloris. These qualities and faults are related to the idea of générosité,²⁶ an idea which is certainly suggested in this play but which Corneille has not yet systematized. In keeping with this concept then, if Tircis has merit so will his sister Cloris because of their blood relationship. And the coupling of Cloris and Eraste at the end of the play is a just one, for she has been found wanting in her readiness to accept the suit of Philandre and also in her jealousy (though less offensive than Eraste's) towards Mélite.

Philandre has little, if any, merit. He is fickle, opportunistic, self-centered. Moreover, he is a coward, a miles gloriosus, a prefig-

²⁵Op. cit., p. 40.

²⁶Générosité is first of all found, generally speaking, in those of noble birth. The généreux serves his king well (when he himself is not a king), and does not debase himself in any way. He also possesses certain qualities, such as merit, courage, magnanimity, contempt for death, controlled ambition, constancy, and self-control.

uration of Matamore in L'illusion comique. When he is confronted with the threat of a duel by Tircis, he quickly evades the situation by empty boasts, and flees. He does not deserve Méliste or Cloris, and proves unworthy of being placed on the same level with either Tircis (who does not shun an honourable duel) or Eraste (who demonstrates courage though in madness). Philandre and the basely materialistic nurse are worthy of one another as Tircis' final words indicate. Merit, then, plays a major rôle in the choice of partners and serves to elevate the concept of possession as applied to the characters.

Another element which heightens this principle is the notion of reciprocal love. If Tircis calls himself possessor of Méliste, he is also aware that Méliste possesses him, a situation which he gladly accepts. Méliste and Tircis have exchanged promises, and each has utmost faith that the other is sincere and will not break the pact. This confidence in the other ennobles both the characters themselves as well as the idea of possession. It might appear somewhat inconsistent, however, that Tircis is entirely content with this state and does not even question what he once considered a loss of freedom. But Nelson rightly justifies this by saying that before Tircis had met Méliste, he had not met his match.²⁷ The problem of freedom within the context of mutual love has not yet entered the Cornelian play. The subject is broached however when love is not mutual. For example, from the very beginning of the play Eraste demonstrates a desire for freedom from Méliste's unwitting power:

²⁷Op. cit., p. 33.

Et je ménage en vain dans un éloignement
 Un peu de liberté pour mon ressentiment,
 Un seul de ses regards l'étouffe et le dissipe.

(vv. 7-8; 9, variant v. 1)

Lacking self-control as he does and clinging unreasonably to a thread of hope, he gives in to his passion rather than master it. Tircis can boast that "Un visage jamais ne m'auroit arrêté / S'il falloit que l'amour fût tout de mon côté" (vv. 513-514), as long as he can hope that Mélite will love him. But his reaction to the apparent breakdown of their reciprocal love is, like that of Mélite, the same as Eraste's. Philandre, haughtily accommodating, says that, because he now loves Mélite, Cloris "est en liberté de faire un autre choix" (v. 750). The question of freedom in love here does not really exist because he did not love Cloris. There is a hint of it, however, in Cloris' behaviour, but only a hint, for her love was not as intense as that of the other characters.

The existence of a supernatural power, a providential being, is suggested, one who at times appears to limit the freedom of the characters. At the end of the play Mélite says to Eraste:

Voyez comme le ciel a de secrets ressorts
 Pour se faire obéir malgré nos vains efforts:
 Votre fourbe, inventée à dessein de nous nuire,
 Avance nos amours au lieu de les détruire. (vv. 1729-1732)

This same idea of obedience to a superior being appears in the first scene of Act II where Eraste soliloquizes on the disloyalty of Tircis and its cause:

Mais hélas! qui pourroit gauchir sa destinée?
 Son immuable loi dans le ciel burinée
 Nous fait si bien courir après notre malheur,

(v. 372, variant vv. 2-4)

and later during Eraste's madness:

Les Dieux à mes forfaits ont dénoncé la guerre;
 Leur foudre décoché vient de fendre la terre,
 Et pour leur obéir son sein me recevant
 M'engloutit (vv. 1307-1310)

Philandre is also aware of this power. When Eraste attempts to persuade him to change allegiance from Cloris to Mélite, Philandre realizes that the consequence would be that "J'en serois mal voulu des hommes et des Dieux" (v. 629). Having decided to do so anyway, he encounters a series of problems which, in the edition of 1644, eventually lead him to confirm what he had said earlier to Eraste: "On diroit que le Ciel, ami de l'équité, / Prend le soin de punir mon infidélité" (v. 1010, variant v. 72). Remembering what the will of the gods had held for him, he wishes the same on the unforgiving Cloris (vv. 1591-1594).

That the characters acknowledge the presence of this limiting force is certain, but it plays a very minor rôle in this play, as it will in Corneille's future comedies. At most we have, here, an element which will take on greater importance in a tragi-comic context, such as Clitandre, and in the tragedies.²⁸

From material possession, then, we pass to possession of others,

²⁸For the latter, see Stegmann, L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 280-334.

the concept ennobled by the notion of merit in the choice of a lover and by confidence of the one in the sincerity and constancy of the other's promise. These elements along with the suggestions of the need for self-control and freedom foreshadow Corneille's later preoccupation with what has been called an ethic of générosité²⁹ which, as we have mentioned, has not, in this play, been presented in any systematic or complete manner.

Another indication of future Cornelian concern may be seen in the element of pathos present in this play, for here already

le rire de l'amour s'altère. . . . A l'allure de danse du premier acte, à son libre et gracieux badinage succèdent l'amertume, la violence, le deuil. Soudain tout va à l'extrême. L'amour engage si avant les êtres qu'une fois unis ils préfèrent mourir plutôt qu'être séparés.³⁰

Many instances in the play excite the spectator to sadness or pity, but these are nearly always attenuated. Tircis' anger at Philandre erupts and he provokes him to duel. But the effect is immediately offset by Philandre's attempt at avoiding this encounter through boastful talk and, as this does not suffice, he runs away. The dramatic scene, in which Lisis announces the death of Tircis causing Mélite to faint, is short and followed by much fuss around Mélite who is eventually carried off. The extent of Eraste's remorse and the despairing cries which it draws from him undoubtedly move the spectator:

²⁹Ibid., p. 480.

³⁰Nadal, op. cit., p. 80.

Dis que j'ai violé les deux lois les plus saintes,
 Qui nous rendent heureux par leurs douces contraintes;
 Dis que j'ai corrompu, dis que j'ai suborné,
 Falsifié, trahi, séduit, assassiné. (vv. 1279-1282)

Moving too is the sight of Eraste suffering mental anguish as he becomes confused and begins to have hallucinations:

. . . Mais d'où vient que tout mon corps chancelle?
 Quel murmure confus! et qu'entends-je hurler?
 Que de pointes de feu se perdent parmi l'air! (vv. 1304-1306)

This level however is not maintained and deteriorates quickly into buffoonery, Eraste's visions becoming ridiculous and extravagant. Once again the pathetic effect has been weakened by the proximity of the comic.

An exception is found in the length of Tircis' despair which consists of a soliloquy of ninety-one lines (III, 3) followed by a scene (III, 4) with his sister, Cloris. He does not know what to believe: did Mélite break her promise? No, she could not have been such a hypocrite. Or could she? His mind is troubled, he is angry, confused and finally, in despair, decides to kill himself. The arrival of Cloris and her reasonable reaction alleviate somewhat the effect of the preceding scene, but Tircis is not to be distracted from his fatal decision. That the spectator knows that the cause of Tircis' suffering lies in Eraste's deceit in no way detracts (as Rivaille would have it)³¹ from the fact that he is suffering and that it is a pathetic scene which lasts perhaps a little longer than it should.

³¹Op. cit., p. 180.

Only the spectator's knowledge of the fact that it is a comedy which he is seeing might mitigate the pathetic effect.

Pathos, then, plays a significant part in this play. However, when it threatens to become too strong Corneille offsets it by following it with comic effects that dissipate its intensity. The one instance where he postpones doing so indicates at least an interest in the tragic possibilities of such situations, situations which at a later date and in a different genre he will develop.

Méliste, then, marks the point of departure for Corneille's adventure in the theatre. It is not a perfect beginning, for the action is not well-developed, our author having unfortunately concentrated only on parts of the story, apparently lacking interest in others, thus omitting certain details necessary for smooth continuity. As we have seen, the interest of the play depends mainly on what the characters say rather than what they do. And their main preoccupation is love and how it affects them. In the main, love dominates them to the extent that it destroys their original pragmatic approach, causing them to lose self-control and making of them impassioned characters. This reaction, however, finds its opposite in Cloris, in whom reason and self-control win out. But the contrast is too sharp between these two reactions and will need to be rendered more subtly.

In connection with this main theme of love, we find that of merit upon which the first, at least in part, depends. For merit is that characteristic which, besides indicating worthiness in general, also causes one or makes one worthy to be loved. But this theme leads to a third, which is only suggested in this play, namely that of générosité:

this is especially evident at the end of the play where the characters are paired according to an apparent hierarchy based on merit. Also related to générosité is the element of freedom which is only broached here. One of the qualities of the généreux is self-control, and the latter implies freedom. We have seen, however, that there exists a desire for freedom in those characters who become possessed by love and eventually lose self-control. The matter is not resolved in the one exception, Cloris, for she was not adequately tested. Corneille presents the problem in this play, but does not yet supply an answer.

Such are the most promising elements in this play, elements with which Corneille will experiment, which he will polish, work and re-work, and eventually lead to Le Cid.

CHAPTER III

CLITANDRE

Clitandre is a tragi-comedy with all the typical elements of that genre: a prison, a fierce jailer, an ambush, deaths, disguises, etc. We include it in a study of Corneille's comedies because, despite these differences, there are many basic similarities to the comedies which surround it; because, as we shall see in this chapter, Clitandre does not indicate, on the part of the playwright, any significant theories or ideas not already present in the comedies, but rather contributes to the linear development of Corneille's theatre from Mélite to L'Illusion comique.¹

There exists a tradition which makes of Clitandre an inextricably complex play, a tradition begun by Corneille himself in the preface to this play where he confesses that "ceux qui n'ayant vu représenter Clitandre qu'une fois, ne le comprendront pas nettement, seront fort excusables".²

Moreover the author further contributes to this impression by adding an unnecessarily long and detailed Argument which R. L. Wagner

¹Indeed, if Gustave Charlier's suggestion (in "La Clef de Clitandre," Publications de l'académie royale de langue et littérature françaises de Belgique, III (1924), 5-21) that Corneille reworked the play, at the instigation of Longueville, in order to make of it an appeal to the king to reconsider the fate of marshal Louis de Marillac is valid, then many of the differences between Clitandre and the comedies are purely accidental. This theory would also explain the play's structural faults. Antoine Adam (op. cit., I, 486) refutes this argument by replying that these flaws can be just as easily explained "par la gaucherie d'un débutant".

²M.-L., I, 261-262.

has condensed to only eight lines.³ It appears that Corneille deliberately set out to make the play seem so complex in order to satisfy the critics of Mérite: "Ceux qui ont blâmé l'autre [Mélite] de peu d'effets auront ici de quoi se satisfaire".⁴

As we shall now see in a description of the action, the play is complex and contains many "effets", but is not incomprehensible. From the beginning we become aware that Corneille has already begun to weave the "fourbe" which will separate the lovers.⁵ Caliste, lady-in-waiting to the queen, fears that her lover, Rosidor, the king's favourite, is going to meet a new love in secrecy and she intends to follow him. We soon learn that this is only a trick on the part of Dorise, another lady-in-waiting. The latter aims to lure Caliste into the woods in order to kill her, thus eliminating her rival for the love of Rosidor. Moreover, when Rosidor enters we discover that he is on his way to fight a duel with Clitandre, favourite of the king's son, for the hand of Caliste. Again, we are shortly informed that this is a plot concocted by Pymante, who has forged a letter from Clitandre, in order to attract Rosidor into the forest to murder him, thereby disposing of the obstacle to his suit of Dorise. Here, then, we have two plots developing, that of Caliste and Rosidor, and that of Dorise and Pymante. And we can also see the beginning of a third one with

³In a footnote of his edition of Pierre Corneille, Clitandre (Genève: Droz, 1949), p. 11.

⁴M.-L., I, 261.

⁵See above, chap. I, p. 14.

Clitandre and the fraudulent letter. We are given, as well, the points of contact between these three story lines. Already at the very beginning, the sets of relationship between Caliste and Rosidor, and between Pymante and Dorise have broken down. The interest lies, therefore, in how and whether they will be reconstituted. Also, the setting is prepared for the many "effets" which Corneille mentioned.

The moment Dorise is about to kill Caliste with a sword, Rosidor enters defending himself against three disguised men, one of whom is Pymante. Rosidor kills one of them, breaks his sword, then, seizing the one which Dorise holds, kills another (both victims being servants of Clitandre), whereupon Pymante flees. In the meantime, Dorise has also fled and Caliste has fainted. Eventually, the latter wakes and takes care of her lover's wounds. Pymante, seeing a cave, throws his mask and sword into it but keeps the rest of his disguise in order to avoid arrest. Clitandre, however, is arrested and imprisoned without being informed of the reasons. Here, finally, is the third plot, that which gives the play its name. At this point, it is very difficult to know just where the main interest of the play lies: is it with Caliste and Rosidor? with Dorise and Pymante? with Clitandre? The remainder of the play is of little help in determining this.

Meanwhile, Dorise too has disguised herself and, meeting Pymante, asks for shelter. They recognize one another and Pymante, intending to force his attentions on her, carries her off to a cave. She defends herself by piercing one of his eyes with a hairpin and flees with Pymante in pursuit.

The Prince, hunting in the same forest, is caught in a storm, the

violence of which causes his retinue to seek shelter, leaving him alone and on foot, his horse having been killed by a bolt of lightning.⁶ After the storm, the Prince comes upon Pymante, who is about to kill Dorise, and fights with him until she trips Pymante, enabling the Prince to capture him. Dorise then tells her benefactor all that has taken place. They hurry back to the court to save Clitandre who is freed from prison and is invited by the King to marry Dorise who has been pardoned because she helped the Prince. Thus, a new group, Dorise-Clitandre, is formed; that of Caliste-Rosidor is reconstituted; and Pymante will be tried for his crimes.

From this description, we can conclude that Corneille must have indeed satisfied his critics' thirst for "effets". Moreover, he intensified them through the use of two devices. First, instead of having a messenger relate events which would not have been presented on stage, he has, where possible, set the events themselves before our eyes, and as a result unity of place, in the strict sense, is lacking, but no more than it was in Méliste. Secondly, having been made aware of the rule of unity of time while visiting Paris to see Méliste,⁷ his use of it in Clitandre serves to concentrate these events, thus giving them greater effect and impact. The presence of the unity of time should produce the same result on the plot, but as we have seen, no

⁶Not without irony, Jean Schlumberger observes: "La tempête s'en mêle; mais tout en répandant l'épouvante, elle est assez bien élevée pour savoir ce qu'on doit aux têtes couronnées, et l'héritier du trône en est quitte pour la peur" (Plaisir à Corneille [Paris: Gallimard, 1936], p. 25).

⁷M.-L., I, 270.

main plot is distinguishable, and the combination of these two characteristics certainly helps to create the impression of complexity.

This play lacks unity of action even more than did Mélite. From two plots in the latter, there are now three: one involving Caliste and Rosidor, another Dorise and Pymante, another Clitandre. Whereas in Mélite, one of them was given greater relief, this is not the case in Clitandre where no one plot dominates. Corneille himself noted, in the Examen to this play, that "pour la constitution, elle est si désordonnée, que vous avez de la peine à deviner qui sont les premiers acteurs".⁸ The plot concerning Caliste and Rosidor occupies the first act where their story ends with the termination of their peril. There remains only the acquisition of the permission of the queen to enable them to marry. In this act the rôles of Dorise and Pymante are definitely secondary; but, in the next three acts they become of primary importance, except for the periodic emergence of Clitandre, who is completely passive, the scenes taking place to a large extent in prison where he is limited to soliloquizing and conversing about his lot.

These three plots are not completely distinct from one another. There are, as noted above, certain points of contact: Dorise is loved by Pymante but loves only Rosidor; she loves him to the point of trying to kill her rival, Caliste, whom Rosidor loves; on the other hand, because Clitandre too loves Caliste, he is naturally suspected of

⁸M.-L., I, 271.

having planned the attempted assassination of Rosidor. These stories, though superficially linked, remain nevertheless separate even in the last act which is concerned only with settling the different accounts. Corneille admits in his Examen that "Tout le cinquième languit comme celui de Mélite après la conclusion des épisodes, et n'a rien de surprenant, puisque, dès le quatrième, on devine tout ce qui doit arriver" ⁹ The action surrounding Caliste and Rosidor has ended long ago and once again as in Mélite the last act completes the remaining plots and fulfills, in part at least, the convention of having the principals married at the end, even though the proposed marriage of Dorise and Clitandre is much stranger than was that of Cloris and Eraste. However, there is at least no attempt this time, even in jest, of having Pymante marry someone as was the case with Philandre.

In the exposition of Clitandre there are some improvements over that of Mélite. Because Corneille has introduced the unity of time here, when the play begins we are placed immediately into the situation. The necessity of presenting the initial stages of love-relationships has been eliminated. The various links are given without delay as we witness the development of the two deceptions. There is no sudden jolt as we pass from one plot to another as in Mélite. There remain, however, instances where this shift in plots results in an empty stage, as between the end of Act I, scene 4, where Dorise goes off to join Caliste, and scene 5 which takes place in the forest.

⁹M.-L., I, 271.

As in Mélite, the movement of the action is clumsy because of the three separate plots and because of the arrangement of the various scenes which do not all converge on the same group of events. Rivaille concludes quite rightly that, because of this, "le spectateur se trouve en présence des membres épars de trois aventures".¹⁰ In addition, the author has relied too heavily on coincidences, even though he has given some explanation to make them acceptable: the two murder attempts which take place at the same time and at the same place in a forest; again, in the same forest, the meeting of the Prince and Pymante who is at that very moment about to kill Dorise. In this respect Corneille had better results in Mélite than here, where his concern for "effets" prevails. His negligence of continuity and justification are especially noticeable in the rôle of Cléon, a gentleman of the court and a secondary character: in Act I, scene 5, Cléon suspects that the letter given to Rosidor with Clitandre's signature is spurious, but provides no explanation as to the origin of his suspicions; in Act IV, scene 5, Cléon, looking for the Prince to tell him of Clitandre's fate, seems at such a loss as to where to find him that "je crois que pour le rencontrer / Il faudroit quelque dieu qui nous le vint montrer" (v. 1187, variant vv. 21-22). This is apparently what happens, for the next time we meet him he has found the Prince, has related his information, and they are about to leave to save Clitandre. Generally, Corneille has once again attempted to justify occurrences, but, in Clitandre, in a much more tenuous way

¹⁰Op. cit., p. 143.

than in his first or subsequent plays.

The movers of the action are Dorise and Pymante, of whose motives the author more readily informs us. The action begins as a result of their desire to eliminate their respective rivals, Caliste and Rosidor, through deception and murder. To achieve their ends, Dorise lures Caliste into a forest where she has hidden the sword with which she will kill Caliste, and Pymante has sent a letter to Rosidor presumably from Clitandre demanding a duel in the same forest. It is thanks to Dorise's presence with her sword, fortuitous as it is, that Rosidor is saved and saves Caliste. Thus the first plot ends. Because of their crimes, Dorise and Pymante must resort to disguise in order to escape arrest. Again fortuitously, they meet and eventually recognize one another. Pymante seeks at first to satisfy his lust and then, when Dorise puts out one of his eyes, he seeks vengeance. During the fight between the Prince and Pymante, Dorise trips up the latter allowing the former to capture him. It is thanks to Dorise's turn of heart that her own story as well as that of Clitandre ends well, for she confesses all.

The other main characters act either defensively or passively, especially Clitandre who does nothing at all. "Tout ce qu'il y a d'actif en eux se transforme en sentiments et en pensées," says Rivaille.¹¹ There is, nevertheless, much more physical movement in this play than in Mélie: the final preparations for the ambush, Dorise's attempt to kill Caliste, the fight between Rosidor and his assailants, Rosidor's seizing of Dorise's sword, the flights of

¹¹Ibid., p. 145.

Pymante and Dorise, and the swoon of Caliste; Pymante's ridding himself of his sword and mask, the passing of a troop of archers, their search for Rosidor, their discovery of the bodies of Clitandre's two men (Géronte and Lycaste), the meeting of Pymante and Dorise, both disguised, Pymante's fear of being found out by this person and his ensuing flight; Dorise's blinding of Pymante with a hairpin and subsequent flight, Pymante's pursuit, attack and attempt at murder, the Prince's intervention, the following fight during which Dorise trips up her assailant whom the Prince captures, the arrival of royal huntsmen who lead Pymante and Dorise away. Corneille's desire to abate criticism for the lack of action in Mélite accounts for the generally frenzied pace of Clitandre.

As our study of the action has shown, there exists no central character about which all else revolves in contrast to Mélite. Reinforcing this conclusion a count of the frequency of names at the rhyme reveals that Clitandre appears five times, Caliste, Rosidor and Pymante three times each. The exceptional appearance of Dorise, seen thirteen times can be explained by the fact that, of the three plots, that of Dorise and Pymante occupies most of the play and that, within this plot, Pymante loves Dorise while the reverse is not true, accounting thus for the greater frequency of Dorise's name than of Pymante's. Once more the theme of love is important (less than in Mélite, however) as the repetition of the words amour (10 times), âme (8 times), coeur (8 times), flamme (7 times), and the couplets amour-jour (7 times) and âme-flamme (5 times) further indicate. Rivalry is marked by the use of rival (6 times), but this time we have no confrontation of moi and toi

in rhyming couplets, the reasons being that in the encounter between Caliste and Dorise there is little time for discussion, in those between Rosidor and Pymante, and Pymante and Dorise at least one party is disguised. The presence of the third plot in which Clitandre suffers an ill-deserved lot at the hand of the king expresses itself in the words roi (9 times) and innocence (9 times), the importance of the king translated in the rhyming couplet moi-roi (6 times). Meanwhile, the words vie (15 times), mort (10 times), peine (10 times), envie (9 times), supplice (9 times), mal (7 times), rage (6 times) and the couplets vie-envie (8 times), jour-secours, coeur-rigueur, mort-sort (4 times each) serve to highlight the gravity of the various situations in the play.

While the words vertu and estime still rarely appear (once and twice respectively, as in Mélite), devoir occurs three times, nevertheless too infrequent to be of any great importance. In contrast to Mélite where gloire was totally absent and mérite had some significance, the reverse is true in Clitandre: nowhere do we meet mérite while gloire turns up four times at the rhyme. The presence of raison eight times carries with it approximately the same weight as it did in the first play. The slight increase in the use of these "typically" Cornelian words results undoubtedly from the fact that the play is a romanesque tragi-comedy, and that the latter takes place traditionally on a higher plane than comedy.¹²

¹²H. C. Lancaster, The French Tragi-Comedy: its Origins and Development from 1552 to 1628 (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. xiii.

The above examination of word frequency at the rhyme leads us to expect what we may already have surmised from our investigation of the action and what we will find in our study of the characters, namely that the play deals with life, death, and love.

Caliste is in many respects Mélite's counterpart. Speaking of her, Rosidor uses such vaguely descriptive words as "beau visage" (v. 249), "belle" (v. 301, variant v. 1; v. 694, variant v. 5), "objet adorable" (v. 1349) and "beauté" (v. 1371). She is, says Clitandre, "cette fière Caliste" who "Dans ses cruels mépris incessamment persiste" (vv. 469-470), showing much the same attitude as that of Mélite towards Eraste. Her clemency towards Dorise echoes that of Mélite towards Eraste. Caliste too is a rather strict observer of proprieties, but not without a certain measure of qualified leniency. In reply to Rosidor who seeks a kiss from her, she says:

Tout beau, si quelquefois je souffre, et je pardonne
Le trop de liberté que ta flamme se donne,
C'est sous condition de n'y plus revenir.

(v. 1384, variant 30-32)

The extent of her affection for her lover manifests itself in an identical way to that of Mélite: both faint upon discovering their lover's 'death'.

In spite of these similarities, Caliste emerges as an individual quite distinct from Mélite. She is first of all of higher social rank (as are all the main characters of Clitandre), being one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting. We agree with Rivaille that "la différence

de sa condition ne se laisse guère sentir",¹³ but, however slightly, it does nevertheless make itself felt, for she does have duties to the queen which she scrupulously carries out. Moreover, her response to the demands of her station provides a contrast to that of Dorise and serves to enhance her qualities by the addition of yet another, conscientiousness.

Because Corneille began this plot very near its crisis and because he has not given us any information concerning the lives and attitudes of Caliste and Rosidor before they fell in love, we can not discern any great development in their approach to love. Rosidor, however, gives us a brief outline of their love since its inception: in Act V, scene 2, we learn that their love was instantly mutual: "J'aperçus aussitôt ta flamme que la mienne" (v. 1378); it was also timid in its expression (v. 1381); no one else knew of it, therefore no one was jealous (v. 1384); as this love increased in intensity, it became more open (v. 1384, variant v. 4) and less timid (v. 1384, variant vv. 5-6); and, with time, "l'amour s'est fait le maître" (v. 1384, variant v. 10).

As the play opens then, Caliste is already the captive of her love for Rosidor. Having been informed by Dorise that Rosidor loves another woman with whom he has a secret rendez-vous, she is torn by an internal conflict of emotions: "Ma jalouse fureur, mon dépit, mon amour / Ont troublé mon repos" (vv. 11-12). Oscillating between

¹³Op. cit., p. 123.

jealousy and love, she first accuses her lover of being disloyal and of acquiring, at her expense, "une honteuse gloire" (v. 15, variant v. 4); but she almost immediately adds: "Si j'écoute l'amour, il devient si puissant, / Qu'en dépit de Dorise il te fait innocent" (vv. 23-24). Not only does she deceive herself, but she does so voluntarily: "Ah mes yeux! . . . / Le moyen de me plaire est de me decevoir" (vv. 29 and 32). The love she bears for Rosidor makes her completely unable and even unwilling to reason her situation, to question the truth of Dorise's story. There is no reason for her to doubt the sincerity of her 'loyal' friend, but she might at least seek to establish its veracity by confronting her lover with it. The intensity of her emotions causes a definite lack of judgement on her part in this matter. In Act I, scene 2, she is given the opportunity to take the lead and enlighten herself by presenting her story to Rosidor. She apparently prefers once again to be deceived, for she remains hidden, choosing only to eavesdrop on Rosidor and Lysarque. "Je n'en puis plus douter," (v. 103) she says, her conclusion being groundless, for nothing Rosidor and Lysarque have said could confirm her suspicions. However unfounded her conclusions, she does not react passively:

. . . allons à la vengeance;
 . . .
 Pour en venir à bout il suffit de ma rage;
 D'elle j'aurai la force ainsi que le courage;
 Et déjà dépouillant tout naturel humain,
 Je laisse à ses transports à gouverner ma main.

(vv. 105, 109-112)

Apparently, Caliste will not waste her time complaining of her lot;

she will act under the spell of her passion whose force and blindness we witness here. However, it is perhaps questionable whether she will make good her threats. She has not thought it out, has not made any plan, is in too much of a hurry. Dorise shows wonderful insight when she says to Caliste: "Modère ces bouillons d'une âme colérée, / Ils sont trop violents pour être de durée" (vv. 117-118). Corneille does not allow us to see the accuracy of this statement, preferring to present as soon as possible Dorise's attempt to murder Caliste as well as Rosidor's battle. But in the latter we have an instance which lends weight to our suspicions that Caliste's love is associated with passivity: seeing Rosidor in a combat in which he is outnumbered and wounded, she faints because of her fear that Rosidor will be killed. A more reasonable reaction would have been to help him out in the hope of saving him. Her overpowering love causes her to accept her fears as fact and makes her helpless, unable to act even to preserve the object of this love.

The remainder of Caliste's rôle consists mainly of the expression of her love for Rosidor. Her chief preoccupation was and remains to secure her marriage to him.

Similarly, we have no indication of the latter's attitude towards love before meeting Caliste. Afterwards, as we have seen above,¹⁴ his view corresponds to hers. As in Mélite, the two lovers exchange promises of love ("foi" v. 1384, variant v. 14) and, in the end, this proves to be enough to make it secure. His loyalty to Caliste is

¹⁴See above, p. 63.

complete and he has absolute faith that Caliste feels the same way (an echo of Mélite): ". . . Juge mieux de ma flamme", he says to Lysarque, "On ne verra jamais que je manque de foi / A celle que j'adore et qui n'aime que moi" (v. 66; v. 67, variant vv. 1-2). When Lysarque continues to show doubt concerning his master's intended activities, Rosidor considers these suspicions unjust and insists that "Tant s'en faut que le change ait pour moi des appas" (v. 71) and dissipates his squire's skepticism by relating to him the story of Clitandre's letter.

Rosidor possesses many qualities besides this loyalty, which would have attracted Caliste. When Cléon suspects him of having duped Lysarque, the latter replies immediately: ". . . il parloit du coeur, je connois sa franchise" (v. 189), for he knows that his master ". . . est trop généreux pour si mal procéder" (v. 186, variant v. 3). Rosidor, like Tircis, is a man of honour and courage, willing to meet Clitandre to duel for the hand of Caliste. He further displays his bravery in the battle-scene (I, 9) where, alone, he confronts three opponents in a combat which foreshadows, even though remotely, the odds which, in Le Cid, Rodrigue and his followers meet in the fight with the Moors, and in Horace, that of Horace with the Curiaces. Furthermore, he is unresentful towards Clitandre (v. 697), respectful of his superiors (v. 699), lucid and fair-minded in his presentation of Clitandre's case to the king (vv. 739-742).

However, this heroic, loyal, tender and galant lover lacks one quality, namely self-control in love, for he too has given up his freedom (v. 1384, variant v. 12) to his obsession with love. Once again it

appears impossible that the two can co-exist. After the battle, Rosidor sees Caliste lying on the ground and believes that she is dead. There follows a scene in which he demonstrates the tremendous anguish he feels in the face of this loss, a scene where he does not really accept the loss of his beloved but rather tries to join her again in death. The means matter not: he asks the gods to take away his life; he then hopes that his wounds are fatal; and finally, he tries to take his own life. Again love overpowers and blinds him to reason: if this were not so, it might occur to him first of all to make sure that Caliste is dead. If she were, the thing to do then, perhaps, would be to seek vengeance on her murderers, but within the context of love he lacks lucidity. He, himself, momentarily recognizes the effect of love on him: addressing the gods, he says: "Cruels, n'abusez plus de l'absolu pouvoir / Que dessus tous mes sens l'amour vous fait avoir" (v. 258, variant vv. 14-15). The experience of love for Rosidor, as for Caliste, Mélite, and Tircis, means the loss of self-control, enslavement to fear and hope, lack of judgement and ability to reason, the concession to love of too great an importance and power.

Dorise too is the servant of her passion. Unable to resign herself to the love of Rosidor and Caliste, she applies her energies and reason to breaking up this couple and replacing Caliste. Her jealousy dictates that she lure Caliste, under false pretenses, to a remote part of a forest to kill her in order that

. . . ce Rosidor qui possède mon âme,
Cet ingrat qui t'adore et néglige ma flamme,

Que mes affections n'ont encor su gagner,
Toi morte, n'aura plus pour qui me dédaigner.

(v. 130, variant vv. 4-7)

More a woman of action than Caliste, she would have indeed killed the latter had not Rosidor snatched her sword away in order to defend himself. The failure of her plan is a turning point: having begun the play as a thoroughly passionate person, from this point on she becomes gradually more rational. The miscarriage of her stratagem provides her with the small consolation of knowing that Rosidor owes his life to her, prefiguring the satisfaction which Lyse (L'Illusion comique) will derive from having saved her lover's life for her rival. This leads her to cling briefly to the only hope that remains for her: "Il m'en est redevable, et peut être à son tour / Cette obligation produira quelque amour" (vv. 571-572). But she quickly regains her senses and realizes that, "S'il vit par ton moyen c'est pour une rivale" (v. 574) and that all she can expect from him is hatred. She clear-sightedly admits that all hope of ever acquiring Rosidor's love is gone, for "Ce péril mutuel qui conserve leurs jours / D'un contre-coup égal va croître leurs amours" (vv. 579-580). Having first of all used her reason, lucidity, and will to gain Rosidor's attention and affection, she now deploys these same resources to escape punishment, evidently an inevitable but practical pursuit. This does not mean that she loves Rosidor less, as she tells Pymante in very definite terms:

Que veux-tu? son mépris plus que ton feu m'oblige;

J'y trouve malgré moi je ne sais quel appas,
Par où l'ingrat me tue, et ne m'offense pas. (vv. 922-924)

It means simply that she no longer has any hope in this direction and that the energies spent to gratify her obsession are rechannelled towards more useful activity.

Pymante appears to be of the same sort as Dorise whom he loves. Equally jealous, he too resorts to trickery to rid himself of "Le seul qui sert d'obstacle au bonheur qui m'est dû" (v. 168). The extent of his love, like that of Dorise, is seen in his willingness to carry out murder. All his faculties are bent on winning Dorise's affection. His ruse, however, fails, but does not result in the same awakening as it does for Dorise, remaining instead on an affective level in the form of despair. Momentarily regaining his composure, he realizes that he can return to Court, for no one knows of his misdeeds. However, once he meets Dorise and recognizes her through her disguise, his passion again overcomes him:

J'en meurs déjà de joie, et mon âme ravie
Abandonne le soin du reste de ma vie.
Je ne suis plus à moi, quand je viens à penser
A quoi l'occasion me pourroit dispenser. (vv. 653-656)

Unfortunately for him, he gives his hand away, revealing that he was responsible for the attack on Rosidor. He quickly recovers and twists the truth to his own purposes: "Il est vrai, j'ai puni l'orgueil de ce barbare, / De cet heureux ingrat, si cruel envers vous" (vv. 934-935). He is ready to use any argument to obtain Dorise's love: he exhorts her to forget Rosidor since he is dead and to think only of

him who is ready to give the rest of his life to her (vv. 996-998);
 he begs her to take into consideration the extent of his love for her:

Si j'oubliai l'honneur jusques à la trahir,
 Si pour vous posséder mon esprit, tout de flamme,
 N'a rien cru de honteux, n'a rien trouvé d'infâme,
 Voyez par là, voyez l'excès de mon ardeur:
 Par cet aveuglement jugez de sa grandeur. (vv. 1008-1012)

Getting nowhere with his arguments, he tries to force his affection on Dorise who, in self-defense, puts out his eye with her hairpin. There occurs at this juncture an important change in the Cornelian perspective of love: Pymante rebels against the slavery of love: "L'amour vient d'expirer, et ses flammes éteintes / Ne t'imposeront plus leurs infâmes contraintes" (vv. 1065-1066). Pymante has apparently broken loose from the tyranny of love; his affection for Dorise ostensibly no longer controls him and one would expect that he will now regain his senses. "Remettez-vous, mes sens" (v. 1060), he says in apparent agreement with what we have just stated. However, his next words tell us that he is only substituting hatred and vengeance for love:

. . . rassure-toi ma rage;
 Reviens, mais reviens seule animer mon courage;
 Tu n'as plus à débattre avec mes passions
 L'empire souverain dessus mes actions;

 Dorise ne tient plus dedans mon souvenir
 Que ce qu'il faut de place à l'ardeur de punir.

(vv. 1060-1064; 1067-1068)

As Georges Poulet says, his revolt then "ne s'y marque encore que sous

la forme d'un amour retourné, d'un amour-haine".¹⁵ It is also not a complete revolt nor a true liberation, for it is based not on a free choice but a forced choice. In addition, the crime which he would commit is a crime passionnel stemming from jealousy and therefore love. Thus, in effect, Pymante is no less possessed by love than the other main characters. But the principle of revolt and of independent action which it implies is nevertheless introduced in this character.

Pymante's case differs from that of Cloris in that his revolt is explicit while with Cloris it is not. In fact, with the latter, we sense rather a feeling of relief than of rebellion.

Clitandre, like Eraste in Mélite, portrays the loyal, hopeful lover who perseveres despite Caliste's scorn for him. The Prince expresses surprise that Caliste's attitude has not "Rétabli ta raison ou dissipé ta flamme" (v. 478). Clitandre, quite aware of his position, displays none of the revolt we have just seen in Pymante. In fact, he admits that

Quelques charmes secrets mêlés dans ses rigueurs
 Etouffent en naissant la révolte des coeurs;
 Et le mien auprès d'elle, à quoi qu'il se dispose,
 Murmurant de son mal, en adore la cause. (vv. 479-482)

We are once again brought back to the je ne sais quoi of Mélite, this time under the guise of "charmes secrets", which overpowers the lover and prevents him from acting in accordance with his reason. Again as in Mélite, reason becomes the reason of love of which Clitandre

¹⁵ Etudes sur le temps humain (Paris: Plon, 1949), I, 90.

realizes the ineluctable force and bewildering nature: "Folles raisons d'amour, mouvements égarés, / Qu'à vous suivre mes sens se trouvent préparés!" (v. 812, variant vv. 11-12).

Is it this lucidity which, in Act V, scene 1, causes him to repudiate Caliste? We have no indication that this is so. Clitandre has not rebelled against love--at least we do not see or hear of it if he has. If he has, the struggle does not seem to have been very great. There is no doubt that Clitandre has chosen gratitude and duty towards the Prince over love for Caliste, but Corneille has unfortunately not shown us the mechanism through which it occurred. The Prince's words--"Ta résolution, un peu trop violente, / N'a pas bien consulté ta jeunesse bouillante" (vv. 1329-1330)--indicate that Clitandre has simply chosen on impulse and that his choice is probably only a temporary one. However, its importance must not be minimized: although he has not found freedom in love, he has escaped from its shackles, as has Cloris in Mélite. Moreover, he has done so in preference for what he considers a more worthy principle, duty to his Prince. This foreshadows Corneille's tenet, as he will apply it to tragedy, that the depiction of love should be relegated to a secondary position in favour of "quelque passion plus noble et plus mâle que l'amour".¹⁶

In Clitandre, then, Corneille has made important advances in the approach to love of his characters. Caliste and Rosidor continue the

¹⁶Discours de l'utilité et des parties du poème dramatique in M.-L., I, p. 24.

servitude of reason, will and judgement to the force and blindness of love seen in Mélite. With Dorise we have a counterpart to Cloris, first of all overcome by and acting solely out of love, then, once the element of hope has gone, using these same faculties for more practical purposes, but in a much more impetuous manner than Cloris. But it is in Pymante and Clitandre that development occurs: to the former, Corneille adds the principle of revolt against the slavery of love, while with Clitandre Corneille has allowed one of his characters the choice of a higher goal than love. Soon our author will attempt to bring these two elements together in one character who will revolt against the strictures of love, not to negate love, but to act and choose freely within its context and then to establish priorities which would give love a secondary position.

In this play, independence is restricted in two ways: by parental and by state authority. The word 'parental' must be qualified, for the only true parent-child relationship is that between the King and Queen on the one hand, and the Prince on the other. However, the first two royal figures also play the rôle of guardian to Rosidor and Caliste respectively. The Queen, whom we never meet and who is not as well delineated as Mélite's mother, apparently has ultimate authority over whom Caliste will marry. We learn that she holds a preference for Clitandre over Rosidor (vv. 485-486), but the only reason given for this choice is the influence of the Prince on her (v. 489). In the end she shows herself to be considerate and sympathetic in acceding to the wishes of Caliste and the King: "Aussi n'est-il plus rien qui s'oppose à nos vœux", says Caliste to Rosidor,

La Reine, qui toujours fut contraire à nos feux,
 Soit du piteux récit de nos hasards touchée,
 Soit de trop de faveur vers un traître fâchée,
 A la fin s'accommode aux volontés du Roi
 Qui d'un heureux hymen récompense ta foi.

(v. 1384, variant vv. 72-77)

The rôle of the King as parent-guardian is as sketchy as that of the Queen and more complex, for it is intertwined with that of ruler of the state: "Mais Rosidor, surpris et blessé comme il l'est, / A mon devoir de roi joint mon propre intérêt" (v. 715 and v. 716, variant). His attachment to Rosidor is such that "attaquer Rosidor, c'est se prendre à moi-même" (v. 709). Considering what measures he will take in response to the assault on his protégé, he first of all decides to help him gain the hand of Caliste by exerting his influence on the Queen: "Eh bien! je veux moi-même en parler à la Reine; / Elle se fléchira, ne t'en mets pas en peine" (vv. 685-686). Next, he seeks to punish the person responsible for the attack on Rosidor, his favourite but also his subject. All the evidence points to Clitandre, the Prince's favourite. Will the King be influenced by his son's arguments or wishes? Evidently not: "Je lui ferai sentir, à ce traître Clitandre, / Quelque part que le Prince y puisse ou veuille prendre . . ." (vv. 717-718). So blunt are his words that we may find in them a suggestion of definite partisanship for Rosidor against the Prince. But the King acts in anger (v. 737), excessive severity (v. 956, variant v. 25) and haste:

On hâte le supplice avant la fin du jour;

Le Roi, qui ne pourroit refuser sa requête [the Prince's],
Lui veut à son desçu faire couper la tête.

(v. 956, variant vv. 29-31)

The King conducts himself impetuously therefore out of fear of his son's influence on him, and this is, to say the least, a rather rash and unbecoming way to act both as father and as King.

As supreme justice of the realm, the King shows himself unworthy of his position, as we have seen, by virtue of his overly affective nature. He bases his judgement on sound evidence, but in tyrannical fashion: there exists a Council where the defendant has the opportunity to present his case; but, for Clitandre, "Qu'on l'amène au conseil, seulement pour entendre / Le genre de sa mort, et non pour se défendre" (v. 753, variant vv. 1-2). The justice he metes out is unjust because it is too emotional. Like Rosidor and Caliste who lacked reason in love, so does the King in this matter as is repeatedly indicated by such words as "l'ardeur qui vous transporte" (v. 762), "ses violents transports" (v. 775), "excès de rigueur" (v. 956, variant v. 25), "l'aigreur de son courroux" (v. 956, variant v. 33), "sa colère" (v. 956, variant v. 39; v. 1353), "haine mortelle" (v. 956, variant v. 55), "le courroux du Roi" (v. 1271). In Act V, scene 4, even the King recognizes and accuses his own lack of judgement and lucidity in a passage where Corneille states a preferable use of judicial power by a sovereign:

Et que d'incertitude en nos raisonnements!

 Jamais jusqu'à ce jour la raison en déroute

N'a conçu tant d'erreur avec si peu de doute
 J'en suis honteux, Clitandre, et mon âme confuse
 De trop de promptitude en soi-même s'accuse,
 Un roi doit se donner, quand il est irrité,
 Ou plus de retenue, ou moins d'autorité.

(vv. 1464, 1469-1470, 1473-1476)

Having learned his lesson, he sends Pymante to be judged by the Council (vv. 1531-1532) and pardons Dorise (v. 1561).

We believe that the King, in behaving thus, does so chiefly in his rôle of father-figure to Rosidor. And Caliste agrees: "Ses violents transports sont d'assurés témoins / Qu'il t'écouterait mieux s'il te chérissait moins" (vv. 775-776). Elsewhere, Rosidor refers to him as "un grand roi" (v. 1354) and Clitandre as "un si juste roi" (v. 815). This miscarriage of justice towards Clitandre appears to be only an isolated instance in the reign of the King, understandable therefore in his rôle of guardian but scarcely admissible in his rôle as sovereign.

Corneille has taken a retrograde step in his depiction of the parental rôle in Clitandre: the King and Queen are represented as generally sympathetic to Rosidor's and Caliste's wishes respectively and are readily influenced by their son, but we know too little of the Queen's motives, while those of the King are rather more emotional than rational and confused with affairs of state in such a way that we can not clearly discern which is which.

As we have seen, the Prince has considerable influence on his parents, but this forms only a part of his rôle, the other part given over to being a 'brother' to his favourite, Clitandre. He allows,

even counsels the latter to use his power on the Queen to obtain the hand of Caliste (v. 485). When the King calls Clitandre without giving reasons, the Prince fears for his friend's safety (vv. 513-514). The magnitude of this friendship manifests itself during the storm scene:

Dieux, si vous témoignez par là votre courroux,
De Clitandre ou de moi lequel menacez-vous?
La perte m'est égale . . . (vv. 1115-1117)

And when, in Act IV, scene 8, he learns of Clitandre's lot, he is overwhelmed with sorrow: "Ce funeste récit me met tout hors de moi" (v. 1272). But he then rushes to Clitandre's aid in the hope of arriving in time to save him. However, if he does not, he will seek vengeance on Rosidor: the Prince has evidently inherited his father's impetuosity. He is very conscious of his rights as prince and uses his powers to save Clitandre even to the extent of contravening the King's orders that Clitandre be kept in prison (Act V, scene 1), so great is his attachment to his friend ("Cher ami que je tiens comme un autre moi-même"--v. 1298, variant).

Thus the King and Prince demonstrate definite similarities of character: consciousness of powers; intensity of affection for their respective favourites; their common unreason and rashness in the use of their powers for the sake of friendship, which they consider justice. They are very evidently of the same family. The rôle of the Prince, as that of his father, smacks of Corneille's desire for "effets": it contains little, if any, subtlety, being rather a vehicle for extreme decisions and actions. Moreover, Corneille was dissatisfied with these two characters, saying that "le Roi et le Prince son fils y

paroissent dans un emploi fort au-dessous de leur dignité; l'un n'y est que comme juge, et l'autre comme confident de son favori".¹⁷

Of the remaining characters, we have three archers and three huntsmen who fulfill their normal functions and lack any particular characteristics; of little interest also are G ronte and Lycaste, equerry and page of Clitandre to whom they are disloyal. Of slightly more interest is Cl on, a nobleman who stumbles into a court intrigue and who, as we have seen near the beginning of this chapter,¹⁸ has the r le of increasing tension by means of unfounded suspicions and feelings of guilt. Otherwise, he appears as little more than a messenger of the King (Act II, scene 5), a bearer of news to the Prince (Act IV, scene 8), and a guard of the prisoner Dorise (Act IV, scene 8), ever willing to fulfill his duty towards his royal masters. Lysarque, equerry to Rosidor, is a loyal and faithful servant whose r le consists of acquitting himself of his duties towards his master. All of these auxiliaries are utility characters and, as such, do not contribute the interest of the nurse, or even of Cliton, in M lite.

Only the Jailer receives, besides what one would expect of him, particular characteristics. An experienced jailer, he remains unmoved by Clitandre's plight: he has his duty to perform and will not depart from it either out of pity or for promises or gifts. Moreover, Corneille has suggested the jailer's physical appearance, the effects of which we learn from Clitandre:

¹⁷M.-L., I, p. 271.

¹⁸See above, p. 58.

Va, tigre! va, cruel, barbare, impitoyable!
 Ce noir cachot n'a rien tant que toi d'effroyable.
 Va, porte aux criminels tes regards, dont l'horreur
 Peut seule aux innocents imprimer la terreur:
 Ton visage déjà commençoit mon supplice. (vv. 1221-1225)

Given the high status of most of the characters in this play, it is not surprising that the system of values found in Clitandre excludes the concern for money found in Mélite. However, the principle of possession remains and continues to be related to the theme of love: Caliste says to Rosidor who, wounded, wants that they should rush off to be married: "Tout beau; j'aurois regret, ta santé hasardée, / Si tu m'allois quitter sitôt que possédée" (v. 1384, variant vv. 90-91); earlier, Rosidor willingly looks upon himself as a possession of Caliste (v. 1384, variant v. 84); Dorise speaks of "ce Rosidor qui possède mon âme" (v. 130, variant v. 4); Pymante of his desire to possess Dorise (v. 1009). Ideally for these characters, love must be reciprocal: "Mon feu qu'elle alluma fût mort au premier jour", says Rosidor, "S'il n'eût été nourri d'un réciproque amour" (vv. 1375-1376). As in Mélite, the concern for loyalty of the partners continues, but there is as yet no question of freedom in love, whether mutual or not. We have noted above¹⁹ the importance of Pymante's revolt as well as its deficiencies in this respect.

The object of possession must have attributes other than the merely physical, and once again the principle of générosité enters into play. First, all the main characters are noble. Secondly, we know that Rosidor is the King's favourite, Clitandre the Prince's, Caliste is

¹⁹ See above, pp. 70-71.

held in high regard by the Queen, Dorise is lady-in-waiting to the Queen, and Pymante--as seen in the Prince's reaction to the revelation that it was Pymante who showed such disrespect to him (v. 1173)--apparently has a certain good reputation at the Court. Also, Lysarque describes his master as "généreux" (v. 186, variant v. 3) and honest (v. 189). Rosidor himself states that he dislikes "le change" (v. 71). He has also demonstrated courage in battle and magnanimity towards Clitandre whose punishment he finds too severe and on whom he does not seek vengeance. Besides acquiring the object of his love, his ambition is devoted to maintaining his good reputation: he realizes that the two men he has killed in battle are "marques de ma gloire" (v. 262) and that in defending Clitandre too much "On devient ton complice" (v. 1363), thereby exposing himself to blame (v. 1362). Manifesting also the greatest constancy in love, he fails to keep his self-control. Caliste possesses the same qualities as her lover although she lacks his courage. Caliste and Rosidor are evidently worthy of one another and their marriage is justified.

Clitandre has displayed constancy in his love for Caliste for three years (v. 504), and in spite of the scorn which the latter shows towards him, he refuses to gain her favours through the Prince's influence, for "Le respect que je porte à ses perfections / M'empêche d'employer aucune violence" (v. 492, variant vv. 1-2). Magnanimous, he bears no resentment towards the King who unjustly imprisoned him. Indeed, Clitandre's dominating ambition is to serve dutifully his King and the Prince, and in so doing retain and augment his gloire.

(This element is also present in *Rosidor and Caliste*, but to a much lesser extent.) When the King sends for him without disclosing the reason for doing so, Clitandre, without hesitation, says: "C'est à moi d'obéir sans rien examiner" (v. 520) (foreshadowing the words of Horace [in Horace]: "Rome a choisi mon bras, je n'examine rien"-- v. 498). Later, in prison, trying to discover the cause for his punishment, he tells us:

Jamais aucun forfait, aucun dessein infâme
 N'a pu souiller ma main ni glisser dans mon âme;

 Et quelque grand effort que fasse ma mémoire,
 Elle ne me fournit que des sujets de gloire.

(vv. 809-810; vv. 820-821)

At the King's promise to make amends for his haste in judging Clitandre, the latter nobly replies:

L'honneur de vous servir m'apporte assez de gloire,
 Et je perdrais le mien, si quelqu'un pouvoit croire
 Que mon devoir penchât au refroidissement,
 Sans le flatteur espoir d'un agrandissement. (vv. 1481-1484)

Clitandre is an honourable man who chooses to serve his monarch and refuses to demean himself. We have seen elsewhere in this chapter,²⁰ that Clitandre chooses to rise above the constraints of love to regain self-control. In this character, Corneille comes very close to giving us the attributes of a true généreux, but Clitandre falls short on one important point: when in prison, in Act IV, scene 7, he complains

²⁰See above, p. 72.

of his lot, of "la rigueur de ma peine" (v. 1266), lacking therefore the disinterestedness of the généreux as will be depicted later in Horace and Polyeucte, and généreux who must "accepter aveuglément".²¹ Likewise, in giving himself up totally to his duty as a subject, his goal is not particularly superior, for he is in fact doing only what he must do as a subject, what is demanded of all the people of the realm. If, as Bénichou says, the généreux must have "une disposition permanente à préférer les satisfactions de la gloire à celles de la jouissance pure et simple, quand par malheur il faut choisir",²² then Clitandre has two more shortcomings: his preference for gloire is apparently not permanent and when, at the end, he chooses duty over pursuit of love, there is no need for him to make a choice. If Clitandre approaches the généreux, he does not, however, resemble the great généreux to come in Corneille's theatre: he is a rather insipid character on whom no strong demands are made, lacking not only some of the qualities to become a heroic généreux but also the opportunity and the psychological development.

Strangely enough, more interesting and more promising in this respect are Dorise and Pymante, of whom Nadal rightly observes: "Deux personnages forcenés y préfigurent les âmes noires et splendides dont il [Corneille] parera bientôt sa tragédie".²³ Corneille gives

²¹ Stegmann, L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 455.

²² Op. cit., p. 19.

²³ Nadal, op. cit., p. 103.

them the heroic virtues of strength, ardour, drive, fixity of purpose, but withholds the qualities of the généreux. In their attempt to assassinate Caliste and Rosidor respectively, in Pymante's added attempt at diverting the evidence of his own crime to Clitandre, they attack the monarchy. They demonstrate constancy, but lack self-control in their quest for the object of their love. A thorough coward, Pymante prefers to ambush Rosidor rather than duel with him. He shows no respect towards Dorise as Clitandre does towards Caliste: for him, Dorise is a "bonheur qui m'est dû" (v. 168) and the vanity of these words is compounded by lust in his attempt to rape her (Act IV, scene 1). Nowhere in Pymante do we find the respect for Dorise that Rodrigue will have for Chimène, acting as he does purely in his own self-interest as in his effort to kill Dorise (Act IV, scene 4). He even extends this self-interest and disrespect to the Prince who is saved from his murderous blows (an act for which he later shows no remorse--Act V, scene 4) thanks to Dorise's courage. Justifiably, Dorise calls him "Monstre de la nature" (v. 939) and later ". . . monstre bouffi de luxure et d'orgueil" (v. 1030, variant v. 18).

Dorise, however, through the courageous act we have just mentioned, as well as her humble confession at the knees of the Prince (v. 1172) and repentance in the presence of the King, receives a complete pardon. Even this nevertheless does not justify her projected union with Clitandre, for the latter deserves much better. However, when Corneille decides to give to a généreux the determination and will of Dorise and Pymante, but for what he considers a more elevated goal than love, then we will have heroes such as Rodrigue and Horace.

The supernatural power which we met in Mélite takes on a much greater importance in Clitandre and all of the major characters acknowledge its ascendancy. His plot having failed, Pymante laments its outcome and in so doing gives a more precise portrayal of this entity's power: "Destins, qui réglez tout au gré de vos caprices" (v. 325). That they govern all is confirmed by the other characters, but are we to believe that they are capricious? In the next breath, Pymante implies the opposite:

Dites, que vous ont fait Rosidor ou Pymante?
Fournissez de raison, destins, qui me démente;
Dites ce qu'ils ont fait qui vous puisse émouvoir
A partager si mal entre eux votre pouvoir.
Lui rendre contre moi l'impossible possible
C'est le favoriser par miracle visible,
Tandis que votre haine a pour moi tant d'excès
Qu'un dessein infallible avorte sans succès.

(vv. 329-332, 333 variant vv. 1-4)

It appears that there is rather a definite order: Pymante, the criminal is punished, while Rosidor, the innocent, is rewarded. Indeed, Rosidor might even be a providential agent,²⁴ instrumental in saving the good Caliste and routing the evil Pymante. Rosidor recognizes these events as part of the providential plan:

Sire, ajoutez du ciel l'occulte providence:
Sur deux amants il verse une même influence;
Et comme l'un par l'autre il a su nous sauver,
Il semble l'un pour l'autre exprès nous conserver.

(vv. 677-680)

²⁴ Stegmann, L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 282.

The King's reply, as Stegmann says, "définit déjà clairement l'attitude du héros futur";²⁵

. . . il faut qu'avec le ciel ma volonté conspire,
Et ne s'oppose pas à ses justes décrets,
Qu'il vient de témoigner par tant d'airs secrets.

(vv. 682-684)

It is exactly this motivation which will lead to the abnegation of self²⁶ and submission to the divine plan that we find in Horace (Horace). Pymante's outcome can then be viewed as a result of his vanity and lack of self-denial. In a passage which looks forward to Oreste of Racine's Andromaque, Pymante rebels against the gods and refuses to obey them: "Je ne veux plus vous rendre aucune obéissance" (v. 333, variant v. 9), and a little further: "Le Ciel me persécute, et l'enfer me délaisse. / Affronte-les, Pymante . . ." (vv. 374-375). But his rebellion and his disobedience prove futile, for the gods hunt him down to the end: "Et sans l'âpre rigueur du sort qui me tourmente", he says to the King near the conclusion of the play, "Vous pleureriez le Prince et souffririez Pymante" (vv. 1525-1526).

A hierarchy of power, from the supernatural entity through the King and providential agent to the subjects as a whole, and a definite system of values based on the ethic of générosité is strongly suggested

²⁵Ibid., p. 282.

²⁶It is not a question of total abnegation of self, but rather a denial of lesser desires and goals in favour of greater ones (when there is conflict between the two), resulting in greater benefits for all.

in Clitandre, but the main interest of the play still lies in the theme of love rather than the more elevated ones (in Corneille's scheme of things) we will meet in the tragedies. However, in the comedies following this play, Corneille will relegate the principle of a superior being to the minor rôle seen in Mélite, perhaps to concentrate on and develop other aspects of his ethic or dramatic technique in general.

Because Clitandre is a tragi-comedy, one naturally expects pathos to play a major rôle. The pathos found here, however, is mainly melodramatic, for it is based, as we have seen,²⁷ on Corneille's search for effects, and consists, therefore, of sensational incident and violent appeals to the emotions. Scenes 1 and 2 of Act I present Caliste torn between love for Rosidor and doubts concerning his loyalty. At the end of Act I, Rosidor, wounded in battle, despairs upon seeing Caliste who has fainted and whom he believes to be dead. Pathetic though these scenes are, Corneille has continued to weaken his pathos. In Mélite he had done so through the use of the comic, while here he resorts to sensational effects: between the two parts of Act I which we have just mentioned, there appear Pymante and two other men in disguise who concern themselves with the final preparations of an ambush. Also, we have the battle-scene where Rosidor puts Pymante to flight and kills the other two after being wounded and saving Caliste from Dorise's murderous intentions. Evidently, the pathetic element is therefore not as effective as it might have been. Moreover, any pathos there may be connected with this plot terminates at the end of

²⁷See above, p. 53.

this act.

The pity which the audience might feel for Dorise and Pymante caused by anguish they suffer due to their unrequited love is dissipated by their criminal intentions. In Act II, we have two soliloquies in which Pymante (scene 1) and Dorise (scene 6) vent their despair to the extent of cursing the gods who persecute them. Once again compassion is dispelled: Pymante, disguised as a peasant meets a troop of archers and manages to avoid recognition (scene 2); the archers find two bodies, Rosidor's broken sword and traces of blood; Dorise, disguised in the clothes of one of Pymante's accomplices, meets Pymante who thinks she is G ronte and, Pymante rushing to embrace 'him', she believes that he, thinking she is Rosidor, is about to stab her and she lets out a scream (scene 7). Act III shows us Clitandre's emotion at being imprisoned without just cause (scene 3) and the anguish which Pymante inflicts upon Dorise at his admission of having killed Rosidor (scene 5). Lack of continuity and sustentation cuts short the pathos of these scenes: the first is interrupted by the second, and the latter by an indirect return to the former through a conversation between Lysarque and Cl on concerning the King's severity (the last scene of this Act in the 1632 edition). Pathos itself remains but shifts direction from Clitandre to Dorise and back to the first but with much less effect. In 1660, Corneille will correct this defect somewhat by deleting the last scene, thereby allowing for continuity of pathetic effect at least as far as Dorise is affected, Act III ending and Act IV beginning with the Pymante-Dorise plot.

At the beginning of Act IV, Pymante and Dorise are both pathetic

characters, the former pleading with Dorise to accept his love, the latter troubled by her lover's death. But our sympathy for Pymante quickly wanes, while that which we feel for Dorise increases when he attempts to use force on her. Moreover, there follows a series of events which succeed in dispelling pathos: Dorise pierces Pymante's eye; the latter pursues Dorise (scene 1); a storm breaks out (scene 2); lightning has struck the Prince's horse (scene 3); Pymante catches Dorise and, throwing her to the ground, threatens to kill her; the Prince arrives; Pymante fights with the Prince; Dorise trips the former; the Prince captures him (scene 4); Cléon and a huntsman appear, looking for the Prince (scene 5 in the 1632 edition); the scene shifts once again to the prison and to Clitandre (scene 6); Cléon and three huntsmen arrive in time to tie up Pymante (scene 8). The only dominant element of pathos present in all this is found in scene 7 where Clitandre, having just been condemned to death, curses the traitor who has caused his suffering. However, this scene appears out of nowhere, preceded and followed by the events surrounding Dorise and Pymante.

The pathetic, then, is present in abundance in this play but, besides lacking sustained continuity, is mainly sensational, exterior and violent, and "ne paraît capable que de provoquer des émotions physiques et brutales, celles à qui il était réservé, deux siècles plus tard, de constituer le principal attrait du mélodrame".²⁸ Corneille will gradually turn, now, to a more intellectual pathos,

²⁸Rivaille, op. cit., p. 173.

having apparently satisfied himself and his critics of their thirst for "effets".

In many respects, Clitandre shows little improvement over Méliste and is sometimes even a retrograde step in our author's development as a playwright. The movement of the action is clumsy and confused owing to the presence of three plots none of which predominates nor is properly linked to the others. Corneille has also preferred to stress physical movement over psychological development with the result that the characters lack clear delineation. Love remains the dominant theme and once again the characters are possessed by their passion. Pathetic elements are abundant but this time melodramatic.

Corneille has, however, made some important advances in this play. He has used the principle of the unity of time to concentrate his action, but its combination with the amount of movement further lends to confusion. There is little concern in this play with freedom. There are nevertheless some important instances concerning this aspect: apart from the exception of Dorise who resembles Cloris in this respect, we have Pymante who rebels against love in favour of hatred and vengeance, although it is not a true revolt as he acts out of jealousy which is born of love. In addition, Clitandre escapes from the entanglement of love to choose a higher goal, but Corneille does not give us the psychological mechanism for this action. Clitandre comes close to being the true généreux, but fails because he complains of his plight and makes an unnecessary choice between love and duty. When Corneille will have combined the good qualities of Clitandre with the drive and will of Dorise and Pymante added to a

more impressive and elevated goal in the context of the Providential plan he has suggested here, then we will have the généreux hero of the tragedies. He must first, however, solve the problem of freedom within a context which appears to enslave, and this, along with other technical problems, he will now begin to work out in La Veuve.

CHAPTER IV

LA VEUVE

After Clitandre, Corneille returns to comedy with La Veuve, probably because the former had had a rather mediocre success¹ in comparison to that of Mélite.² In the Examen to his third play, Corneille states: "Cette comédie n'est pas plus régulière que Mélite en ce qui regarde l'unité de lieu . . .".³ There is, in spite of this last statement, considerable improvement in this respect in this play. In Mélite, it was necessary to represent houses far enough apart so that Tircis could not previously have seen Mélite before being introduced to her by Eraste and also in order that Mélite could not have known Philandre who spends most of his time with Cloris. In Clitandre, the scene shifts back and forth between many parts of a forest, a castle and a prison. La Veuve, however, does not require such distance and presents us with a street on which we find the houses of Clarice and Chrysante. All the characters meet on this street except in the last scenes of Act III which take place in Clarice's garden. Thus, if the unity of place has not been rigidly adhered to in this play, it comes much closer to being so than previ-

¹"Ce qui semblerait l'indiquer," says Antoine Adam (op. cit., I, 487), c'est d'une part que Corneille ne tarda pas à faire imprimer sa pièce, et c'est aussi que Clitandre ne figure pas au mémoire de Mahelot. Ce ne sont pas là, on s'en rend compte, des preuves certaines. Ce sont du moins des indices".

²Ibid., I, 478: "Le succès des trois premières représentations n'eut rien d'éclatant. Il se décida à la quatrième et dura le reste de l'hiver".

³M.-L., I, 394.

ously.

As for the unity of time, Corneille says, in the Examen, that "elle a quelque chose de mieux ordonné".⁴ From the irregularity of Mélite and the strict observance of this rule in Clitandre, the author arrives, in La Veuve, at a compromise: the five acts take place in five days: "J'ai donc cherché quelque milieu pour la règle du temps, et me suis persuadé que la comédie étant disposée en cinq actes, cinq jours consécutifs n'y seroient point mal employés".⁵ In the Examen, he gives the reason for having done so: "C'étoit un tempérament que je croyois lors fort raisonnable entre la rigueur des vingt et quatre heures et cette étendue libertine qui n'avoit aucunes bornes".⁶ In this way, Corneille shows a tendency to concentrate the action in time, but not to the point of rigidly following an arbitrary rule.

Once again there is no unity of action, the play, like Clitandre, having three plots, though this time the third does not attract much notice. From the outset we are introduced to the first plot which concerns Philiste who loves a young widow, Clarice, who in turn returns his love. However, because of her wealth and higher rank, Philiste does not dare openly declare his love for her nor ask for her hand in marriage. We are also introduced, in the first scene, to the second

⁴M.-L., I, 394.

⁵Au Lecteur of La Veuve, M.-L., I, 377.

⁶M.-L., I, 394-395.

plot, that of Alcidon, friend of Philiste, and Doris, sister of Philiste, who apparently love one another and are about to be married. In the second scene, we learn that Alcidon is in fact Philiste's rival and that, to promote his cause, he has acquired the help of Clarice's nurse, who is apparently working to advance Philiste's suit. In scene 3, Doris informs us that she is well aware of Alcidon's duplicity and that she is repaying him in kind until the time comes when she will, as an obedient daughter, marry Florange (who does not appear in the play), the marriage having been arranged by her mother, Chrysante, and Florange's agent, Géron (the third plot). Thus, in the first three scenes of the play the three plots are exposed along with their points of contact. The interest of the play lies in the questions of whether Philiste and Clarice will be able to reconcile their differences, what effect Alcidon's rivalry will have on them, what effect Doris' marriage will have on Alcidon, who is unaware of her own deceit, and what reaction Philiste will show upon learning of this same marriage, for he has promised her to Alcidon, his best friend.

Philiste and Clarice having finally exchanged confessions of love, Alcidon plots with the nurse to kidnap Clarice and acquires the help of Célidan, who secretly loves Doris, under the pretext of avenging the affront made to him by the engagement of Doris and Florange. Philiste, loyal to his 'friend', breaks up the proposed union of Doris and Florange. Célidan urges Alcidon to return to Doris and set Clarice free, but Alcidon refuses, saying that Philiste is making secret promises to Florange. Célidan begins to suspect Alcidon's motives and stages a deception of his own so successfully that he brings about

a confession from the nurse. Célidan then avenges himself by returning Clarice, who had been kept in his castle, to Philiste and receives Doris as a reward. Thus, the relationship of Clarice and Philiste breaks down only to be re-established at the end; that of Doris-Alcidon, established only in appearance, gives way to Doris-Florange momentarily, and finally to Doris-Célidan.

In comparison to Clitandre, this play is staid, containing none of the frenzied action seen in the former. However, it does have a little more movement than Mélite: Philiste flares up at the nurse (Act II, scene 3); he drives Géron away hitting him with the flat of his sword (Act III, scene 6); the kidnapping of Clarice during which the nurse pretends to faint and clutches at the victim's legs (Act III, scene 9); the loud cries of the nurse once the criminals have had time to get away; their pursuit by three of Clarice's servants (Act III, scene 10); Philiste, sword in hand, runs after these three servants (Act IV, scene 2); Alcidon too draws his sword (Act IV, scene 3); Philiste rushes off to see Clarice upon her safe return (Act V, scene 5). Despite this physical movement, Corneille returns to the interest in psychological activity seen in his first play.

We have seen that there are three plots in La Veuve, that involving Clarice and Philiste, another Doris, Alcidon and Célidan, and a third Doris, Florange, Géron and Chrysante. As in the two previous plays, the plots have points of contact: Philiste and Doris are brother and sister, and Chrysante is their mother; Alcidon is a friend of Philiste and, feigning love for Doris, really loves Clarice; Célidan, friend of Alcidon, changes allegiance to Philiste and receives

Doris, whom he loves, as a reward. Again, however, Corneille has not properly combined them and we are left with three distinct stories, two of which should, but do not contain only the elements necessary to the predominant one. For example, what bearing does Doris' ridicule of her awkward suitor have on whether or not Philiste will marry Clarice; or that her mother advises her to wed Florange (Act I, scene 3); or that Chrysante congratulates her daughter for her behaviour towards Alcidon (Act III, scene 4)? What is the purpose of the family background which Chrysante relates concerning herself and Célidan's father (Act V, scene 6)? There is evidently more than one plot in La Veuve, but, as in Mélite, Corneille has given one greater relief than the others, in this case that of Clarice and Philiste.

Whereas in Mélite Corneille has shown the beginning of the love between Tircis and Mélite, here, because of the concentration of the action in five days, the action commences very close to the obstacle which will separate the two lovers. It will be remembered that, in Clitandre while the action was even more concentrated in time (24 hours), this served to add to the confusion. Although the exposition of La Veuve serves the same function as that of Mélite, namely to present the different plots and initial position of the characters, there is improvement, as in Clitandre, in its structure: despite the fact that the scenes are not as closely linked as they should be, their subject has more continuity: Philiste and Alcidon speak of the former's love for Clarice during which appears a comparison of Alcidon's 'love' for Doris (scene 1); we discover that Alcidon's love for Doris is false and that he loves Clarice (scene 2); there follows a dis-

cussion between Chrysante and Doris during which we learn that the latter knows of Alcidon's duplicity and in return resorts to the same tactic; we are told also that Chrysante is arranging a marriage between her daughter and Florange (scene 3); Chrysante meets Geron to discuss the arrangement (scene 4); Philiste, having left at the end of the first scene to visit friends with Clarice, returns chatting with her about their visit in such a way as to give veiled but clear indications of their love for one another (scene 5); alone, Clarice regrets Philiste's lack of temerity in love (scene 6). Each scene is prepared for by what has preceded, avoiding the bewilderment that existed, for example, between scenes 3 and 4 of Act I in Mélite. The dénouement of the third play dissatisfies Corneille as much as that of his first.⁷ The different plots having become intertwined in the course of the play, the author separates them in Act V in such a way as to show clearly the final situation of each character as well as the final groupings. The spectator is interested only in the reaction of Philiste and Clarice to the revelation of those responsible for their separation. Otherwise, they are relegated to the rôle of witnesses of the unravelling of the other plots.

However, there is one aspect of the action in which the author has made great progress as he himself realized and acknowledged in his Au Lecteur: "Ici donc tu ne trouveras . . . que . . . peu de scènes toutefois sans quelque raisonnement assez véritable, et partout une

⁷Discours de l'utilité et des parties du poème dramatique in M.-L., I, 28.

conduite assez industrielle".⁸ In La Veuve, the lack of justification and continuity witnessed in the first two plays makes way, as Rivaille justly notes,⁹ for the preparation and legitimization of events. In the Examen Corneille gives an example of this: "Alcidon a lieu d'espérer un bien plus heureux succès de sa fourbe qu'Eraste de la sienne".¹⁰ The outcome of Eraste's ruse was certainly more doubtful than Alcidon's: would Philandre accept the contents of the false letters; would Tircis not check their validity; would Philandre act quickly enough? Alcidon, on the other hand, resorts to a much more certain method: kidnapping. Moreover, he has a dauntless accomplice in the nurse who, in Act II, scene 6, warns him of the impending marriage of Clarice and Philiste, suggests the kidnapping to him, informs him of the most propitious time and place to carry it out, of the only door to the garden which she will make certain is open, suggests that he find a friend to help him, and even supplies the pretext to convince this friend of the legitimacy of the act. The value of these preparations is evident from the beginning of the next act where Célidan, assured that the abduction is justified, offers not only his help, but also his carriage and his castle. Furthermore, the nurse's ability to plan such a misdeed prepares us for her direct participation, which we see in scenes 9 and 10 of Act III: pretending to faint, she seizes Clarice's legs, preventing her escape, and, having

⁸M.-L., I, 377.

⁹Op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁰M.-L., I, 397.

given the kidnappers enough time to flee with their victim, she finally alerts Clarice's servants only to give them false directions.

In the last chapter, we noted the lack of grounds, in Clitandre, for Cléon's suspicions of the letter given to Rosidor presumably by Clitandre.¹¹ Corneille must have noticed it too and decided not to repeat this mistake, for in La Veuve Célidan's doubts are amply justified: confronted by what he deems complete sincerity and loyalty on Philiste's part towards Alcidon (Act IV, scene 3) and the latter's abrupt change of attitude towards Doris (Act IV, scene 4), Célidan decides to verify his position (Act IV, scene 5); using a trick of his own, he manages to make the nurse reveal her secrets and discovers that Alcidon has deceived him (Act IV, scene 6). Lisis, in Mélite, had also decided to examine the veracity of a ruse, but, besides the relative lack of justification for doing so, his counter-ruse was, as we have seen, of a much more and unnecessarily dangerous nature.

The author's desire to have at least two marriages at the end of his plays had previously led him to somewhat strange combinations, namely Cloris-Eraste in Mélite and Dorise-Clitandre in Clitandre. He again resorts to double-marriage at the end of this play, but this time much more happily, for the proposed union of Célidan and Doris is prepared: when Célidan appears at the beginning of Act III, he tells Alcidon that he has loved Doris for a long time, but has not revealed his love out of deference to his friend; moreover, in the last scene of Act IV, Doris informs us that she loves neither Alcidon

¹¹See above, p. 58.

nor Florange, each imposed on her by her brother and her mother respectively; upon learning that Alcidon had only feigned love for Doris, Célidan actively sets out to ask for her hand (Act V, scene 2); Chrysante accepts his suit readily, but informs him that he must seek Philiste's approval (Act V, scene 6); having given his word to Alcidon, Philiste refuses (Act V, scene 8); but Alcidon, believing he has been found out, reveals that his love was not for Doris, but for Clarice (Act V, scene 9); Philiste, thus released from his promise, gives Célidan permission to marry Doris, who readily accepts (Act V, scene 10).

Corneille has also supplied psychological continuity and justification in this play: Chrysante, wishing to marry her daughter to Florange, first of all makes sure that Doris does not love Alcidon and then that she will obey her mother (Act I, scene 3); Célidan's about face at the end of the play is prepared for by Alcidon's knowledge that he is honest and that a pretext is necessary to convince him that the abduction is an honourable act. In Mélite, we have a misogynist who falls in love swiftly for undisclosed reasons. In Clitandre, Clitandre forsakes his love for Caliste in favour of service to the Prince and the King, again for no apparent reason. In La Veuve, Philiste and Clarice love one another, but neither has said as much to the other, the first through fear of being refused because of an inequality of rank and wealth, the second from a sense of modesty. They, nevertheless, do succeed in declaring their love. This time, however, Corneille has given the psychological development between these two stages: in Act I, scene 5, Philiste reveals in veiled terms

his love for Clarice; in the following scene Clarice wishes very much that he might become bolder and declare his love; in Act II, scene 1, Philiste suffers greatly because of his lot and oscillates between timidity and daring; the next scene presents the nurse's disparagement of Philiste which back-fires, Clarice becoming more determined than ever to marry Philiste even if she must declare herself first; Philiste, who has overheard their conversation, declares his love to Clarice who reciprocates (Act II, scene 4).

In the two previous plays, Corneille had made use of the movers of the action to create continuity, but in this one all characters, with the exception of the servants, provide the necessary elements to achieve greater unity and fluidity. Where in Mélite the progress of the action was halting because it showed only certain high points at the expense of others, and where, in Clitandre, there was a too great reliance on coincidence, La Veuve presents the progression of the action, avoiding coincidence and justifying what would otherwise be fortuitous. Complete continuity is once again lacking, for the presence of three plots necessitates intermittent oscillation from one to the other which also results periodically in an empty stage. Furthermore, in his Examen, Corneille correctly, but perhaps too severely, judges that ". . . il n'y a point de liaison de scènes, et par conséquent point de continuité d'action".¹² However, it is evident that, in writing this play, Corneille attempted to give it and the characters more unity and coherence, an effort which he will continue in his sub-

¹²M.-L., I, 395.

sequent plays.

Our study of the action provided some clues as to the main concerns of the characters. In addition, a look at the recurrence of certain words at the rhyme underlines the return to the concerns of Mélite. The dominant theme is love: thus we frequently meet amour (22 times), âme (14 times), coeur (13 times), flamme (10 times), feu (9 times), amant (6 times), maîtresse (19 times), the latter referring most often to Clarice (16 times), and amour-jour (7 times). However, because the play begins considerably after the initial attraction of the lovers there is little talk of physical appearance such as in Mélite. The immediate pre-occupation here is to establish an exchange of affections and promises: thus the words foi (14 times), loi (8 times), promesse (6 times), the rhyming couplets moi-foi (7 times), toi-foi (7 times), moi-loi (6 times), and promesse-maîtresse (4 times). Vie-envie (5 times) is a matter of less concern than in Clitandre, carrying the same weight as in Mélite.

The presence and significance of so-called 'Cornelian' words remains the same as in the two previous plays, with the exceptions of gloire (1 time) and mérite (5 times) which are reversions to the distribution found in Mélite, the characters of these two comedies finding, perhaps, more necessity to convince themselves of their worthiness than those of Clitandre, and the subject matter not worthy enough for the author to ascribe gloire to his characters. Deserving note, however, are the words devoir (5 times) and honneur (5 times). Devoir we have seen once in Mélite and three times in Clitandre, while honneur not at all in the second play and three times in the first.

Although this increase demonstrates no dramatic change in values, it nevertheless indicates, along with the presence in this play, and the absence in the previous ones, of the couplets devoir-pouvoir and honneur-bonheur four times each, a possible tendency towards alteration of the ethic, a matter to which we will return later in this chapter.¹³

Turning now to an examination of the characters, we will see in greater detail that their main concerns lie in the domains mentioned in the above word-frequency study.

It is evident that, as H. C. Lancaster first suggested,¹⁴ there are basic similarities between the characters of La Veuve and those of Mélite even to the use of direct reference to the latter play and some of its characters (vv. 931-932): three young men in love, Philiste, Alcidon, Célidan, and Tircis, Eraste and Philandre in Mélite; Doris, Philiste's sister, and Cloris, Tircis' sister; the rivals Philiste and Alcidon, and Tircis and Eraste; the deceivers Alcidon and Eraste; the substitution of Alcidon by Célidan in the relationship with Doris and that of Philandre by Eraste with Cloris; the inferior wealth of Philiste and Tircis which causes them to fear rejection by the one they love. However, a closer look at the individual characters will reveal, along with more similarities, that their particular attributes and interrelationships differ considerably from those of the first play.

¹³ See below, pp. 121-128.

¹⁴ A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, I, ii, 594.

Clarice, every bit as beautiful as Mélite (witness the frequent references to her beauty--for example, vv. 14, variant v. 1; 308; 409; 428; 443), reveals quite a different personality, due, perhaps, to her widowhood (v. 83) and the consequent fact that she is no longer answerable to anyone but herself (v. 627). Whereas Mélite, rather than seeking romance, allowed herself to fall into a peaceful love, Clarice actively engages in this pursuit. She must, for she has greater rank and fortune than Philiste (v. 377) who, because of this difference in position and wealth, fears he is unworthy and will be rejected if he declares his love to her. On the other hand, Clarice defers her declaration out of modesty (v. 381), and this restraint, as well as Philiste's, causes her much suffering. At one point she mentions that she would gladly give up rank and wealth to have Philiste say he loves her (v. 379). However, she does not wallow in inertia or content herself with moaning long-sufferingly as appears to be the case in Act I, scene 6:

Ah! que ne devient-il un peu plus téméraire?
 Que ne s'expose-t-il au hasard de me plaire?
 Amour, gagne à la fin ce respect ennuyeux,
 Et rends-le moins timide . . . (vv. 389-392)

In Act I, scene 5, she taunts Philiste in an attempt to make him openly admit his affection for her, but to no avail. Through his veiled words, she easily recognizes that "il m'en dit assez, si je l'osois entendre, / Et ses desirs aux miens se font assez comprendre" (vv. 373-374). The necessary catalyst proves to be the nurse who, in trying to dissuade her mistress from marrying Philiste, actually

accomplishes the opposite: Clarice becomes emboldened and determined to end the uncertainty of her situation:

Fais venir cet amant: .dussé-je la première
Lui faire de mon coeur une ouverture entière,
Je ne permettrai point qu'il sorte d'avec moi
Sans avoir l'un à l'autre engagé notre foi. (vv. 507-510)

Two scenes later, the declarations occur: although it is Philiste who, having overheard the altercation between Clarice and the nurse, is the first to say "je vous aime" (v. 589), it is not before Clarice has told him exactly what she thinks of his past behaviour:

N'oubliez-vous jamais ces termes ravalés,
Pour vous priser de bouche autant que vous valez?
Seriez-vous bien content qu'on crût ce que vous dites?
Demeurez avec moi d'accord de vos mérites;
Laissez-moi me flatter de cette vanité,
Que j'ai quelque pouvoir sur votre liberté. (vv. 577-582)

In her avowal of love, she has gone as far as modesty permits, even for a widow.

During her quest, she has demonstrated that her "rares mérites" (v. 294) consist of more than physical attractiveness, modesty, perseverance and boldness. It appears that her previous marriage was less than ideal and that this one will be based on more solid grounds than "vaines dignités" (v. 485), namely on "rares qualités" (v. 486), using her past experience with lucidity and judgement. It is not a question of a lesser love, for she says that Philiste is "vainqueur" (v. 478) of her heart, that she burns for him (v. 613), that her ardour is "en son extrémité" (v. 615, variant v. 3); in fact, it is because of the extent of her affection that she suffered so

much and so actively sought a statement of love from someone beneath her social position. That she does not faint under duress as did Mélite and Caliste does not indicate that she loves less, for, as the two previous heroines had done, she too speaks of it as an "esclavage" (v. 1106), she too gives in to jealousy (Act I, scene 5) to which she refers as "l'excès de mon amour" (v. 1821). What she does display that Mélite and Caliste did not are less impulsiveness and, as Roques and Lièvre have noted, "des sentiments plus réfléchis et plus profonds".¹⁵ Clarice too is possessed by her affection, but within its context manages to remain practical.

Philiste, like Tircis, has a doctrine of love based this time, however, not on scepticism, but on respect for the one he loves. Two years have passed since the kindling of his affection for Clarice and, according to Alcidon, he seems no further ahead. Philiste feels, however, that anyone can be impulsive in love and that, in doing so, one incurs the risk of "au lieu de notre ardeur lui montrer nos folies" (v. 26). He prefers the approach of the "honnête homme" (v. 21, variant v. 2):

Il faut s'en faire aimer avant qu'on se déclare.
Notre submission à l'orgueil la prépare.

· · · · ·
Et sans lui rien offrir, rendons-lui du service;
Réglons sur son humeur toutes nos actions,
Réglons tous nos desseins sur ses intentions,
Tant que par la douceur d'une longue hantise
Comme insensiblement elle se trouve prise.
C'est par là que l'on sème aux dames des appas,
Qu'elles n'évitent point, ne les prévoyant pas.

(vv. 29-30; 34-40)

¹⁵In the introduction to their edition of Pierre Corneille, La Veuve (Genève: Droz, 1954), p. xxv.

To do otherwise will only shock them and expose oneself to rejection: hence, one reason for not having declared his love to Clarice after two years of longing. But, as we have seen, there is another reason: ". . . inégal de biens et de condition, / Je ne pouvois prétendre à son affection" (vv. 59-60). As in the case of other servants of love we have studied, Philiste hopes that he will not be rejected, but, more than the others, he is confident of the results; besides, the nurse will tell him the most propitious moment to declare himself openly to Clarice. As it is only a matter of time, he feels he can be patient.

Again there is no question of less affection, as Rivaille would have it:¹⁶ Tircis and Philiste simply fear for different reasons: Tircis because of the wealth of a rival, Philiste because of the riches and station of the one he loves. Once Cloris has easily allayed her brother's fears, there remains no obstacle. But in La Veuve, the only person who can remove Philiste's doubts is Clarice. This accounts for the apparently more impassioned pursuit of Tircis. Nevertheless, Philiste is just as much a servant of passion as Tircis:

Loin de vous, je n'ai rien qu'avec plaisir je voie;
 Tout me devient fâcheux, tout s'oppose à ma joie:
 Un chagrin invincible accable tous mes sens. (vv. 365-367)

Moreover, he suffers greatly because his timidity will not allow him to speak of his love openly to Clarice:

Mon âme, dans cet esclavage,
 Fait des vœux qu'elle n'ose offrir;
 J'aime seulement pour souffrir. (vv. 413-415)

¹⁶Op. cit., p. 117.

He is caught in a conflict between the "Secrets tyrans de ma pensée" (v. 393), between love which urges him to be bolder and respect which restrains him. Philiste lets his conflicting influences carry him off to such an extent that he must take hold of himself:

Quel fantasque raisonnement!
Et qu'au milieu de mon tourment
Je deviens subtil à ma peine! (vv. 437-439)

So much in doubt is he that, when Clarice demonstrates some sign of love "Je le prends pour un trait moqueur / D'autant que je m'en trouve indigne" (v. 424, variant vv. 2-3). Even after she has admitted her love for him, he doubts the evidence although the reason is this time different: ". . . l'excès de ma béatitude / Est le seul fondement de mon incertitude" (v. 619, variant vv. 1-2).

In Act IV, scene 1, when he learns that Clarice has been carried off, he first reacts in disbelief. His next reaction, however, is very different from those of the previous heroes and heroines: whereas the others despaired immediately, Philiste, remaining lucid, attempts to uncover any information which would permit him to come to Clarice's rescue, a much more active and reasonable response. Only after being told that no details of the kidnapping are known, does he despair and this for two reasons: his feeling of helplessness and his loss of Clarice. At this point he rejoins the lovers we have previously studied in his desire to die:

Clarice, unique objet qui me tiens en servage,
Reçois de mon ardeur ce dernier témoignage:

Vois comme en te perdant je vais perdre le jour,
Et par mon désespoir juge de mon amour. (vv. 1207-1210)

But soon he wonders whether this kidnapping is perhaps not just a feint by Clarice to test his love. (This, as we shall see in the next chapter,¹⁷ forms the principal subject of La Galerie du Palais). He decides to die anyway to show Clarice the extent of his passion for her. He appears to recover momentarily ("Que ce penser flatteur me dérobe à moi-même"--v. 1223), but he soon falls back into the same old doubts: she simply wants to punish him for his "amour téméraire" (v. 1228). Confused in his despair, he recognizes finally that he has lost his senses, whereupon he pulls himself together: "Pauvre désespéré, que ta raison s'égare" (v. 1235); he now accepts as true that Clarice has been kidnapped. In the following scene (Act IV, scene 2), meeting Clarice's three servants, he continues his inquiries in the hope of acquiring some bit of knowledge that would help him find his lover, but again to no avail, giving way this time to frustrated anger. In Act V, scene 5, upon learning from Célidan that Clarice is safe, he rushes off to see her immediately at the risk of being impolite to her liberator.

Given the above description, we fail to see how Rivaille concluded that Philiste loved less than Tircis. Both are passionately in love, Tircis being the more impulsive, but Philiste the more reflective. Because the latter reacts more practically does not mean that his affection is inferior: surely the account given above denies this

¹⁷ Which begins on p. 133.

inferiority. That he responds more reasonably, however, does indicate a change in Corneille's view of a man in love, at least compared to his previous heroes. Philiste is just as possessed by his passion as the latter, but within the context of this passion, he manages to keep his reason and lucidity functioning to a much higher degree than, for example, Tircis and Rosidor.

Alcidon is presented, in the first scene of the play, as a spokesman for the straight-forward, unambiguous approach to love we encountered between Mélite and Tircis: "Mon coeur ne pourroit pas conserver tant de feu, / S'il falloit que ma bouche en témoignât si peu" (vv. 304). As of the second scene, however, we see that Alcidon comes from a similar mould as Pymante and Philandre. Disloyal to Doris whom he is deceiving, he is also the rival of Philiste whom he misleads as well. Yet, he is apparently not a complete scoundrel for Philiste considers him a friend to whom he has seen fit to promise his sister's hand. Chrysante refers to him as "un amant si parfait" (v. 168) who possesses "rares qualités" (v. 152) and later, the nurse speaks of him as "un brave gentilhomme" (v. 1432). However, these two women are interested parties, the former concerned mainly with finding a husband of some means for her daughter, while the latter is his accomplice. But we have also Célidan, a man of honour, who is friendly with him. Despite this, although Philiste and Célidan are well-meaning in not seeing through his veneer of friendship sooner than they do, they, especially Philiste, prove to be rather gullible. Only Doris recognizes immediately that Alcidon's "âme a deux visages" (v. 169), at least in the matter that concerns her.

Alcidon oversteps the bounds of honesty and honour, like Pymante and Philandre before him, because he is an extremely vain person. He speaks constantly of himself and does not shun self-praise: Doris does not have any of the qualities necessary to hold "des gens faits comme moi" (v. 100), "comme si j'étois des amants ordinaires" (v. 731). Like his earlier counterparts, he is a coward: he attempts to provoke Philiste into a duel only under what for him are ideal conditions as Philiste points out: "Faire ici du fendant tandis qu'on nous sépare, / C'est montrer un esprit lâche . . ." (vv. 1299-1300). Does he lie and dissemble so frequently simply to bring about fulfilment of his love? Rivaille denies this: "Alcidon semble plus attaché aux grands biens de Clarice qu'à elle-même".¹⁸ In a footnote to this statement he mentions that throughout the play, in Alcidon's intrigues to wed Clarice, there is never any question of love. We strongly disagree with Rivaille on this point, believing instead that the contrary is true. Nowhere in the play does Alcidon mention any attachment to Clarice's wealth and possessions. Moreover, he mentions several times his love for Clarice, not when he is in the presence of someone he wishes to deceive, but either when alone or with his accomplice, the nurse: soliloquizing after the opening scene with Philiste, he informs us that he "brûle pour Clarice" (v. 101); having just engaged in amorous conversation with Doris, he says to the nurse that "mon artifice / Lui raconte les vœux que j'envoie à Clarice" (vv. 719-720); again alone, he remarks on the similarity of situation between himself and Célidan who

¹⁸Op. cit., p. 112.

has "comme moi caché sa passion" (v. 877). When the nurse confesses to Célidan, she says of Alcidon that "ce traître aimoit Clarice" (v. 1449). Finally, in the last scene of the play, believing that Célidan has exposed him, he still speaks of his "flamme" (v. 1924) and mentions nothing of money.

We believe that love indeed motivates his actions, love for Clarice, but also love of self. His despair at the end of the play stems not so much from his loss of Clarice, but from his hurt pride: his main concern is that of having been uncovered as he bemoans his "honneur perdu" (v. 1916). He does not indicate the slightest repentance or seek forgiveness as did Eraste, resembling, instead, Pymante. Having freely deceived others, he can not accept to be deceived. Furthermore, too accustomed to duping others, he seems to expect the same of others. Had he not jumped to conclusions he would have preserved his honour in the eyes of the other characters, for Célidan had refused to mention the names of the perpetrators. Thus, the main motive for his deeds as well as the cause of his own downfall is his vanity: his overweening conceit.

Célidan resembles Clitandre in that both innocently have faith in others. Too trusting, his belief in Alcidon's sincerity leads him into a misdeed of which he is unaware, thinking the abduction a matter of honour and justice. Though somewhat gullible in accepting Alcidon's story, he has not done so readily:

. . . ton dessein à l'abord
N'a gagné mon esprit qu'avec un peu d'effort.

Lorsque tu m'as parlé d'enlever sa maîtresse,
L'honneur a quelque temps combattu ma promesse.

(vv. 781-784)

But he does accept, feeling that Alcidon wronged by his friend, deserves to be avenged. There are no half-measures to his promise: "Dispose absolument d'une amitié parfaite" (v. 790, variant v. 15). Alcidon realizes fully the usefulness of such friendship: "Lui, quand il a promis, il meurt qu'il n'effectue" (v. 871). But Célidan serves also as an object of ridicule for Alcidon:

Bon Dieux! que d'innocence et de simplicité!
Ou pour la mieux nommer que de stupidité,
Dont le manque de sens se cache et se déguise
Sous le front spécieux d'une sottise franchise! (vv. 861-864)

It is typical of Alcidon that, being so confident in his superiority, he can not imagine Célidan employing his candour and honesty to avoid participating in falsehood. Indeed, Célidan eventually understands that his friend seems too willing to give up Doris and marry Clarice, too quick to find reasons for avoiding Doris. He is shrewd enough to discover the deceit and to fight those who abused his good nature with their own weapons: he dupes the nurse in order to elicit a confession and pretends to continue to co-operate with Alcidon while, in fact, applying himself to the advancement of his own passion for Doris.

He has loved her for a long time, but kept it a secret, "Sans jamais témoigner que j'en étois épris, / Tant que tes feux [Alcidon's] ont pu te promettre ce prix" (vv. 809-810). Nevertheless there is no doubt of the magnitude of his affection, his secrecy stemming only from respect for what he believed a mutual love between Doris and

Alcidon. Near the end of the play he comes, he says to Chrysante, to offer

. . . à tant d'appas un coeur qui n'est que flamme,
Un coeur sur qui ses yeux de tout temps absolus
Ont imprimé des traits qui ne s'effacent plus (vv. 1724-1726)

Not content with receiving the permission of Chrysante and Philiste, he must, in deference to her wishes, get Doris' as well. Doris accepts not only because, as we learned earlier from Alcidon,

Ce cavalier, au reste, a tous les avantages
Que l'on peut remarquer aux plus braves courages,
Beau de corps et d'esprit, riche, adroit, valeureux,
Et surtout de Doris à l'extrême amoureux, (vv. 1527-1530)

but also because of the "mérite" (v. 1957, variant v. 3) he has shown in the episode with Alcidon.

In addition to the many qualities we have mentioned, Célidan appears to exercise self-control in regards to love. Has he not kept his passion secret for a long time? It seems that, with this character, we have at last come upon someone whose reason, lucidity, will and judgement never flag. However, it is necessary to remember first of all that, not until the end, was there any mutual bond between him and Doris. Also, he did not undergo the hardship of seeing this union broken as did Philiste. In this respect, he is clearly superior to Eraste and Pymante, but difficult to compare to Tircis and Philiste.

Doris, all but engaged to Alcidon, reminds us of Cloris although she is not quite as aggressive. Perspicacious, she is the first to notice Alcidon's duplicity and hollow rhetoric:

. . . ce dissimulé n'est qu'un conteur à gages.
 Il a beau m'accabler de protestations,
 Je démêle aisément toutes ses fictions. (vv. 170-172)

She readily repays Alcidon in kind ("Il ne me prête rien que je ne lui renvoie"--v. 173), parrying effortlessly his deceitful thrusts (Act II, scene 5). Witty in her ridicule of Florange (Act I, scene 3), she is equally scathing in her contempt for Alcidon (Act IV, scene 8). Her proposed marriage to Florange is not motivated by love, but by duty and obedience to her mother's wishes, as was that to Alcidon by obedience to her brother. For almost the entirety of the first four acts she behaves as a "fille bien sage" (v. 1568) towards Chrysante with whom she continues to show herself gay and witty except on the occasions that her mother asks her to behave agreeably for a suitor she has chosen for her daughter; this elicits much more formal and cheerless responses, such as: "Commandez seulement, Madame, et mon devoir / Ne négligera rien qui soit en mon pouvoir" (vv. 231-232) or "Madame, avisez-y: je vous remets le tout" (v. 244). Nowhere in this first part of the play does she appear to have any particular passion, leaving the choice of a husband to her mother. We sense, however, in her frequent acts of submission, that she is simply repeating a formula of resignation to authority which she would wish otherwise. In Act IV, scene 9, the inner revolt which we detected in Doris bursts out in an unexpected and somewhat ambiguous soliloquy in which she expresses her desire for freedom from filial duty:

Une mère aveuglée, un frère inexorable,
 Chacun de son côté, prennent sur mon devoir
 Et sur mes volontés un absolu pouvoir.

Dure sujétion! étrange tyrannie!
Toute liberté donc à mon choix se dénie!

(vv. 1548-1550; 1559-1560)

Yet, this revolt does not end in a refusal to obey, but simply in an appeal to heaven for help; and if, as we indicated,¹⁹ she has not yet found someone she loves, she is certainly predisposed to do so, as the last line of the above quotation reveals as well as the line "Et par force un amant n'a de moi que rigueur" (v. 1562).

In the end, heaven seems to answer her plea, for Célidan, having received permission from both Chrysante and Philiste to marry Doris, gives Doris the freedom to choose whether or not to marry him. Evidently Doris has some inclination for this suitor:

Ici votre mérite est joint à leur puissance,
Et la raison s'accorde à mon obéissance.
En secondant vos feux, je fais par jugement
Ce qu'ailleurs je ferois par leur commandement.

(v. 1957, variant vv. 3-6)

Certainly, even had she not had any affection for Célidan, Philiste would have seen to it that she marry him, for once again he had made a promise. Moreover, she would probably not have refused, but rather have obeyed her parents. Having found someone she loves without straying from her duty, all ends well for her.

In La Veuve, Corneille shows both lovers and beloved in a variety of new and different perspectives. Philiste and Clarice are as much in love as Tircis and Mélite or Rosidor and Caliste. However, Philiste,

¹⁹See above, p. 98-99.

unlike his counterparts is better able to keep his senses when his lover is taken from him. With some difficulty, he manages to control his faculties and direct their efforts to the liberation of Clarice and the preservation of their union. Passion possesses Clarice too and, after the nurse's inadvertent stimulus, her will overcomes social obstacles and she declares her love to Philiste. However, her reaction to separation from her lover is not known. Célidan loves Doris, but controls his affection in deference to Alcidon. The latter has been presented in greater depth than his brother scoundrels Philandre and Pymante, but like them his affection leads him to rather dishonourable deeds and, whereas he demonstrates an attachment to Clarice, his real passion is undoubtedly himself. His vanity, giving him a false feeling of superiority, takes hold of him and causes his downfall. Unlike Dorise or Cloris, Doris loves no one: all she wishes for is the opportunity to do so, denied to her by strict parental authority. In her case, we see only the beginning of her love for Célidan, for, occurring at the end of the play, no development, no complexities or obstacles are given.

A tendency is observable in the way the characters conduct themselves with regard to their passion: from Mélite to La Veuve, Corneille presents an increasing number of characters who demonstrate self-control: Cloris in Mélite, Dorise and Clitandre in Clitandre, and Clarice, Philiste and Célidan in La Veuve. Of even greater significance is the presence of the primary characters Philiste and Clarice in this group, bringing us one step closer to Rodrigue and Chimène.

The qualified leniency of the parents studied in the first two

plays becomes much more strict in Là Veuve. Chrysante first appears as a benevolent mother unwilling to force her daughter into an unwanted marriage:

Ne crains pas que je veuille user de ma puissance:
Je croirois en produire un trop cruel effet,
Si je te séparois d'un amant si parfait. (vv. 166-168)

But very soon we learn that she is arranging a marriage between Doris and Florange, the latter something of a simpleton, as Doris tells us, but also rich, as Chrysante informs us. It is obviously the attraction of money that motivates Chrysante's choice, and she attributes the same motivation to her daughter:

Il suffit qu'elle voit ce que le bien apporte,
Et qu'elle s'accommode aux solides raisons
Qui forment à présent les meilleures maisons. (vv. 282-284)

Further insight into her motivation is revealed by a reply she makes to Géron: "Deux jours me suffiront, ménagés dextrement, / Pour disposer mon fils à mon contentement" (vv. 287-288, variant). She seems to act out of selfishness rather than for the benefit of her daughter, for her own "contentement", not for that of Doris. Philiste recognizes this weakness in his mother:

Les femmes de son âge ont ce mal ordinaire
De régler sur les biens une pareille affaire:
Un si honteux motif leur fait tout décider,
Et l'or qui les aveugle a droit de les guider. (vv. 911-914)

But he is as obstinate as Chrysante, although for what he considers higher motives: he has promised his sister to Alcidon and does his ut-

most to fulfill his promise, even to the extent of showing disrespect to his mother in this matter:

Chrysante: Est-ce là le respect que j'attendois de vous?
 Philiste: Commandez que le coeur à vos yeux je m'arrache,
 Pourvu que mon honneur ne souffre aucune tache.

(vv. 1054-1056)

Doris is innocently caught between these conflicting inflexibilities:

. . . Chacun de son côté, prennent sur mon devoir
 Et sur mes volontés un absolu pouvoir.
 Chacun me veut forcer à suivre son caprice:
 L'un a ses amitiés, l'autre a son avarice. (vv. 1549-1552)

We doubt very much that Doris would agree with Rivaille when he says that Chrysante, as parent, is inclined to indulgence and takes into consideration her daughter's preferences.²⁰ Certainly Doris' soliloquy (Act IV, scene 9) indicates the opposite. Moreover, had not Chrysante begun arrangements with Géron before talking to her daughter? In Act V, when Célidan asks permission to marry Doris, does Chrysante in turn ask her daughter's opinion? It is not from lack of experience that she acts in this authoritarian fashion, for, as she informs us in Act V, scene 6, she too was prevented from marrying the one she loved (Célidan's father) because of wilful parents. However, we must not make a shrew of her, for, if she is so strongly attached to money, it is in part for her daughter's sake:

Considérez, mon fils, quel heur, quel avantage,
 L'affaire qui se traite apporte à votre soeur,

²⁰Op. cit., p. 108.

Le bien est en ce siècle une grande douceur:
Etant riche, on est tout . . . (vv. 1060-1063)

Her concern, though self-interested, is also directed towards Doris: she wants happiness for her daughter and, as she sees it, riches will acquire it. L. E. Harvey has rightly interpreted that Chrysante's explanation of her own marriage serves in turn

to explain her constant attitude all through the play. She lost the man she loved because her family had insufficient wealth to satisfy his family She is determined to give her daughter the wealth she lacked, not for itself, but because she believes that money guarantees love.²¹

Her strictness, then, originates from a motherly concern, at least in part, but, unlike Méлите's mother, she has no consideration for the freedom of choice of her daughter.

Of the remaining characters, Lycas, Philiste's servant, and Polymas, Doraste and Listor, servants of Clarice, appear only to carry out their normal duties. Géron, Florange's negotiator for the hand of Doris, receives only a little greater delineation. He carries out his rôle of spokesman dutifully, to the point of providing what he hopes are adequate enough reasons to excuse his master's awkwardness (vv. 263-266). He is indignant at being called a go-between by Philiste and retorts that "Je ne sortis jamais des termes de l'honneur" (v. 1042). However, he shows himself to be indiscreet in revealing his negotiations to the nurse. We know little else about him.

²¹"The Noble and the Comic in Corneille's La Veuve," Symposium, X (1956), 294.

Much better depicted and of considerably more importance is Clarice's nurse, sister of the nurse we met in Mélite. One would expect her to work for her mistress' benefit, but such is not the case as we see in Act II, scene 2, where she actually attempts to dissuade Clarice from marrying Philiste. Presumably helping the latter in advancing his suit for Clarice (vv. 86-89), she, in fact, serves Alcidon's cause. Surprised by Philiste who has overheard her conversation with Clarice, she quickly turns it to her own advantage, protesting that she did only what she had promised him, proclaiming her superior knowledge in such matters:

Moi, qui de ce métier ai la haute science,
 Et qui pour te servir brûle d'impatience,
 Par un chemin plus court qu'un propos complaisant,
 J'ai su croître sa flamme en la contredisant. (vv. 535-538)

When Philiste continues to accuse her of treachery, the nurse defends herself by using an astute psychological argument of which she should have thought before attempting to influence Clarice:

Jamais il ne s'est vu de tours plus assurés.
 La raison et l'amour sont ennemis jurés;
 Et lorsque ce dernier dans un esprit commande,
 Il ne peut endurer que l'autre le gourmande:
 Plus la raison l'attaque, et plus il se roidit;
 Plus elle l'intimide, et plus il s'enhardit. (vv. 545-550)

She has learned very quickly the truth of these words from her recent experience with her mistress and, opportunist that she is, she takes full advantage of the knowledge to outwit Philiste. The latter and Clarice having exchanged vows of love and arranged the day of their marriage, the nurse cynically voices a threat reminiscent of the final

threat of the nurse in Mélite: "Vous comptez sans votre hôte, et vous pourrez apprendre / Que ce n'est pas sans moi que ce jour se doit prendre" (vv. 639-640). Opportunist again, she capitalizes on Géron's imprudence to provide Alcidon with a pretext for acquiring help to kidnap Clarice (Act II, scene 6). Indeed, throughout her machinations, we feel that Alcidon would have been at quite a loss without her, for it is she who plans all the details of the abduction. Moreover, she compounds her treachery to Clarice and Philiste as well as her co-operation with Alcidon by participating directly in the abduction: pretending to faint, she puts her arms around Clarice's legs to prevent her from fleeing; she gives the abductors ample time to escape before sounding the alarm; and when Clarice's servants come to the rescue, she gives them false directions. However, she meets her match in Célidan who dupes her. Célidan is somewhat surprised that the cunning nurse was so easily deceived and uncovered: "Vraiment un mauvais conte aisément l'a dupée: / Je la croyois plus fine . . ." (vv. 1484-1485). Ascribing a reason to her hasty confession, Célidan thinks that

. . . c'est l'effet des remords.
Le cuisant souvenir d'une action méchante
Soudain au moindre mot nous donne l'épouvante,

(vv. 1490-1492)

which is highly improbable, given her unscrupulous nature. Closer to the mark would be that fear loosens her tongue and, not one to miss an opportunity, condemns Alcidon to save her own skin. In any event Célidan offers her refuge from possible reprisals, and thus the nurse leaves the play and, in fact, the remainder of Cornelian theatre, for

in future plays she will be replaced by the souvante; or perhaps more accurately, she will be promoted to the rôle of souvante, who, as we shall see in the next chapter,²² retains some of the traits of the nurse.

In La Veuve, the characters' preoccupation with money is brought into direct conflict with the principle of honour. Chrysante reveals her love of money, as we have seen,²³ quite frequently, and therein lies her motivation for the choice of a husband for Doris. After all, no one can argue, as she sees it, against the fact that "Etant riche on est tout" (v. 1063). Even at the end of the play, she gives Célidan permission to marry Doris because "Je connois votre bien, je sais votre maison" (v. 1754). On the other hand we find Philiste who has promised a friend the hand of his sister. For him, it is a point of honour to keep his promise as it is for Doris as well: "Je veux tenir parole à mes meilleurs amis, / Et qu'elle tienne aussi ce qu'elle m'a promis" (vv. 1073-1074). That Doris accepts to marry Florange out of duty to her mother or that Célidan acquires greater rights to Philiste's gratitude matters not, the latter remains firm in his first resolution to give his sister to Alcidon. Unfortunately for Doris, she is caught in the middle of this conflict, used simply as barter:

. . . juge, en regardant cette belle maîtresse,
Si celui qui pour toi l'ôte à son ravisseur
N'a pas bien mérité l'échange de ta soeur. (vv. 1896-1898)

²² See below, p. 163.

²³ See above, pp. 116-118.

As we have noted above,²⁴ Doris feels very deeply the tyranny of her condition: "Qu'aux filles comme moi le sort est inhumain! / Que leur condition se trouve déplorable!" (vv. 1546-1547) After a brief inner revolt against the absolute power which mother and brother exercise "sur mon devoir" (v. 1549), she resigns herself to her plight. Evidently, in the society in which she lives, it is the daughter's duty to obey her parents (Clarice can claim freedom from this duty only because she is a widow). Doris could be completely free from this duty if she completed her revolt and openly rejected the principle of submission to authority. But we have seen, in Clitandre, that similar conduct results in punishment for Pymante and, in La Veuve, a kind of ostracism for Alcidon who has broken another rule of the ethic of the play. Doris, on the other hand, accepts her situation and, in doing so with complete lucidity, arrives at freedom, a "liberté d'indifférence" as Doubrovsky calls it:²⁵

Mais mon coeur se conserve, au point où je le veux,
Toujours libre, et qui garde une amitié sincère
A celui que voudra me prescrire une mère. (vv. 160-162)

Doris makes an act of will whereby she consciously and deliberately chooses to submit to authority: "Il faut que mes désirs, toujours indifférents, / Aillent sans résistance au gré de mes parents" (vv. 1565-1566). It is, with Doris as later with Chimène, a choice based on fulfilment of duty as well as personal integrity, the foundation for the conduct of future Cornelian heroines having already been

²⁴See above, pp. 113-115.

²⁵Op. cit., p. 47.

laid in this, our author's third play.

In choosing as she has and conducting herself accordingly, Doris acquires personal honour, and thus joins the ranks of her brother, Philiste. However, this champion of honour is also prevented from doing as he wishes because of monetary and social conditions: he can not aspire to Clarice's affection because he is "inégal de biens et de condition" (v. 59) to the one he loves. These same considerations affect Clarice: "Que mon rang me déplaît! Que mon trop de fortune, / Au lieu de m'obliger, me choque et m'importune" (vv. 377-379). Their problem is resolved through the intensification of their feeling, resulting from the nurse's attempt at discouraging their union, love apparently being stronger than the obstructive considerations:

En vain nos inégalités
M'avoient avantaagée à mon désavantage.
L'amour confond nos qualités . . . (vv. 1103-1105)

However, the next line of this speech by Clarice is very revealing: "Et nous réduit tous deux sous un même esclavage" (v. 1106). Love can conquer these other considerations because the characters involved are its slaves and accept it as their primary cause.

Moreover Philiste has another preoccupation which he holds very highly, namely his honour, which does not enter into conflict (as was apparently the case with Clitandre in the play by that name) with his affection for Clarice and which gives him, in Stegmann's words, "l'occasion de manifester ou d'accroître la réputation orgueilleuse

du moi".²⁶ It is as important to Philiste to honour his promise to Alcidon as it is to honour the "foi" he has given Clarice. Nothing will make him deviate from fulfilling it, for it would mean a loss of honour: his mother attempts to make him change his mind (Act III, scene 7), Alcidon quarrels with him after the abduction of Clarice (Act IV, scene 3), but to no avail. Honour is of such importance to him that he says to Chrysante: "Commandez que le coeur à vos yeux je m'arrache / Pourvu que mon honneur ne souffre aucune tache" (vv. 1055-1056), for honour to him is a duty (v. 1290) which takes precedence over filial respect. In Act V, scene 8, Philiste finds himself in an awkward situation: Célidan asks him to carry out his promise by giving him permission to marry Doris. Philiste, caught between two promises, in turn asks Célidan: "Dispense-moi, de grâce, et songe qu'avant toi / Ce bizarre Alcidon tient en gage ma foi" (vv. 1889-1890). One wonders what his response would have been had Célidan confronted him with his wish before setting Clarice free. Clarice gives us an indication of a possible reaction in replying to Chrysante's appeal that her son forget his old promise in favour of that given to the saviour of his mistress:

Je ne saurois souffrir qu'en ma présence on die
 Qu'il doive m'acquérir par une perfidie:
 Et pour un tel ami lui voir si peu de foi
 Me feroit redouter qu'il en eût moins pour moi.

(vv. 1899-1902)

Had Philiste gone back on his word to Alcidon without just cause,

²⁶ L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 447.

Clarice would not have loved him, as in the similar situation in Le Cid where Rodrigue must avenge his own and his family's honour in order to remain worthy of Chimène. In words equally applicable to both these characters, Jean Starobinski states: "Qui a donné sa parole ne peut désormais être infidèle qu'au prix d'un parjure déshonorant. Et si, contre toutes les contraintes et toutes les séductions extérieures, il parvient à tenir parole sans défaillance, le voici devenu glorieux" ²⁷ However, it is Clarice who responds to Chrysante, not Philiste. Perhaps the latter knows the consequences of betraying his word, but we are not so informed. Moreover, Philiste's honour appears strictly personal: it is conceivable that he applies it equally to his family, but again we are not informed of this. Though the indication that Clarice gives us is incomplete, the situation nevertheless looks forward to that of Le Cid.

Honour is similarly a concern of Célidan. Of his promise to help Alcidon in the abduction, he says that, initially, "L'honneur a quelque temps combattu ma promesse" (v. 784), but finally decides to accept because "Après son action [Philiste's] la tienne est légitime" (v. 795). Célidan acts like a providential agent whose rôle is to right injustices. Altruistic in this matter, he is also altruistic in love, for although he loves Doris he has kept it a secret as long as Alcidon pursued her. In his self-abnegation, Célidan prefigures the généreux Sévère of Polyeucte who graciously effaces himself in deference to the

²⁷In the chapter entitled "Sur Corneille" in his L'Oeil vivant (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 39.

love of Pauline and Polyeucte. However, Célidan's honour and disinterestedness stand him in good stead in his affection for Doris who says in reply to Célidan's proposal of marriage: "Ici votre mérite est joint à leur puissance" (v. 1957, variant v. 3). Thus for Célidan, as for Philiste, the principle of honour proves instrumental in demonstrating merit and acquiring the object of their love.

Alcidon pays only lip service to the word 'honour', using it solely to his own advantage. He uses it as a pretext for acquiring the help of Célidan, saying that it is an offense to his honour that Doris should marry Florange (v. 790, variant v. 4). To impress Célidan even more, he complains that his friend has deprived him of the honour of offering Doris to him (v. 824). Finding Philiste with sword in hand, he taunts him: ". . . un miracle visible / T'a rendu maintenant à l'honneur plus sensible" (vv. 1271-1272), but Philiste recognizes the hollowness and cowardliness of his words (vv. 1299-1300). In the last scene of the play, thinking that Célidan has uncovered him before the others, Alcidon bursts out: "Perfide! à mes dépens tu veux donc des maîtresses? / Et mon honneur perdu te gagne leurs caresses?" (vv. 1915-1916). Obviously, what he considers honour are merely the external manifestations of that quality, for as we can see in his deceptions, he certainly has no personal honour, being content merely with its façade, and it is this lack of true honour along with his overweening vanity that brings about his downfall.

Two systems of values, then, have been presented in La Veuve: one revolving about monetary considerations and another about honour. The first, although fairly common in the society of the play gives way

to the second which the main characters consider more noble. Moreover, the qualities of the characters who hold to honour--self-denial, courage, merit, constancy--remain those of the généreux. Furthermore, Corneille has shown in this play that to follow this ethic does not deny love, but rather, as with Philiste and Clarice, co-operates with love or, as with Célidan and Doris, advances love. On the other hand, to reject the ethic in favour of pure self-interest, as does Alcidon, leads to disfavour and disrepute. In this regard, however, there remains the case of Philiste whose preoccupation with honour also appears solely egocentric, despite the contrary indication mentioned above. Corneille will have to clarify this point and give even greater self-control to his hero before he arrives at his later heroic généreux.

In Clitandre we noted that Corneille attenuated the pathetic element by dispersing it and filling in the gaps with physical action. With La Veuve, he returns to the method used in Mélite: when a situation threatens to become too grave, he dissipates the mood by introducing comic effect. For example, in Act II, scene 3, Philiste's anger at the nurse is more than neutralized by the latter's virtuoso performance with words and arguments. In Act III, scene 6, Philiste's anger at Géron quickly becomes comic through the farcical buffeting he gives to Géron.

Although the author continues to reduce the effect of pathos, there are instances where he does not weaken it as much as in Mélite. Although the pity the audience feels at the suffering of Clarice expressed in her soliloquy in Act I, scene 6 is somewhat alleviated by the intermission that follows it, a similar soliloquy by Philiste be-

gins Act II. These two scenes, straddling the intermission as they do, are in positions of high relief, much more so than when, for example, a comic scene interrupts two pathetic scenes in the same act. In the former case the discontinuity makes the pathetic scene stand out. If the first scene of the next act begins where the last one left off then the relief is that much higher. Thus Philiste's soliloquy, besides showing the audience his own suffering, recalls that of Clarice which has just been seen: although the characters who speak in each scene differ, both are implicated in the same difficult situation, each suffering because of himself as well as the other. Because the intermission lessens the pathetic element we must not make too much of this, but it does indicate, nevertheless, a somewhat greater sustention of pathos. An even more effective method, of course, would be to have two such scenes follow one another without any break at all, but Corneille perhaps avoided this to further dispel the pathetic effect.

Another instance where pathos is not as diluted as in Méliste occurs after the abduction of Clarice: at the beginning of Act IV Philiste learns of the kidnapping and his suffering undoubtedly produces profound pity in the audience giving way to laughter through Philiste's pursuit of his own and Clarice's servants. These scenes (Act IV, scenes 1 and 2) do not assume the mock epic proportions of Eraste's madness, but rather remain on a realistic plane, Philiste's anger stemming from the frustration he feels at the impossibility of discovering any information which would allow him to rescue Clarice. The scenes produce laughter, but not as much as the mock-heroic antics of Eraste. Moreover, the latter take up five scenes while Philiste's

only two. Thus, while laughter dispels the emotion caused by Philiste's anger and sorrow, this effect lasts only for a short time in comparison to that in Méliste, because of both its quality and quantity.

In Méliste and Clitandre, the suffering of all major characters is caused by external agents. The same may be said of that of Philiste in La Veuve in the case of the abduction of Clarice. But the pathos elicited from Doris is created by an internal conflict. True, there exists also an external conflict of interest caused by Philiste and Chrysante, but the greatest feeling of pity is excited from within Doris herself:

Je n'ose fuir mon mal, ni rechercher mon bien.
 Dure sujétion! étrange tyrannie!
 Toute liberté donc à mon choix se dénie!

 Cependant il y va du reste de ma vie,
 Et je n'ose écouter tant soit peu mon envie.

(vv. 1558-1560; 1563-1564)

Doris wishes to have freedom of choice, wishes to liberate herself from the oppression of parental authority, but she does not dare. Pathos is derived from her internal struggle, for the choice to revolt or to continue in her rôle of submission is hers to make. Similarly, Philiste is trapped by a personal promise he has made to Alcidon. He has chosen to pledge his word and will be true to it in spite of Alcidon's increasing offensiveness. This, nevertheless, causes him much suffering, and the nobleness of the principle he defends heightens pathetic feeling. Because the pathos emanates from internal conflict, it becomes more profound, more touching. Even more pathetic

is the suffering caused by the inner struggle of two characters based on the same circumstances, as is the case for Philiste and Clarice who dare not declare their love for one another. In La Veuve, however, this effect lasts only for the better part of the first two acts. In his next work, Corneille will extend it over almost the entire play.

Generally, Corneille's use of pathos in La Veuve has not changed much from that in Mérite. However, there are some indications which lead us to believe that the pathetic element is becoming more profound.

La Veuve, then, represents a progression in Corneille's development as a playwright. Although he has observed none of the unities in a strict way, the manner in which he has dealt with them shows definite improvement. He has limited the place of action to a smaller area; he has struck a compromise, between the irregularity of Mérite and the strict observance of the unity of time in Clitandre, in which the action develops in five days, each act taking place on a different day; and although the action still consists of multiple plots, continuity and justification of events as well as psychological preparation provide greater unity and fluidity. The treatment and use of pathos remains essentially the same in La Veuve as in Mérite, but there are a few instances where it is more profound or better sustained.

The dominant theme remains love, but each of the impassioned characters, with the exception of the deceiver, demonstrates greater self-control, a quality found for the first time in the hero and heroine of this play, although it has appeared in other rôles previously. Moreover, the latter, although possessed by their love, remain somewhat practical within the context of this passion.

The predominant ethic presented in this play is one of honour which overrides that based on riches and which is directly related to générosité, for those characters who hold to honour manifest some of the qualities of the généreux: constancy, courage, merit, controlled ambition and a certain amount of self-control. Related too to the ethic is a suggestion of the beneficent providential being which finds its way into the final outcome of Doris' difficulties. Célidan and, even more so, Doris find freedom: the first, by an act of will, makes a deliberate decision of self-denial, while the latter makes a completely lucid and deliberate choice to submit to authority, Célidan for reasons of personal integrity, while Doris for the same reason as well as in fulfilment of her duty. But there exists as yet no question of freedom in love. We also learn that to comply with the ethic does not deny love, but rather works with or advances love, while to reject the ethic leads to loss of love and defeat.

Decidedly Corneille has made progress in this play, for he has ameliorated much of what he has previously done and filled in many gaps. However, in so doing, he has created others or has left unfinished many of the new elements introduced in La Veuve.

CHAPTER V

LA GALERIE DU PALAIS

The title of Corneille's next play, La Galerie du palais, is misleading, most of the play taking place in an entirely different locality. In the Examen, the author defends the use of this title by appealing to history: ". . . les Grecs, nos premiers maîtres, ne s'attachoient point à la principale action pour en faire porter le nom à leurs ouvrages, et . . . ne gardoient aucune règle sur cet article".¹ He goes on to add that he chose this title "parce que la promesse de ce spectacle extraordinaire, et agréable pour sa naïveté, devoit exciter vraisemblablement la curiosité des auditeurs".² Corneille proved to be correct in his assumption that the title would attract and the "spectacle" would please the spectators, for, in the dedication to Madame de Liancourt, he states that, of the six comedies he has written, "si celle-ci n'est la meilleure, c'est la plus heureuse".³ However, the Galerie with its shops and vendors appears only twice and

¹M.-L., II, 12.

²M.-L., II, 12.

³M.-L., II, 10. The article "Palais de Justice" in the Dictionnaire de Paris (Paris: Larousse, 1964), p. 391, explains that the Galerie du Palais was the Galerie Mercière of the Palais de Justice, "cette antique et confuse maison de lois, peu à peu envahie par les marchands de frivolités et les libraires. C'était alors le grand rendez-vous de la mode parisienne, le théâtre de toutes les intrigues et de toutes les galanteries." The prospect of seeing a representation of the Galerie with its colourful merchants and array of merchandise, the opportunity to witness the development of an "intrigue" among its fashionable habitués must indeed have attracted spectators to Corneille's play.

for a relatively short period of time.

Whereas La Veuve could, with the exception of two scenes, unravel on any street where the two families of interest lived (although we are not informed of this), there no longer exists any uncertainty with regard to the situation of the action in La Galerie du palais: "Célidée et Hippolyte sont deux voisines dont les demeures ne sont séparées que par le travers d'une rue".⁴ Apart from the two displacements of the action to the Galerie, all events occur in this limited area: "sans cet agrément, la pièce auroit été très régulière pour l'unité du lieu et la liaison des scènes, qui n'est interrompue que par là".⁵ Corneille has achieved unity of place, but has deliberately chosen not to adhere to it in order to please his audience.

La Galerie du palais does not obey the rule of the unity of time, the author resorting instead to the same technique as in La Veuve: "Quant à la durée de cette pièce, elle est dans le même ordre que la précédente, c'est-à-dire dans cinq jours consécutifs".⁶ It is true that the play develops during five consecutive days, but, as Thomas B. Rudmose-Brown has indicated,⁷ each act does not represent a separate day as it did in his previous play, all of Act III and most of Act IV taking place on the same day. Nevertheless, the action is much more

⁴M.-L., II, 12-13.

⁵M.-L., II, 12.

⁶M.-L., II, 14.

⁷In his edition of Pierre Corneille, La Galerie du palais (Manchester: The University Press, 1920), p. 98.

concentrated than it was in Mélite and as much as in La Veuve, but without the regularity of the latter.

The playwright's skill in manipulating the action, however, continues to develop. If La Galerie du palais contains more than one plot as did the previous plays, they are this time very closely related. Lysandre and Célidée have loved one another for two years and, at the beginning of the play, are on the threshold of marriage. However, Hippolyte, close friend of Célidée, also loves Lysandre, but is courted instead by Dorimant who fell in love with her instantly when he saw her for the first time at the Galerie du Palais. Rather than accept his suit, Hippolyte prefers, with the help of Florice, her souvante, and of Aronte, Lysandre's servant, to attempt to catch Lysandre for herself. Hippolyte, having noticed Célidée's attraction to Dorimant, uses this disposition to convince her friend to pretend to reject Lysandre in order to test his affection.⁸ As a consequence of her experiment, Célidée realizes that it is truly the latter she loves, but too late, for Lysandre, in despair, retaliates by feigning love for Hippolyte. Also in despair, Célidée offers Dorimant her hand in marriage, which he does not accept in spite of Hippolyte's indifference towards him. Lysandre and Dorimant suspect one another of being rivals and, after a number of confrontations, are about to duel when Célidée intervenes to discover that Lysandre still loves her. All hope of ever winning Lysandre now lost, Hippolyte accepts Dorimant, who never did displease

⁸ Thus, it is not, as Lemonnier says (op. cit., p. 48), "par simple amusement, peut-être par curiosité perverse" that Hippolyte suggests this scheme to Célidée.

her, and all ends well for everyone, including Aronte and Florice who are pardoned.

Evidently, the action is, strictly speaking, not unified, containing a major plot which revolves about Célidée, Lysandre and Hippolyte, and a minor one concerning Hippolyte and Dorimant. Nevertheless, as Lancaster rightly indicates, "the two sets of interests are so closely bound together that the unity of action is practically achieved"⁹: Lysandre, who loves only Célidée, is a friend of Dorimant and, in an attempt to regain Célidée by making her jealous, he pretends to love Hippolyte; Célidée, a friend of Hippolyte, believing herself abandoned by Lysandre, makes advances to Dorimant, who loves only Hippolyte; the latter, friend and sometimes confidante to Célidée, loves and pursues Lysandre; Dorimant, continuing his suit for Hippolyte, befriends the abandoned Célidée, leading Lysandre to believe that he is a rival. As closely linked as the two plots are, one still wonders what bearing Dorimant's immediate love for Hippolyte has on the primary question of whether or not Célidée and Lysandre will marry. However, such a consideration does not eliminate the fact that the stories are much more closely linked than in the previous plays.

The exposition of La Galerie du palais is not as well done as that of La Veuve mainly because, as we have seen above,¹⁰ Corneille chose to present the scenes of "spectacle" occurring at the Galerie,

⁹ A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, I, ii, 604.

¹⁰ See above, p. 133.

scenes which initially have no significance for the action. Their justification eventually materializes when Dorimant sees Hippolyte for the first time and immediately falls in love with her. Corneille makes use of "la promiscuité du Palais" to facilitate "la connaissance, les rencontres" which "amène[nt] naturellement la conclusion matrimoniale".¹¹ However, Corneille was quite rightly more satisfied with the dénouement of this play than with those of his preceding plays. If it still contains a double marriage, our author this time consciously laughs at the practice of ending comedies with multiple marriages: when Florice suggests that Hippolyte's mother marry Célidée's father, Chrysante replies: "Outre l'âge en tous deux un peu trop refroidie, / Cela sentiroit trop sa fin de comédie" (vv. 1793-1794). What pleased Corneille the most, however, was that "le cinquième acte est moins traînant que celui des précédentes, et conclut deux mariages sans laisser aucun mécontent; ce qui n'arrive pas dans celles-là".¹² Indeed, all characters are happy at the end: the lovers marry their loved ones, the parents are pleased with the matches their children have made, and even the intriguing servants are pardoned. There is no bitter nurse, no condemned Pymante, no dishonoured Alcidon. Moreover, the last act is "moins traînant" because this time it is more necessary in achieving the dénouement. Whereas in the last act of La Veuve Philiste and Clarice were relegated to the rôle of witnesses of the

¹¹Emile Magne, "Corneille évocateur de Paris: le Palais de Justice et la Place Royale," Mercure de France, LXI (1906), 537.

¹²M.-L., II, 15.

termination of the secondary plot, in La Galerie du palais Célidée and Lysandre take direct part in the entire dénouement: because Célidée and Lysandre will definitely be married, Hippolyte must marry Dorimant in order to remain true to her word; Lysandre actively works toward their union by having Pleirante make arrangements with Hippolyte's mother; it is at the instigation of Lysandre and Célidée that they and Dorimant and Hippolyte become friends once again. The two primary characters are thus instrumental in bringing about the dénouement of their own story as well as the second plot and are largely responsible for the return to stability at the end of the play.

In the first three plays, the obstacles which Corneille had presented to the fulfilment of the characters' wishes were external and melodramatic in nature, such as the use of false letters or abduction. In La Veuve, besides resorting to abduction, the author had also offered a less sensational impediment in the form of inequalities in wealth and rank. La Galerie du palais continues this trend, dropping the melodramatic device altogether, making use, instead, of a less flamboyant principle, which demands even greater justification of events than La Veuve, namely the use of misunderstanding. Now, Rivaille correctly states that it is just such a misunderstanding which separates Célidée and Lysandre.¹³ But he goes on to say that this separation would not have occurred without the intervention of Hippolyte. We would say, instead, that it would have taken place, but not as quickly, for Célidée is so attracted to Dorimant that "Mon

¹³Op. cit., p. 154.

coeur a de la peine à demeurer constant" (v. 508). It is true, however, that Corneille chose to give the initiative to someone else, rather than make the character most concerned the initiator.

Let us study more closely the development of this misunderstanding, showing at the same time how the author justified it and made it coherent. We have just seen that Célidée, in spite of having loved Lysandre for two years, has been mentally prepared for the suggestion which Hippolyte will make to separate them. Hippolyte herself received the idea from her souvante, Florice (Act II, scene 5), but she too was prepared by her love for Lysandre and her desire to shift his attention from Célidée to herself. Célidée will test her lover's faithfulness and love by feigning not to love him. Initially, the test fails in so far as it concerns Hippolyte, for Lysandre shows himself a model of constancy and love (Act II, scene 9), while Célidée's love increases (Act III, scene 4). However, Hippolyte has another accomplice, Aronte, Lysandre's servant, who convinces his master that the only way to regain Célidée's love is by making her jealous; reluctantly he accepts (Act III, scene 1). He encounters Célidée in the company of Hippolyte and bestows upon the latter all the terms of love previously addressed to the first. Célidée, completely taken aback, invents a pretext and leaves (Act III, scene 5). The misunderstanding is now established, and, as we have seen, chiefly by characters (Hippolyte, Florice and Aronte) other than the most directly involved.

We have seen also that Célidée was first of all predisposed to accept the suggestion made by Hippolyte. Now, with the establishment of the misunderstanding, only the mental disposition of both Célidée

and Lysandre will rule their conduct. Lysandre remains convinced that Célidée no longer loves him, while Célidée believes that Lysandre has forsaken her: Pleirante's command that she marry Lysandre (Act IV, scene 10) only causes Célidée to feel persecuted and to revolt (Act IV, scene 11); Lysandre, having failed to rekindle Célidée's love through his feigned courtship of Hippolyte, is once again approached by Aronte who suggests that to punish Célidée's infidelity, he has only to turn to truth his feint, but Lysandre sends him packing in no uncertain terms (Act IV, scene 4). Another outside intervention fails to bring about the desired results: Célidée, to avenge herself for being supplanted by Hippolyte, tries to make herself loved by Dorimant (Act III, scene 10). Hippolyte, having learned from Aronte that his master intends to seek Célidée's pardon (Act IV, scene 1), tries to worsen their division and suggests to Aronte that he make Lysandre jealous. The unfaithful servant, with this intention in mind, speaks in such a calculatedly awkward way when he meets Dorimant and Célidée, as to further establish that Lysandre is still courting Hippolyte (Act IV, scene 2), and then Aronte brings his master to see Célidée and Dorimant together (Act IV, scene 3). However, these two ploys backfire: Dorimant decides to duel with Lysandre for the hand of Hippolyte (Act IV, scene 3), and Lysandre wants to do the same for the hand of Célidée (Act IV, scene 5). They are about to begin the duel (Act V, scene 2) when Célidée intervenes to protect Dorimant who flees, considering Célidée an "importune" (v. 1532), leaving her alone with Lysandre. All of the previous development leads to this event which will provide them the opportunity of rectifying the paradoxical

situation in which Célidée and Lysandre find themselves, for, alone, the two lovers gradually come to see the truth (Act V, scene 4). The way Corneille brings about their reconciliation is very cleverly done, showing a variety of feelings and arguments leading eventually to forgiveness and reunion: Lysandre, in despair, threatens to kill himself for love of Célidée; surprised, she protests that he still thinks he is speaking to Hippolyte; he admits that he pretended to love Hippolyte, his heart all the while still under Célidée's power: that he asked Pleirante once again for her hand, that he is now willing to die in order to please her proves it; Célidée reproves him for not having withstood her small test and explains her own situation; finally, she admits that she is the cause of their troubles, apologizes, forgives and asks forgiveness. As a result of their trials, they love one another more than ever. Thus, although their misunderstanding was prepared and sustained by other characters, they had created their own false situations and, in the end, they bring about the conclusions to them themselves. Also, we have seen while speaking of the dénouement¹⁴ that their reunion leads to the union of Dorimant and Hippolyte.

In La Veuve, Corneille had already begun to have the primary characters influence the course of events: it is thanks to their own temperaments and personalities that Clarice and Philiste declare their love for one another. However, after this exchange which takes place early in the play (Act II, scene 4), these two characters fall victim to events which they neither create nor terminate. In La Galerie du

¹⁴ See above, pp. 137-138.

palais, Corneille has extended this procedure over the entire play. Louis Rivaille, unfortunately overlooking the beginning of La Veuve, could nevertheless rightly conclude that, from Méliste to La Galerie du palais, "les personnages principaux, d'abord simples témoins des événements, en sont devenus les acteurs".¹⁵ Moreover, because the two lovers, Célidée and Lysandre, produce and undo the false situations in which they find themselves as a result of their temperaments, and because these situations are a product of misunderstanding, it was necessary for Corneille to justify what would otherwise be implausible. It was necessary to show what conditions caused such exceptional occurrences, how they were prepared and committed, how they could persist, whence the even greater continuity, coherence, and justification of the action in La Galerie du palais than in the previous play.

As indicated by the recurrence of the following words at the rhyme, the dominant theme in La Galerie du palais remains love: flamme (16 times), amour (11 times), feu (10 times), affection (8 times), coeur (6 times), âme (11 times), amant (10 times) and maîtresse (13 times), this motif reinforced by the frequent return to the rhyming couplets, flamme-âme (10 times) and jour-amour (5 times). The presence of Hippolyte eighteen times at the rhyme is easily accountable by the fact that she is directly involved with all of the other characters in the play and reminds us that its sub-title is l'Amie rivale. The concern with promises seen in La Veuve still exists in this play

¹⁵Op. cit., p. 167.

as the frequency of the word foi (11 times) and the couplets moi-foi (8 times) and moi-loi (3 times) indicate. But this concern has changed nature, for the words loi and promesse, and the couplets toi-foi and promesse-maitresse rarely appear in this play. They seem to have been replaced by numerous other words none of which appears very frequently, but all containing a relationship to inconstancy or pretence at inconstancy: feinte (8 times), mépris (7 times), volage (4 times), changer (4 times), changement (3 times), inconstant (4 times), etc. Corneille, then, appears to be presenting this aspect in a new light.

It is undoubtedly because three of the four main characters resort to deception that the words devoir (1 time) and honneur (1 time) appear so infrequently. Supporting this conclusion is the fact that it is Dorimant, the only one of these four who does not deceive, who uses them. Gloire (2 times) has the same weight as it did in the previous plays, with the exception of Clitandre. The word raison (4 times) occurs only half as often here as in the last play indicating, as we shall soon see, that the characters are much too bent on acquiring the object of their desires to worry unduly about this faculty. However, there is a marked increase in the use of mérite (12 times) used mainly by or in reference to Dorimant (6 times), the only character who is completely worthy, the remainder seen in a context where one character tries to persuade another of the latter's or of a third party's worthiness.

We saw in the last chapter that, in La Veuve, Corneille presented characters who viewed a promise as absolutely binding and for whom any

breach was dishonourable. In La Galerie du palais, the author presents another side of the question, that is, whether there ever exists a justifiable reason for breaking a promise, and what the consequences of such a breach might be. A study of the characters and of their ethic will serve to support this point as well as provide further detail for it.

Célidée, not to be outdone by the heroines of the previous plays, is among the most beautiful women in Paris:

Après elles [one of which is Hippolyte] et vous il n'est rien
dans Paris,
Et je n'en sache point, pour belles qu'on les nomme,
Qui puissent attirer les yeux d'un honnête homme. (vv. 64-66)

Moreover, "son mérite est grand" (v. 904), says Lysandre, and Hippolyte explains that her friend's "mérite" consists of "qualités et de corps et d'esprit / Dont pas un coeur donné jamais ne se reprit" (vv. 899-900). Although we are not shown the initial stages and development of the love Célidée and Lysandre have for one another, Aronte and mainly Hippolyte shed some light on the question. Upon their first meeting, "L'amour en même temps sut embraser vos coeurs" (v. 524) to such a degree that Lysandre "se vit accepter avant que de s'offrir" (v. 527). Célidée accepted his love immediately and without question, putting no obstacle whatsoever in his way so that

Il ne vit rien à craindre, il n'eut rien à souffrir;
Il vit sa récompense acquise avant la peine,
Et devant le combat sa victoire certaine. (vv. 528-530)

Because Célidée was so receptive, it is not very surprising that

Lysandre remains constant, continues Hippolyte. As a result Célidée has no idea how great is Lysandre's love for her. As far as she knows, the slightest severity might make him change his mind. Hippolyte suggests that "La force de l'amour paroît dans la souffrance" (v. 537). Up to the beginning of the play, then, love between Lysandre and Célidée was instantaneous and reciprocal with no obstacles to overcome, no hardships or suffering to endure. Further, we learn that this situation has lasted for two years (v. 1170) and, at the beginning of the play, apparently still continues. In Act I, scene 2, Pleirante authorizes the marriage of the two lovers and attempts to elicit a confession of love from his daughter. Célidée replies in terms which show affection for Lysandre, but not ardent love: "Monsieur, il est tout vrai, son ardeur légitime / A tant gagné sur moi que j'en fais de l'estime" (vv. 33-34). We feel, however, that the coolness of her response is due simply to the respect which she bears for her father's authority. Soon, we learn otherwise and realize that the comments by Hippolyte we have noted above would be more applicable to Lysandre than Célidée who, having seen Dorimant, says: "Et déjà dans l'esprit je sentoie quelque ennui / D'avoir connu Lysandre auparavant que lui" (vv. 503-504). Dorimant has visibly shaken her love for Lysandre and leads her to admit that "Mon coeur a de la peine à demeurer constant" (v. 508). Her reaction is not just a passive realization of what has happened, for it includes also a wish to act upon it: "Si j'avois un prétexte à me mécontenter, / Tu me verrois bientôt résoudre à le [Lysandre] quitter" (vv. 515-516). It is at this point that Hippolyte takes advantage of Célidée's mental disposition to suggest that she

test Lysandre's love. Hippolyte taunts Célidée's pride, and the latter accepts the challenge, for she has nothing to lose and a lot to gain:

. . . un dédain éprouvera ses feux:
Ainsi, quoi qu'il en soit, j'aurai ce que je veux;
Il me rendra constante, ou me fera volage:
S'il m'aime, il me retient; s'il change, il me dégage.
Suivant ce qu'il aura d'amour ou de froideur,
Je suivrai ma nouvelle ou ma première ardeur. (vv. 543-548)

In doing belatedly what she should have done before giving her "foi" to Lysandre, Célidée appears to be flighty, for her initial fear is of being called "les noms de perfide et d'ingrate" (v. 568, variant v. 3). However, she hesitates, not for the reason just given, but because "Je vois mieux ce qu'il vaut lorsque je l'abandonne, / Et déjà la grandeur de ma perte m'étonne" (v. 573-574). Confused at first (v. 568, variant v. 5), she finally decides to test Lysandre, but now for one reason only: "Ma feinte éprouvera si son amour est vraie" (v. 577). Too familiar with love and accustomed to taking Lysandre for granted, her affection had been waning; however, now that she is about to leave him, the feeling comes surging back, but, despite this, she will test the strength of his affection.

In La Veuve, Clarice had demonstrated independence of action, but she was a widow, and as such was permitted considerable freedom. This is not the case with Célidée who, in making her decision and carrying it out, leaves herself open to the unkindest criticism. Initially she finds freedom, not in her station, but in herself; not freedom to love and marry whom she wishes, but freedom from the possessiveness of love. The previous heroines of Corneille's theatre were all dominated by

their passion, and any act of will they undertook was directed at acquiring the object of this passion. Célidée, on the other hand, despite the magnitude of the love she still bears for Lysandre ("Je meurs de le quitter"--v. 567), uses her will, not to win Lysandre, but to test his love--"Je voulais vous aimer, et je ne le veux plus" (v. 604)--at the risk of losing both him and her reputation. Furthermore, her decision foreshadows the element of amour-estime which will be found later in the tragedies, for Célidée tests Lysandre's worthiness to be loved, and if he fails their relationship will end.

The immediate result of her experiment is two-fold: first, the enduring love which Lysandre demonstrated "a rallumé ma flamme" to the point that "Le change n'a plus rien qui chatouille mon âme" (vv. 813-814); but her success draws her also to over-confidence and imprudence, for, at Florice's indirect suggestion, she agrees to continue her deception. This, as we know, leads to part of the misunderstanding which will keep the lovers divided for most of the remainder of the play. Prepared to continue her harsh treatment of Lysandre, Célidée is subjected to his wooing of Hippolyte, and turns for revenge to Dorimant whom she tries to attract. This attempt to seduce Dorimant renders suspect her previous declarations of love for Lysandre. However, our suspicions are allayed in Act IV, scene 11 when, having just learned from her father that her first lover still wishes to marry her and that Pleirante commands her to do so, Célidée says in a soliloquy:

Mais s'il ne m'aimoit plus, parleroit-il d'amour
 A celui dont je tiens la lumière du jour?
 Mais s'il m'aimoit encor, verroit-il Hippolyte?

Mon coeur en même temps se retient et s'excite.
 Je ne sais quoi me flatte, et je sens déjà bien
 Que mon feu ne dépend que de croire le sien. (vv. 1375-1380)

Obviously, she still loves Lysandre, and her pursuit of Dorimant was only an act of desperation and confusion. The truth of the matter is that the free and independent Célidée which we encountered earlier in the play has become just as possessed by her passion as the previous heroines and any indication of independence is now only a façade. For example, in Act V, scene 4, during the scene of reconciliation, Célidée scolds Lysandre in bad faith (vv. 1585-1586; 1589-1590). However, there follows her own confession in which she reveals her state of mind resulting from Lysandre's feint: "Dieux! que je fus surprise, et mes sens éperdus" (v. 1599). In a statement applicable to Célidée, Maria Tastevin correctly observes that "elle [the will] commande d'abord, mais si elle rend la bride, le sentiment la gouverne à son tour, elle n'est plus qu'esclave".¹⁶ The overwhelming resentment she felt at having been rejected by her lover caused her to become confused and to resort to action such as the pursuit of Dorimant. Earlier, Florice had given an indication that this might happen when she said to her mistress that Célidée was "De honte et de dépit tout à fait possédée" (v. 974). Lysandre's confession of love, however, gradually restores her to her former self:

Je vous sens, malgré moi, reprendre votre place;
 L'aveu de votre erreur désarme mon courroux:

¹⁶ Les Héroïnes de Corneille (Paris: Champion, 1924), p. 228.

Pardonnez à ma feinte, et j'oublierai la vôtre.
 Moi-même je l'avoue à ma confusion,
 Mon imprudence a fait notre division.
 Tu ne méritois pas de si rudes alarmes.

(vv. 1606-1607; 1610-1613)

Thus, Célidée shows, although imperfectly, a marked step forward in Corneille's delineation of the heroine which will lead eventually to Chimène. If this character still shows herself, in the end, to be as subjected to the powers of passion as her previous counterparts, she nonetheless has demonstrated the possibility of freedom within love, for, even though suffering greatly from her decision, she sees her plan through. The experiment is, therefore, not only a test of Lysandre's love, but also a self-test, a test of her will and of her situation.

Lysandre is an "homme de cour" (v. 391) endowed with so many "perfections" (vv. 27 and 571) that he is considered "le plus accompli des hommes de son âge" (v. 506). He is a loyal friend to Dorimant and only when he deems the latter his rival does he become his enemy. Moreover, Lysandre demonstrates the ability to understand the motivations of others: he correctly examines and explains to Dorimant that the latter's feelings after seeing Hippolyte for the first time stem from love, so that Dorimant, who has attempted to hide it, exclaims:

Que tu sais, cher ami, lire dans les esprits!
 Et que pour bien juger d'une secrète flamme,
 Tu pénétrés avant dans les ressorts d'une âme! (vv. 276-278)

Other than this characteristic, Lysandre is little different from the previous lovers who were completely at the service of their passion. The greatest modification which the author has introduced in Lysandre depends on the nature of the obstacle to the fulfilment of this character's love. This time the impediment comes from the loved one who directly confronts and rejects her lover rather than from a third party. We have seen¹⁷ that the affection which existed between Lysandre and Célidée was, from the outset, reciprocal. Little wonder then that Lysandre can not believe what he hears when Célidée so bluntly receives him in Act II, scene 8:

Quoi? que vous ai-je fait? d'où provient ma disgrâce?
 Quel sujet avez-vous d'être pour moi de glace?
 Ai-je manqué de soins? ai-je manqué de feux?
 Vous ai-je dérobé le moindre de mes vœux?
 Ai-je trop peu cherché l'heur de votre présence?
 Ai-je eu pour d'autres yeux la moindre complaisance?

(vv. 597-602)

Through his numerous questions we see not only his utter disbelief, but the intensity of his love. No matter how harshly Célidée treats him he remains completely loyal to a woman who appears so entirely disloyal, and it is precisely this characteristic which rekindles Célidée's waning love.

Jamais le désespoir qui saisit son courage
 N'en put tirer un mot à mon désavantage;
 Il tenoit mes dédains encor trop précieux,
 Et ses reproches même étoient officieux.
 Aussi ce grand amour a rallumé ma flamme. (vv. 809-813)

¹⁷ See above, p. 145.

Lysandre, like the previous lovers, first calls upon death as the ultimate demonstration of his affection (v. 622), but, unlike them, rejects this solution on his own initiative in favour of a more beneficial one, not for himself, but for Célidée:

. . . de peur de t'ôter un captif par ma mort,
 J'attendrai ce bonheur de mon funeste sort,
 Jusque-là mes douleurs, publiant ta victoire,
 Sur mon front pâissant élèveront ta gloire. (vv. 675-679)

Aronte, however, sets out to implement the second part of the ruse and contrives to have his master feign disloyalty to Célidée by pretending to love Hippolyte. Although Lysandre finally agrees, he does so very reluctantly: pretence is difficult for him ("Mais me jugerois-tu capable d'une feinte?"--v. 716, variant v. 2), and he consents to do it only because it may instil jealousy in Célidée and thus bring her back to him. Even though the ploy succeeds in arousing jealousy, it fails, for it also serves to drive Célidée towards Dorimant. Having very reluctantly yielded to Aronte's persuasion, one is not surprised to learn that Lysandre has changed his mind again, for, as Aronte says to Hippolyte:

. . . sa passion trop forte
 Déjà vers son objet malgré moi le remporte:
 Et comme s'il avoit reconnu son erreur,
 Vos yeux lui sont à charge et sa feinte en horreur.

(vv. 1049-1052)

Nothing will now deter Lysandre from loving and expressing his passion for Célidée, not even the sight of the latter and Dorimant together.

When Aronte suggests that he turn his deception to truth in order to punish Célidée, Lysandre angrily sends him away. In a soliloquy in Act IV, scene 5, he becomes completely confused in his anger: both Dorimant and Célidée must die, the first by Lysandre's hand, the second from sadness. As perhaps not even Dorimant's death will suffice to move her, his fury will be merciless and strike out as well at those who know of his love. Realizing that his emotions have lead him astray, he regains his senses:

Frénétiques transports, avec quelle insolence
 Portez-vous mon esprit à tant de violence?
 Allez, vous avez pris trop d'empire sur moi;
 Dois-je être sans raison, parce qu'ils sont sans foi?

(vv. 1201-1204)

He will seek vengeance only on Dorimant, for it is impossible for him to hate Célidée whom he still loves. This decision eventually leads to the reconciliation of the two lovers in Act V, scene 4, where Lysandre humbly confesses his love and explains why he pretended to love Hippolyte:

Confus, désespéré du mépris de mes flammes,
 Sans conseil, sans raison, pareil aux matelots
 Qu'un naufrage abandonne à la merci des flots,
 Je me suis pris à tout, ne sachant où me prendre.

(vv. 1570-1573)

Again we must disagree with Rivaille when he suggests that Lysandre loves less than Tircis.¹⁸ In fact, it might even be said that

¹⁸Op. cit., p. 117: "De Tircis à Florame, l'amour éprouvé par ces jeunes gens diminue, en intensité et en abnégation".

he loves more because he decides at one point not to die, but instead to live for her. In any event his passion is certainly as strong as Tircis', for they are both equally ready to die in order to demonstrate the extent of their love. To say that Lysandre represents a reversion to the type of lover seen in Tircis would be equally erroneous: Lysandre willingly undertakes to overcome the obstacle which confronts him even without the sort of stimulus which spurred Philiste to conquer his. It is, as we have said before, because of his own active efforts that he regains his beloved.

Corneille has insisted on Hippolyte's attributes: we are told twice that she is "belle et fine" (vv. 290 and 1322), numerous times how beautiful she is (vv. 203, 207, 355, 402, 850, 861, 916, 1753), that she possesses "perfections" (v. 888), "rares mérites" (v. 338) and "rares qualités" (v. 362). This emphasis is necessary in order to make credible Lysandre's suit of Hippolyte after having been attracted so greatly by Célidée for so long. It also serves, in part, to justify Dorimant's spurning of Célidée in favour of Hippolyte.

Hippolyte is in many respects a sister to the Dorise of Clitandre. In love with Lysandre, she attempts to separate him from his beloved. Not as violent as Dorise, her conduct is nonetheless reprehensible: she resorts to lies, and she abuses a long friendship in order to lure her friend away from her lover and take him for herself. However, she lacks the daring, energy and imagination of Dorise. The suggestion which she made to Célidée that would divide the lovers was not her own idea, but that of her suiivante. However, once an acceptable stratagem

has been found, she demonstrates resourcefulness in the invention of the new lies required to sustain it. Louis Rivaille writes that Hippolyte, like Cloris in *Mélite*, "se gardent de laisser l'amour s'installer dans leur âme, comme un tyran".¹⁹ This is in fact true only in appearance in that Corneille has deliberately made of her a character of low relief, and we see her involved mainly in intriguing against and thus making more prominent the relationship of Célidée and Lysandre. Moreover, she is so busy keeping the misunderstanding alive or fending off Dorimant that she has few opportunities to express verbally her love for Lysandre. However, is it not because she loves him so much that she is disloyal to her friend and leaves herself open to criticism? In Act I, scene 10, she warns Florice: "Toi, ne me parle point, ou parle de Lysandre. / C'est le seul dont la vue excite mon ardeur" (vv. 302-303). Later, her impatience to learn from Florice the outcome of Aronte's efforts with his master reveals her passion: "Dépêche, ces discours font mourir Hippolyte" (v. 777). Seeing Célidée cry at the loss of Lysandre, she says: ". . . j'en aurois pitié si je n'aimois Lysandre" (v. 982); and, after the latter has shown signs of love for her, Florice informs us that "Elle ne veut plus être au logis que pour lui" (v. 1039). Hippolyte refers to the desired outcome of the subterfuge as "le bonheur que j'attends" (v. 1080). At the end of the play, asking forgiveness, she explains the cause of her conduct:

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 120.

Excuse, chère amie, un esprit amoureux:
 Lysandre me plaisoit, et tout mon artifice
 N'alloit qu'à détourner son coeur de ton service.

(vv. 1732-1734)

We would conclude then, in contrast with Rivaille, that Hippolyte was possessed by her affection for Lysandre, and, like Dorise, the reason she ceases to pursue him is because there no longer exists any hope of fulfilling her love. This leads to her marriage with Dorimant, whom she does not love but for whom she has a certain inclination:

Je chéris sa personne [Lysandre's], et hais si peu la vôtre,
 Qu'ayant perdu l'espoir de le voir mon époux,
 Si ma mère y consent, Hippolyte est à vous. (vv. 1686-1688)

And this marriage is by far the best justified of the secondary marriages until now in Corneille's theatre.

Hippolyte is a very well delineated character within the bounds of the rôle assigned to her by the author, that is, one of low relief which helps make the primary characters more outstanding. However, she lacks the desperation of a Dorise, the overweening vanity of an Alcidon or Pymante, the revolt of a Doris or the sound common sense of a Cloris. We have seen the degree of her love for Lysandre, but Corneille has chosen to keep any heart-rending expression of it toned down in order to highlight the feelings of the primary characters.

Dorimant, like Célidan in La Veuve, is a loyal friend to Lysandre, and becomes his enemy only when he feels an injustice has been done and the principle of honour threatened. He manifests a rather original

trait as he leafs through and comments, like a connoisseur, on the new books he finds at the bookseller of the Galerie. It is here that he first meets and instantly falls in love with Hippolyte. In this, we witness an abrupt change, similar to that of Tircis in Mélite, for he had promised himself never to be dominated by love. Once again, passion triumphs over will as he openly admits to Hippolyte:

Que mon coeur désormais vit dessous votre empire,
Et que tous mes desseins de vivre en liberté
N'ont rien eu d'assez fort contre votre beauté.

(vv. 358-360)

However, once he has admitted his love, he bends his will to its fulfillment without hesitation or debate: "Je n'ai point consulté pour vous donner mon âme" (v. 369). He confronts all obstacles face to face without deviating from his new goal: he will combat Hippolyte's indifference "à force de services" (v. 385); he repeatedly visits Hippolyte only to find that she is out, but nevertheless perseveres; he will willingly duel with Lysandre, whom he deems his rival, for the hand of his beloved; he is not swayed by the advances of Célidée; all because Hippolyte's "charmes trop puissants me forcent à ces feux" (v. 1659). Hippolyte having promised him her hand when she no longer has any hope of winning Lysandre and even then only if her mother acquiesces, Dorimant wastes no time in putting the promise into effect when Célidée and Lysandre become reconciled. Receiving assurances from Chrysante, he exclaims: "Ce favorable mot me rend le plus heureux / De tout ce que jamais on a vu d'amoureux" (vv. 1775-1776).

Dorimant brings very little that is new in characterization, con-

sisting largely of traits seen in previous characters such as honesty, honour, loyalty, courage and singleness of purpose.

Of the four characters we have just studied, Hippolyte resembles Dorise in her resourcefulness and inventiveness, but lacks her energy. She acts mainly as a foil to Lysandre and Célidée. Dorimant corresponds to Célidan in his unswerving dedication to honour, and to Tircis in his early determination not to be dominated by love. Both Hippolyte and Dorimant are possessed by love, and they direct their faculties to the acquisition of the object of their passion. Thus, there is very little that can be considered new in the delineation of these characters. However, Lysandre and especially Célidée show more originality in their depiction. Lysandre is obsessed with love for Célidée, like all the previous heroes, perhaps even more so than those whose ultimate demonstration of love would be death, for Lysandre wishes to live in order to proclaim his beloved's attractions. Moreover, whereas the earlier primary characters were content to bemoan the loss of their mistresses, Lysandre does something about it. Philiste, in La Veuve, had attempted to do the same, but circumstances prevented him. However, where Philiste showed the desire and will, Lysandre does it, and through his efforts regains the one he lost. Passion also dominates Célidée, but not to the degree encountered in preceding heroines, for she decides to test Lysandre's love. Although Hippolyte suggests the idea which she in turn received from Florice, Célidée freely chooses to implement it. It is unfortunate, however, that Corneille did not have this idea originate spontaneously from Célidée, and thus present a character who possesses the initiative for her own conduct. Nevertheless, she agrees

to gamble on the loss of Lysandre as well as a possible taint on her reputation despite the great love for him which she feels, indeed, eventually because of her love, for she has no idea how much Lysandre loves her or whether or not his affection will withstand any hardships. Because of the possible consequences, her experiment not only tries Lysandre's love, a test related to the idea of amour-estime seen in the tragedies, but also proves to be a self-test for Célidée, a test of her ability to function freely while still loving. With the two main characters of La Galerie du palais, Corneille has further developed the principle of freedom and the use of will met in La Veuve, aspects which will be elaborated more extensively in La Place royale.

While the third play presented us with two intransigent parent figures, La Galerie du palais offers two lenient ones. Pleirante, Célidée's father, appears as completely authoritarian as Rivaille states,²⁰ but mainly because of the comparison with Hippolyte's mother Chrysante, the second parent of the play. We agree rather with Doubrovsky²¹ who maintains that Pleirante, without abdicating his authority, shows himself indulgent. In Act I, scene 2, having just learned that his daughter loves Lysandre, he gives her permission to pursue her desires:

Aime, aime ton Lysandre; et puisque je consens
Et que je t'autorise à ces feux innocents,
Donne-lui hardiment une entière assurance
Qu'un mariage heureux suivra son espérance. (vv. 43-46)

²⁰Ibid., p. 107.

²¹Op. cit., p. 49.

Looking already upon Lysandre as a son, he consents, as a gesture to Lysandre, to make representations in favour of Dorimant to Chrysante for Hippolyte's hand (Act III, scene 7). However, in Act IV, scene 10, when he commands Célidée to marry Lysandre, we begin to doubt his leniency. Moreover, in the next scene, he appears completely unjust and obstinate towards his daughter through whose words we now see him:

J'avois, auparavant qu'on m'eût manqué de foi,
 Le devoir et l'amour tout d'un parti chez moi,
 Et ma flamme, d'accord avecque sa puissance,
 Unissoit mes désirs à mon obéissance;
 Mais, hélas! que depuis cette infidélité
 Je trouve d'injustice en son autorité!
 Et l'on m'attache à lui d'une éternelle chaîne.

(vv. 1363-1368; 1374)

To take into account appearances only is not enough; we must look also at Pleirante's motives. On doing so, we discover that he does not act this way to be a tyrant but because he has Célidée's interests at heart. He permits his daughter to love and consents to her marriage with Lysandre because the latter "a des perfections / Dignes de posséder tes inclinations" (vv. 27-28). Don Gomès in *Le Cid* will also consent to Chimène's marriage to Don Diègue's son because Rodrigue is worthy of her. When Pleirante orders Célidée to marry Lysandre, it is because he knows that Lysandre still loves her, suspects that his daughter is jealous and that she is attracted to someone else:

". . . [Lysandre] n'aima jamais que toi dessous les cieux" (v. 1332);
 "Qu'il est peu de raison dans ces esprits jaloux" (v. 1344); "Quelque nouveau venu vous donne dans les yeux" (v. 1355). We know, of course,

that he is right on all three counts. He realizes that the wishes of Célidée, "cette enfant gâtée",²² are but "caprices" (v. 1353), the consequences of which would be very harmful: "Il faut que nous manquions, vous et moi, de promesse? / Quittez, pour votre bien, ces fantasques refus" (vv. 1358-1359). Therefore, Pleirante uses his authority in a manner reminiscent of Méliete's mother, that is, only for the welfare of his daughter as a good and conscientious father. The amount of freedom he gives Célidée is limited, but, as we have just seen, this limitation is necessary.

Hippolyte's mother, on the other hand, gives complete freedom to her daughter in the choice of a husband: "Monsieur, j'aime ma fille avec trop de tendresse / Pour la vouloir contraindre en ces affections" (vv. 930-931). Hippolyte's preferences are of prime importance to her, and she refuses to use her absolute power for her own interests. Hippolyte, on the other hand, unlike Célidée, returns her mother's kindness by putting herself entirely in Chrysante's hands: "Dessus tous mes desirs vous êtes absolue, / Et si vous le voulez, m'y voilà résolue" (vv. 949-950), she says when her mother suggests that she consider Dorimant as a possible husband. Again, in the last scene of the play, Hippolyte abdicates the freedom given to her by Chrysante:

Madame, un mot de vous me mettroit hors de peine.
Ce que vous remettez à mon choix d'accorder,
Vous feriez beaucoup mieux de me le commander.

(vv. 1770-1772)

²²Couton, op. cit., p. 24.

Chrysante replies: "Puisqu'elle s'y résout, le reste ne m'importe"
(v. 1774). This lenience is understandable in the light of her own
experience:

Je sais ce que la force est en un mariage.
Il me souvient encor de tous mes déplaisirs
Lorsqu'un premier hymen contraignit mes desirs.

(vv. 1762-1764)

One wonders, however, what Chrysante's reaction would be had Hippolyte exposed herself to dishonour as did Céliidée. Nevertheless, according to the traits given, the combination of Chrysante's indulgence and Hippolyte's submission proves useful: the mother allows her daughter to marry someone she loves while the daughter, acting in accordance with her mother's wishes, is assured a more balanced opinion concerning a suitor. For example, we have seen that Hippolyte has a certain fondness for Dorimant. This attraction combined with Chrysante's opinion-- "Un homme tel que vous, et de votre naissance" (v. 1757)--provides for a more stable and solid marriage than one based purely on emotion.

Thus, the parent-child relationship in La Galerie du palais is viewed in two different ways: naturally kind Pleirante who must become strict to protect his daughter from herself, and considerate Chrysante who has no need to use her power because of the relationship of mutual trust which she has with her daughter. From the parent-child situations we have encountered in the preceding plays as well as this one, it appears that an ideal arrangement emerges in the combination of the sets we have just discussed, one where the parent takes note of the child's

wishes, but not to the detriment of the latter's interests, and where the child recognizes the value of the parent's opinion and authority when this parent does not act purely out of self-interest. There remains for Corneille to combine these traits into one parent-child association.

The auxiliary character Cléante, Dorimant's equerry, only carries out duties normal to his position. The rôle of the merchants is restricted but picturesque: the Libraire is knowledgeable in the popularity of his merchandise, ready to impress this on his clients, but does not press the point avoiding alienation of the buyer (Act I, scene 5); accomodating, he readily helps Dorimant discover the identity of the beautiful Hippolyte (Act I, scene 6); the Lingère and the Mercier quarrel with each other and "s'entre-poussent quelque temps une boîte qui est entre leurs deux boutiques" (Act IV, scene 12); Florice coming for the lace ordered by her mistress, the Lingère does not miss the opportunity to assure the return of her client by offering the servant one of her products free of charge (Act IV, scene 13); the Mercier's grouchiness, we learn, results perhaps from the fact that he is not as adept as his colleagues at selling his merchandise (Act IV, scene 14).

Aronte, equerry to Lysandre, is fairly well delineated. Disloyal to his master (Act I, scene 1), he attempts to influence Lysandre to change allegiance from Célidée to Hippolyte with some success (Act III, scene 1). He also exhibits some imagination and ability to help sustain the misunderstanding between Célidée and Lysandre (Act III, scene 2 and Act IV, scene 2). Otherwise, he manifests a certain amount of

vanity which gives him an incentive to destroy the union of the two lovers (Act I, scene 3), and, later, expresses his gratitude to Florice for her promised efforts to obtain forgiveness for him from his master.

Florice is the best depicted of the auxiliary characters. Suivante²³ to Hippolyte, she resembles the nurse of previous plays in many respects: she is advanced in years, experienced and thus has influence, intrigues but lacks the totally unscrupulous nature of the nurse. Her main preoccupation is separating the two lovers Lysandre and Célidée, but this time for the benefit of her mistress. The instigator of the plot against the two lovers, she enlists the help of Aronte to sway his master and of Hippolyte to influence Célidée. Her background, according to her own words, lends itself readily to this sort of activity:

Je fus fine autrefois, et depuis mon veuvage
Ma ruse chaque jour s'est accrue avec l'âge;
Je me connois en monde, et sais mille ressorts
Pour débaucher une âme et brouiller des accords.

(vv. 317-320)

A person of high spirits, she likes to tease Hippolyte when she has good news to tell her (Act III, scene 3). Prudent, she tells Aronte that they should keep their distance to avoid suspicion (Act I, scene

²³Corneille was not the first to make use of a suiivante, but he turned to this character because "il accueillait toutes les innovations, qui pouvaient accentuer le caractère réaliste de sa comédie" (Adam, op. cit., I, 493), and the nurse remained too similar to the stereotyped character of farce.

1). A faithful friend to Aronte, she promises him to do what she can in order to reinstate him in Lysandre's good graces (Act IV, scene 14) and accomplishes it through her mistress in the last scene of the play.

The souvante as seen in Florice remains very close to the nurse in energy, self-confidence, and cunning though lacking her immorality. However, as we shall see in the next play, her rôle will evolve considerably.

The world in which Corneille has placed the characters of La Galerie du palais continues to hold the principle of honour as the highest value, manifested by continuous concern with making and keeping promises, and with the consequences of breaking them. Whereas the main characters of La Veuve, with the exception of Alcidon, would not derogate from this principle for any reason, those of La Galerie du palais all depart from it except Dorimant. Closer scrutiny reveals, however, that two of the four main characters do so only momentarily and only in appearance. The dishonourable actions of Célidée, Lysandre and Hippolyte can be explained by the degree to which they want to fulfil their wishes, causing them to opt for means that are ethically wrong and for which they find no viable alternative.

When the play opens Lysandre has long been faithful to Célidée, and there is every indication that he will continue to be so. Even when his beloved rejects him he intends to remain constant: "Tu verras ma langueur, et non mon inconstance" (v. 674). Only when Aronte suggests to him that Célidée's disdain is but a trick does he give in and come to believe that the answer to his own question--"Faut-il être inconstant pour la rendre fidèle?" (v. 721)--is affirmative.

In pretending to love Hippolyte he appears unfaithful to Célidée and disloyal to his friend Dorimant, but is in fact true to both. Very soon after his feint, he has a change of heart and now holds "sa feinte en horreur" (v. 1052). "Amour, cruel auteur de ma longue misère" (v. 1473): that is the cause of his apparent disloyalty to both his beloved and his friend. Because his love for Célidée "a sur mon coeur un pouvoir absolu" (v. 667), he risked his honour to regain her, his passion being the stronger of the two at this point, for he was quite aware that to pretend is wrong: "Mais me jugerois-tu capable d'une feinte?" (v. 717).

Otherwise, Lysandre is irreproachable: he has merit (v. 35), he shows courage in his impending duel with Dorimant (Act V, scene 2), and most of all complete constancy in his love for Célidée as well as in his friendship for Dorimant. Moreover, he only too readily forgives Célidée for having tormented him. However, because he lacks self-control which in turn causes him to demean himself, he is not a généreux.

Célidée, as we are reminded throughout the play, has merit (vv. 10, 658, 849, 898, 925) and, until the beginning of the play, constancy in her love for Lysandre. However, her affection begins to wane and she admits to Hippolyte that "Ce n'est plus que ma foi qui conserve ma flamme" (v. 510). She realizes that the "foi" which she gave to Lysandre and which, in previous plays as well as this one, secures the object of love also limits freedom. Ready to test Lysandre's affection, she becomes aware that not only does she still love Lysandre, but loves him even more. Thus, she does not carry through her ruse out of a

desire to be free to pursue Dorimant, but first of all because she wishes to know whether her love and that of Lysandre depend solely on the exchanged promises; whether it is really true love (v. 577). Once alone, the force of her affection almost prevents her from doing it, but with a great effort of will she steels herself: "Prépare-toi, mon coeur, et laisse à mes discours / Assez de liberté pour trahir mes amours" (vv. 579-580). In carrying out her plan despite a strong temptation to the contrary, she exercises great self-control, foreshadowing that of the heroes and heroines of later plays. It is as if Corneille were laying the psychological foundation of the self-control which will allow his future heroes to set aside considerations of love in favour of values and goals which they will deem more elevated when the two are in conflict.

As we have seen elsewhere in this chapter,²⁴ Célidée's self-control is of short duration: she appears quite capable of mastering her emotions as long as she has the upper hand, but not when Lysandre counters with a ruse of his own. She is so shaken that, in vengeance, she is willing to humiliate herself by offering herself to Dorimant. In Act II, scene 7, we see that she was quite conscious of the possible consequences of her experiment with Lysandre: "Je redoute les noms de perfide et d'ingrate" (v. 568, variant v. 3). However, the risk of dishonour is not real, for she intends to clarify the situation immediately after the test. Later, however, objecting to her father's command to marry Lysandre, she must be reminded by Pleirante of the

²⁴See above, p. 147.

consequences: "Il faut que nous manquions, vous et moi, de promesse?" (v. 1358) In the second instance, she falls prey to jealousy with the ensuing result that confusion and despair override the self-control which she demonstrated earlier, and thus unwittingly exposes her reputation to satisfy her emotions.

In Act IV, scene 11, we seem to have a repetition of the situation of Doris in La Veuve. Célidée bemoans her father's authority over her:

. . . que depuis cette infidélité
Je trouve d'injustice en son autorité!
Mon esprit s'en révolte, et ma flamme bannie
Fait qu'un pouvoir si saint m'est une tyrannie.

(vv. 1367-1370)

However, we have seen earlier²⁵ that Pleirante's use of authority in this case consisted simply in saving his daughter from herself and her "caprices". Pleirante had given his daughter freedom to love Lysandre in Act I, scene 11, and Célidée had submitted to his will: "Vos seuls commandements produiront mon amour" (v. 40). Furthermore, near the end of the play, she speaks of a "douce amende / Que l'effet d'un hymen qu'un père me commande" (vv. 1625-1626). Evidently, when she is in a balanced frame of mind, she willingly submits to the authority of her father and consciously and freely accepts this constraint in the same manner as did Doris.

At the end of the play, when Lysandre confesses his deceit, Célidée accuses him in bad faith:

²⁵See above, pp. 158-160.

Volage, falloit-il, pour un peu de rudesse,
 Vous porter si soudain à changer de maîtresse?
 Ne pouviez-vous juger que c'étoit une feinte?

(vv. 1585-1586; 1589)

This could and should apply equally to herself who was unable to see that Lysandre's was a feint as well. Finally, however, she humbly admits her mistake and forgives Lysandre (v. 1610, variant; vv. 1611-1614). In the second last scene of the play, she continues her magnanimity by forgiving Hippolyte.

Célidée, then, although possessing many traits of the généreuse, does not satisfy all its requirements. She is incapable of sustaining, in the face of an obstacle she has not created, the self-control which she exhibits momentarily. Temporarily free, she very readily falls prey to her emotions and becomes just as much a slave to them as previous heroines.

Hippolyte too adheres to the pattern of freedom encountered first in Doris. She voluntarily submits to the authority of her mother when the latter tells her to think about marrying Dorimant: "Dessus tous mes desirs vous êtes absolue, / Et si vous le voulez, m'y voilà résolue" (vv. 949-950). The self-imposed obedience to parental authority is linked, in her case, very closely to honour. She has promised Dorimant that, once she no longer has any hope of marrying Lysandre, "Si ma mère y consent, Hippolyte est à vous" (v. 1688). After Célidée and Lysandre have been reconciled, Dorimant reminds her of her promise and emphasizes: "Vous savez trop à quoi la parole vous lie" (v. 1741). Hippolyte admits that "j'ai fait une folie" (v. 1742) in making such a

promise even though at the time she thought any reconciliation of the two lovers quite remote. However, when Dorimant begins to wonder whether she will keep or break her promise, she answers immediately and categorically: "Puisque je l'ai promis, vous pouvez voir ma mère" (v. 1746). Chrysante once again gives her daughter full latitude and Hippolyte once again yields to her authority (vv. 1770-1772). Thus, almost in the same breath, she chooses honourably to keep her promise to Dorimant and, in a gesture of généreux self-abnegation, bows to the governance of her mother, much as Horace and Polyeucte will do later before providential authority.

This générosité, however, is not a constant feature of Hippolyte, for she demeans herself by plotting against her friend Célidée to whom she continues to pretend loyalty when, in fact, she acts in a thoroughly interested manner, wishing to have Lysandre for herself. There remains much distance yet between this character and the Infante of Le Cid, but Hippolyte nevertheless represents a step in that direction.

Dorimant too is first concerned with freedom, freedom from the slavery of love, but, similarly to Tircis in Méliste, upon seeing Hippolyte, he willingly gives it up, never to be concerned with it again (vv. 358-360). Otherwise, Dorimant reminds us very much of Célidan in that they are both highly principled characters devoted to doing what is honourable. A close friend of Lysandre, he becomes his enemy when he learns that Lysandre is disloyal to him and to Célidée: "Son sang me répondra de son manque de foi, / Et me fera raison et pour vous et pour moi" (vv. 1119-1120). When Célidée suggests to him indirectly that he use deceit in battle in order to kill Lysandre who

has proved to be deceitful, Dorimant replies without hesitation:

"J'achèterois trop cher la mort du suborneur" (vv. 1131-1132). Nor will he stoop, in revenge, to feign love for Célidée as the latter suggests, dismissing it as a feminine defect: "La foiblesse du sexe en ce point vous conseille: / Il se croit trop vengé, quand il rend la pareille" (vv. 1141-1142). Again like Célidan, he looks upon himself as an agent chosen by Providence to punish Lysandre:

Aussi veux-je punir autrement tes parjures:
 Le ciel, le juste ciel, ennemi des ingrats,
 Qui pour ton châtement a destiné mon bras,
 T'apprendra qu'à moi seul Hippolyte est gardée.

(vv. 1518-1521)

Dorimant, therefore, is the only main character who remains completely honourable throughout the play, but presents no ethical advance over Célidan of the last play.

Although it seems that lack of honour is rewarded at the end of La Galerie du palais, we must remember that Lysandre in fact remained constant throughout, and that he as well as Célidée and Hippolyte seek forgiveness, thus finding their way back to values and rules of conduct common to their society. The rôle of Célidée is by far the most important ethically, for we see in her a conflict of two values which she holds dear: love and freedom, foreshadowing the even greater conflicts to come. She unfortunately resolves it by appearing unethical and thus by being unethical, and eventually, confused and despairing, acts not at all honourably. She nonetheless prefigures the conflicts, the difficult decisions made with self-control of Rodrigue and Chimène.

The pathos of La Galerie du palais is even less attenuated than that of La Veuve due mainly to the different disposition of the action which allows for even greater penetration into the minds of the characters. The misunderstanding which exists between Lysandre and Célidée brings forward emotions felt simultaneously by both, which, however, drive them further apart. Lysandre and Célidée pass from a loving and tender state which appeared eternal to one of hostility. To test her lover's constancy, Célidée breaks this relationship, causing his surprise which gives way to great suffering and despair. When Lysandre retaliates in kind, Célidée's happiness at the success of her experiment turns to sadness and suffering. Her anguish is greatly increased when Lysandre makes a declaration of love to Hippolyte in her presence, and she finds the weakest of pretexts to leave. The final explanation which leads to the clarification of their misunderstanding begins in anguish and ends in pity and happiness: Lysandre threatens to kill himself; Célidée, suffering also, fortifies herself resentfully against the onslaught of Lysandre's loving and pitiful words; gradually, she relents and forgives Lysandre, and ends by asking forgiveness and regretting the day she so imprudently exposed their happiness. While in La Veuve there existed the same type of pathos, it lasted for only approximately two acts, but in La Galerie du palais it extends over the better part of the whole play.

The pathos evoked by the violent feeling of Philiste at the loss of Clarice finds its counterpart in Lysandre when he sees Célidée and Dorimant together: his despair increases to the point where he wants to kill not only the one he loves but also his friend, and indeed even

those who simply knew of the love between Célidée and himself. Pity is also excited in the audience by expressions of feelings such as Lysandre's determination to continue to live in order to proclaim Célidée's virtues despite his having been rejected by her; or later when he feels he can not live without Célidée's love, he decides to gain from her "La pitié par ma mort, ou l'amour par ma plainte" (v. 1498). Pathos is also elicited by the clash of two sentiments or ideas irreconcilable either in reality or appearance, or by confusion and indecision: Célidée feels anguish at having to weigh her love for Lysandre against the possibility of mistreating him by pretending to reject him; Lysandre, after his violent outburst, wonders what conduct he should adopt towards Célidée and Dorimant, both of whom he considers disloyal: must he seek vengeance? should he be lenient? but is it not their fault? are they not the cause? Conflict, confusion and indecision draw from him this lament: "Qu'un rigoureux combat déchire mon courage!" (v. 1209)

In the last chapter, we discussed the effect of ending one act and beginning the following with a pathetic scene.²⁶ La Galerie du palais also gives us one such instance: Act II, scene 9 consists of a pathetic soliloquy by Lysandre who, having just been rejected by Célidée, gives in to his sorrow and despair; Act III begins with a scene which, although not as pathetic as the previous one, presents the suffering of Lysandre at having to feign disloyalty to his beloved, fearing also that his friend Dorimant might suffer because of it.

²⁶ See above, pp. 128-129.

Although there remains some sustention of pathos here, it is not as strong as in La Veuve if one considers only the two scenes just mentioned. In fact, Corneille prolonged the pathetic element, for scene 9 of Act II is preceded by two more pathetic scenes: in scene 7, Célidée soliloquizes about her difficulty in carrying out her experiment realizing now how much she still loves Lysandre and does not want to mistreat him; scene 8 presents her confrontation with Lysandre where she undoubtedly still suffers at having to torment her lover, but also the beginning of Lysandre's confusion, misery and despair. Thus, we have four pathetic scenes in a row providing more continuous pathos than previously seen in Corneille's theatre. Moreover, the author uses the same technique twice more in this play: in Act IV, Dorimant's anger at being betrayed by Lysandre, the confusion and desperation of Célidée manifested in her attempted seduction of Dorimant which fails (scene 3); Lysandre's sorrow and anger at having seen his beloved and his friend together (scene 4); Lysandre's outburst of violent feeling in which he wants to kill all who know of his treatment by Célidée (scene 5); the continuation of his sorrow in the presence of Hippolyte who comments:

Vous avez dans l'esprit quelque pesant souci;
Ce visage enflammé, ces yeux pleins de colère,
Me sont de votre peine une marque assez claire.

(vv. 1228-1229; 1230, variant v. 1)

In Act V, Lysandre's anger abates, he continues to bemoan his lot, but decides pathetically to obtain from Célidée either pity through his death or love by his lamentations (scene 1); Lysandre and Dorimant, believing one another to be rivals, exchange hurtful words and prepare

to cross swords (scene 2); Célidée arrives on the scene angry at Lysandre and separates the two duellists in the fear of losing her last hope, Dorimant (scene 3); then, we have the reconciliation scene containing the pathetic elements mentioned above. Thus, in three instances in this play, Corneille has given a sequence of four pathetic scenes which prolongs and increases the element of pathos.

If Corneille has extended the pathetic element in La Galerie du palais, he has continued to attenuate it, this time by the machinations of the intriguers, Hippolyte, Florice and Aronte, but even more so by basing the pathetic events and utterances on a misunderstanding which creates false situations. Thus, the audience, while participating in the feelings of the characters, remains constantly aware of the true situation and the fact that it will probably be of short duration. We are in complete agreement with Octave Nadal when he observes:

En faisant de l'amour le ressort de l'intrigue, Corneille confère aux gestes et aux propos de ses personnages, un caractère presque tragique; mais il sait en faire avorter le trop grand pouvoir d'émotion; il s'ingénie à nous faire entendre qu'il ne s'agit entre les amants que d'une situation fausse.²⁷

While this technique denies the full impact of the pathos present, the audience can still become involved in emotions which the characters feel, for, if the situation is false, the suffering remains nevertheless very real. Moreover, in spite of this dilution, Corneille has definitely given this play more pathos than any of his previous comedies: ". . . le comique s'envole: les demi-teintes et l'humour

²⁷Op. cit., p. 105.

grinçant mènent au tragique. Ce glissement s'accusera encore dans les deux comédies suivantes".²⁸

With La Galerie du palais Corneille takes us one step closer to the dramatic technique and world of his tragedies. Although there is still no unity of time, he uses the same compromise as in La Veuve to make the action more concentrated than in Mélite. He has, however, achieved unity of place save for the scenes which occur at the Galerie, deliberately introduced to please the spectators. The action again contains more than one plot, but now so closely intertwined that unity is practically achieved. The author has excluded the external obstacles seen in the previous plays and replaced them with an internal, psychological obstacle which creates even greater demands on the playwright for coherence and justification of developments, demands which Corneille has fulfilled. The use of a psychological obstacle allows for considerably greater penetration into the minds of the characters involved and, because the consequences of the impediment occupy a major portion of the play, pathos is more predominant than in his earlier comedies, the pathetic element being intensified by frequent groups of emotional scenes.

Once more the main theme is love, and all four main characters are slaves to their passion. However, if Lysandre lacks Philiste's self-control, he regains his loved one through his own efforts. Célidée represents the most dramatic change in that, first of all, she assumes the freedom which Doris in La Veuve had won for the Cornelian heroine

²⁸Stegmann in his edition of Corneille, Oeuvres complètes, L'Intégrale, (Paris: Seuil, 1963), p. 101.

and, secondly, introduces for the first time the question of freedom within reciprocal love, one which demands and for which she provides great will-power and self-control. Unfortunately, Corneille has given the initiative to a secondary character, Florice, the first sui-vante in Cornelian theatre, rather than to the one most directly concerned.

The society in which the characters are placed holds honour dear as does that in La Veuve. However, a perspective arises from La Galerie du palais different from the preceding play: it appears as though there may sometimes be a justifiable reason for going beyond the ethical tenets common to society. Three of the four main characters prove to be dishonourable even though only in a minor way. In each case, it is unacceptable both to themselves and their society, and all repent in the end. However, Célidée's case is more interesting, for, if she acts contrary to the social ethic when she tests Lysandre's love by appearing disloyal, it is to ascertain that Lysandre's affection is true and that their love does not depend solely on a promise. It is essentially a case of setting aside one value in order to arrive at a higher one. The will-power and self-control necessary to overcome emotional slavery in favour of higher values announces such heroes and heroines as Rodrigue and Chimène. Moreover, the same qualities needed to go against generally accepted rules of conduct in favour of more elevated but not totally recognized values announces such difficult situations as that in which Horace will find himself when he kills his sister for the good of the state.

Thus, La Galerie du palais, while repeating a number of characteristics found previously in Corneille's theatre, contains many

new ones in a more sound and unified fashion than seen in his production up to this time.

CHAPTER VI

LA SUIVANTE

La Suivante is the most regular play in Corneille's production thus far, even to the extent of distributing the number of lines equally among the five acts. Moreover, it is the first time that he observes the rule for liaison de scènes. In his Examen, he notes that the play contains two kinds, "de présence et de vue".¹ He defends the use of the latter which, he admits, is "beaucoup plus imparfaite que celle de présence et de discours . . .; mais enfin je crois qu'on s'en peut contenter, et je la préférerois de beaucoup à celle qu'on appelle liaison de bruit . . .".² Thus, if we concur with Corneille, all the scenes of this play are linked. From the compromise of five consecutive days struck in his last two plays, he returns to the strict observance of the unity of time seen in Clitandre. However, he does even better here, for "le temps n'en est point plus long que celui de la représentation, si vous en exceptez l'heure du dîner, qui se passe entre le premier et le second acte".³ Where in La Galerie du palais Corneille had practically achieved unity of place, broken only to please his audience by presenting the spectacle of the Galerie, he makes no such concession in La Suivante, the entire action unfolding in only one place which "n'a point plus d'étendue que celle du théâtre".⁴

¹M.-L., II, 123.

²M.-L., II, 124.

³M.-L., II, 118.

⁴M.-L., II, 118.

The action, although concentrated by the playwright's adoption of the unities of time and place, remains faulty, but no more so than in his previous play as a résumé of the story will reveal. The play opens with Théante informing his friend Damon that he, in an attempt to disengage himself from his suit for the suiivante Amarante, has dared Florame, who has a reputation for being able to resist the allurements of love, to pay court to Amarante. This will allow Théante to approach Daphnis, Amarante's mistress, and thus permit him to pursue his ambitions for social advancement. However, Damon tells Théante that Florame is also using the suiivante to gain access to Daphnis. The latter and Florame fall in love with one another thus destroying the plans of Théante and of Amarante who also loves Florame. Trying to keep Florame for herself, Amarante falsely tells Géraste, Daphnis' father, that Daphnis loves another suitor, Clarimond. Géraste informs his daughter that he approves of her lover, but does not name him. Thinking her father means Florame, Daphnis engages herself to him. Géraste, in love with Florise, Florame's sister, learns that Florame will permit their marriage only if Géraste gives him Daphnis. Géraste agrees and informs his daughter that he has chosen another husband for her, again without revealing his name. Both Florame and Daphnis despair at this change of heart and at the thought of being separated. Meanwhile, Damon has schemed with Théante to arrange a duel between Clarimond and Florame so that Théante may rid himself of both these rivals and permit him to continue freely his pursuit of Daphnis. Damon, however, is really a double agent and reports Théante's plans to Florame. Meeting Théante, Florame agrees to duel with Clarimond and

asks him to be his second. Realizing that he too will have to fight, Théante shows himself to be considerably less eager for this solution and prefers to take a trip to Italy to foster his recovery from his melancholy. Finally, when Daphnis, Florame and Géraste meet, the misunderstanding is cleared up, Daphnis and Florame will be united, and Géraste will marry Florise. The play ends with Amarante's bitter lament at the loss, due to the pressure of social circumstance, of the man she loves.

The three plots, that of Daphnis and Florame, that of Amarante and Théante, and that of Daphnis and Clarimond, are not only closely linked to one another, but the outcome of the last two depends on that of the first which is the main plot. As Corneille himself recognizes in his Examen to this play, La Suivante is not faultless. The love of Géraste for Florise is not mentioned in the first act and, as a result, the exposition contains the first scene of Act II: "Ainsi c'est un défaut, selon moi, qu'on ne le connoisse pas dès ce premier acte".⁵ The fairly lengthy episode surrounding the Théante-Florame-Clarimond-Damon relationship dissipates dramatic interest and "ne sert qu'à un agréable épisode de deux honnêtes gens qui jouent tour à tour un poltron et le tournent en ridicule".⁶ The dénouement of La Suivante is well done, for once the Daphnis-Florame plot is resolved so are automatically the other two.

Corneille's use of misunderstanding in La Suivante requires as

⁵M.-L., II, 120.

⁶M.-L., II, 123.

great a coherence and justification of events as did that in his previous play. Moreover, this concern is compounded by the use of deception from which arise many false situations. Once again, the author has had to make these convincing by showing how they are prepared, committed, and can persist. Whereas in La Galerie du palais the misunderstanding arose out of an interior need of Célidée to ascertain the quality of Lysandre's love, in La Suivante it finds its source externally, out of an inadvertent omission of a name. Also, if in the previous play the characters were largely responsible for creating and controlling events, here the characters most often become playthings at the mercy of events even though they try very hard to control them.

It appears occasionally that the characters influence the course of events, but this influence is minimal. Géraste consents to his daughter's marriage to the one he believes she loves (Act III, scene 7) and later, acting out of self-interest, commands her to accept another suitor (Act IV, scene 2). Géraste, then, causes the unhappiness and confusion which ensue, but not knowingly, for his omission of Florame's name was completely inadvertent. The efforts of Daphnis and Florame are directed at gaining an opportunity to exchange declarations of love, this moment denied them by the presence of Amarante and Théante: Florame tries to keep Théante away by drawing him and Amarante together (Act I, scene 3); Daphnis attempts to do the same with Amarante (Act I, scene 8). Both fail and Daphnis eventually succeeds by sending Amarante off on a series of errands (Act II, scene 4). Later, Florame takes advantage of the fact that Géraste loves his sister in order to obtain from him permission to wed Daphnis (Act III, scene 1). Otherwise, the

desires and dispositions of these two characters alter in no way the course of events: Florame can protest all he wants that Géraste will not receive Florise, if he in turn does not receive Daphnis; Daphnis can continue to refuse to marry the new suitor to whom her father wants to unite her; the causes of these complications as well as their solution remain exterior to them.

Théante and Amarante, on the other hand, in their attempts to prevent the union of Daphnis and Florame are more successful in controlling events, but not nearly as much as they wish. Théante sees to it that Amarante distracts Florame while he himself prevents Daphnis from drawing nearer to Florame (Act I, scene 6). And when the two lovers come together, Théante tells Florame it is time to leave (Act I, scene 7). With the help of Damon, he organizes a duel between Florame and Clarimond (Act II, scene 9). This plan, however, comes to nothing, and from this point on Théante plays only a passive rôle (Act IV, scene 6; Act V, scene 1). It is Amarante who influences events the most. She keeps Florame away from Daphnis (Act I, scenes 4 and 5). She carries out her errands as quickly as possible in order to return to Florame and Daphnis to interrupt their conversation and prevent any amorous exchanges (Act II, scene 4). Then, she attempts to prevent their marriage, first by falsely encouraging Théante (Act II, scene 8), then by persuading Clarimond that the way to win Daphnis is to ask her father for her hand (Act III, scene 4), and finally by convincing Géraste that his daughter loves Clarimond and that he should compel her to marry him (Act III, scene 6). When her plan miscarries she believes that perhaps her indications were not clear enough, so she tells Géraste once

again that it is Clarimond whom Daphnis loves (Act IV, scene 3). Though she influences events, the results of her actions are not the ones for which she strove: ultimately it is neither she nor any of the other characters who control events, but rather events govern the characters.

In the first part of the play, although the influence exerted by external occurrences does not yet predominate, it nevertheless makes its presence felt. Théante, convinced that his plan for approaching Daphnis will work, is informed by Damon that Florame is using Amarante for the same purpose (Act I, scene 1). Later, confident in the outcome of his efforts to keep Daphnis and Florame apart in order to further his own aim, he learns from Damon that the two lovers have exchanged declarations of love (Act II, scene 9). Chance and coincidence indeed play an important rôle in this part of the play: Géraste, an old widower, falls in love with a young girl; the latter just happens to be Florame's sister; Géraste's love turns out to be so great that he is prepared to do anything to obtain her (Act II, scene 1). This in turn allows Florame to marry Daphnis (Act III, scene 1), a match which otherwise would be hopeless given the normal social conditions. Similarly adventitious is the unexpected arrival of Clarimond in Act III, scene 2.

Beyond this point, confusion reigns, and events take place independently of the wishes of all characters involved. As Rivaille has astutely observed, "les faits semblent se libérer de leur dépendance habituelle des esprits, et prendre des directions opposées à celles qui leur étaient imprimées".⁷ This originates in Géraste's

⁷Op. cit., p. 159.

omission of a name: he authorizes Daphnis to marry 'the one she loves', Géraste believing him to be Clarimond while she believes her father is referring to Florame (Act III, scenes 7 and 8). At a time when Florame and Daphnis should feel sadness and despair, this misunderstanding instead produces their happiness. Of course, it also produces surprise and confusion in Amarante. When Géraste learns that Florame will give him his sister on the condition that he, Géraste, give him Daphnis, Géraste accepts and informs his daughter that he has chosen 'another husband' for her. This second misunderstanding causes Daphnis to think that this other partner is someone other than Florame, while he, in fact, is, the one chosen by Géraste (Act IV, scene 2). Amarante, attempting to rectify the results of the first misunderstanding, achieves a negative result and only makes herself more confused. Also, now that Daphnis and Florame should be happy, they are not. Florame reminds Célie of the condition he has imposed on Géraste's union with Florise (Act IV, scene 9) and Célie intercedes with Géraste (Act V, scene 6). This serves only to aggravate the situation, for Géraste becomes even more authoritarian with Daphnis who threatens to kill herself rather than change allegiance (Act V, scene 7). However, Géraste's determination to prove his loyalty to Florame inadvertently brings about the rectification and clarification of the situation. The arrival of Florame in the presence of Daphnis and Géraste clears up the misunderstanding and the situation returns to even greater stability.

Thus, for most of the play, chance and coincidence, that is, forces exterior to the characters, are responsible for setting up obstacles to the various characters' desires. Rivaille concludes that

"les esprits humains . . . se trouvent réduits, le plus souvent, à n'en [of events] être que les spectateurs impuissants".⁸ We agree that they are powerless, but not that they are only spectators: events do occur in completely unexpected ways, and contrary to wishes and efforts of the characters, but, except after the clarification of the misunderstanding, the instances where a character is resigned to accept passively an adverse situation are rare. Events control them to a great extent, but they in turn attempt to reverse the consequent situations in favour of an outcome which they prefer.

The nature of the action in La Suivante, then, is quite different from that of La Galerie du palais: in the latter, it served to emphasize activities of the mind and the capabilities of human faculties, while here the action describes the futility of human efforts in the face of external occurrences. Both these elements are present in both plays, but the emphasis is reversed from one play to the next. What we considered an improvement in La Galerie du palais, relative to what Corneille will do in his tragedies, namely that the characters do not sit idly by, but rather affirm their wills and thus bring about results which they desire, seems to have been washed away by the forces of coincidence and chance which reign over the characters of La Suivante. However, we do not believe that the result is entirely negative, believing instead that our playwright made use of this technique in part to give variety to a subject basic to his production thus far, and also to show that human efforts, no matter how great, do not always succeed, that events do not always concur with man's wishes

⁸Ibid., p. 160.

or designs, and that these are often at the mercy of unforeseen circumstances.

The concern with love and promises encountered in preceding plays remains in La Suivante and these preoccupations continue to be indicated by the frequent recurrence of words at the rhyme used previously by Corneille for this purpose. There is, however, an increase in the use of words related to promises as compared to La Galerie du palais. This comes as a surprise when one considers that there is as much deception, and perhaps more deception in this play than in the last. The difference emerges, first of all, from the fact that the two main characters, Florame and Daphnis, do not deceive one another as did Lysandre and Célidée, and second from the ease with which most of the characters use these terms in bad faith.

The emergence of the word père which we meet ten times at the rhyme points to the greater rôle which the father will have in this play as compared with the previous ones and the frequency of the word commandement (6 times) reveals, at least in part, what rôle he will play, while the presence of the couplet père-espère (3 times) and the word rebelle (5 times) tells us what reactions to expect from the daughter.

'Typically Cornelian words' recur approximately the same number of times at the rhyme as in the last comedy and for the same reasons, except for the words devoir (3 times) which appears more frequently and mérite (3 times) which we meet much less frequently. The use of the word devoir here represents a partial return to La Veuve in that it refers solely to the duty which a daughter owes her parent and not, as in Philiste's case, to that owed oneself as well. On the few occasions

mérite is mentioned, twice it is not meant, while the third time it refers only to monetary considerations. In comparison to Dorimant, his counterpart Clarimond plays a much less important rôle and, as a result, there is much less talk of his worthiness.

In La Suivante where the characters are largely unable to control events in spite of their efforts, and where things change so unexpectedly, we find an increase in words and couplets denoting the consequent feelings of these reversals: peine (8 times), tourment (6 times), martyre (5 times), malheur (4 times), pleurs (4 times), supplice (4 times), douleurs-pleurs (3 times), peine-haine (3 times). The difference in the frequency of their appearance is not great, but nonetheless striking enough to notice.

Thus, we are lead to expect, in the following study of the characters and their ethic, an elaboration of the concerns indicated by the words and couplets which dominate at the rhyme.

Besides beauty (vv. 73, 709, 721, 1173), Daphnis has many attributes which attract the suitors Florame, Théante and Clarimond: she is wealthy (v. 74), has a certain social position (vv. 11-14), "esprit" (v. 443), and "mérite" (v. 442). She is a discriminating person, for she looks upon love as a prime requisite for marriage: she rejects Théante because he is one of the "insolents qui prétendent trop haut" (v. 308), and Clarimond whom, despite his high rank (v. 700), she does not love. However, she favours Florame, even though he lacks riches, because he has merit (v. 513) and she loves him.

In the events which surround her affection for Florame, we encounter more qualities which Daphnis possesses. Unable to converse in

complete freedom with Florame because of the ever present Théante and Amarante, she, as well as Florame, displays the usual resourcefulness of one in love, resorting to the "langage des yeux" (v. 98) to communicate her feelings. Eventually, finding herself in the presence of Florame and Amarante only, she contrives to arrange a tête-à-tête with Florame by sending Amarante on a series of unimportant errands, thus giving her lover the opportunity to declare his love for her. At this declaration, she protests, out of modesty, that

Vous pouviez me traiter un peu plus doucement.
Sans me faire rougir, il vous devoit suffire
De me taire l'objet dont vous aimez l'empire.

(vv. 452-454)

However, when Amarante returns to interrupt Florame's amorous discourse, Daphnis quickly finds another excuse to get rid of her so that she and her lover may continue their exchange. Obedient daughter that she is, Daphnis does not openly tell Florame of her love, content at this point to do so only indirectly: "Je crois que vous m'aimez; n'attendez rien de plus: / Florame, je suis fille, et je dépends d'un père" (vv. 488-489). The following scene (Act II, scene 6), however, reveals the true colours of her feelings for Florame:

Mon amour, par ses yeux plus forte devenue,
L'eût bientôt emporté dessus ma retenue;
Et je sentoîs mes feux tellement s'embraser,
Qu'il n'étoit pas en moi de les plus maîtriser.
· · · · ·
· · · que je t'aime, Florame!

(vv. 497-498; 499, variant vv. 1-2; v. 509)

Despite the immensity of her love, she had all the self-control necessary to act according to the "importune loi" of modesty (v. 505), and, when she saw that she was weakening, enough presence of mind to take leave of Florame. For her too, love presents itself as a powerful master which enslaves its happy victim: "Je me trouve captive en de si beaux liens" (v. 503), but thus far not completely. One reason for this is that her father might not agree to marrying his daughter to someone of considerably less wealth, for Daphnis finds herself in a situation similar to that of Clarice in La Veuve: she and Florame, like Clarice and Philiste, are unequal in merit and wealth. Her personal feelings on this matter pose no problems: "Aussi par celle-là [merit] de bien loin tu me passe, / Et l'autre [wealth] seulement est pour les âmes basses" (vv. 513-514). However, unlike Clarice, she is answerable to her father who, she fears, will want more tangible considerations. Little wonder then that she is so pleasantly surprised when she believes her father has given her permission to speak openly of her love to Florame (Act III, scenes 7 and 8), which she wastes no time in doing (scene 9). Her happiness is short-lived, however, for her father tells her, not long afterward, that he has promised her to someone else. Her reaction to this parental command is similar to that of Célidée in that both disapprove very strongly of their father's wishes. But Daphnis is on firmer ground than the capricious Célidée:

Sous votre autorité j'ai dévoilé mon âme,
 J'ai découvert mon coeur à l'objet de ma flamme,
 Et c'est sous votre aveu qu'il a reçu ma foi.

(vv. 1049-1051)

Thus, a conflict is established for Daphnis: she must either disobey her father or break the promise she made with her father's consent. No matter which decision she chooses, she is in the wrong: "Je ne puis conserver mon devoir et ma foi, / Ni sans crime brûler pour d'autres ni pour toi" (vv. 1255-1256). A similar dilemma will face Rodrigue and Chimène in Le Cid and, in both their case and that of Daphnis, the characters choose what they feel is the most honourable solution.⁹ For the present heroine, "Un parjure jamais ne devient légitime" (v. 1593), but she opts for a compromise: she will neither disobey her father nor break her promise completely:

. . . En l'état où je suis,
Etre à toi malgré lui, c'est ce que je ne puis;
Mais je puis empêcher qu'un autre me possède.

(vv. 1291-1293)

The compromise is not entirely of her own choosing: she can not carry out her promise because her father stands in the way. However, she has given her love to Florame and will continue to do so no matter what Gêraste commands. Unlike Célidée, her objections are not capricious, but based on true judgement and feeling. The freedom which Célidée had

⁹In her study of Chimène, Maria Tastevin (op. cit., p. 2-3) notes a fact which applies equally well to Daphnis: ". . . il est un temps, celui des fiançailles, où la jeune fille se trouve placée entre deux foyers, celui qu'elle va quitter et celui où elle n'est pas encore. Elle commence à se détacher de l'un, elle n'est pas encore fixée pour jamais à l'autre. . . . dans la vie quotidienne, ils ne luttent pas, ils semblent se fondre, s'harmoniser, s'enrichir mutuellement. Il y a entre eux cependant opposition foncière et cette opposition se révèle . . . si, brusquement, les circonstances obligent la jeune fille à choisir entre son fiancé, son époux de demain, et sa famille, son affection la plus ancienne. La lutte éclate alors, poignante et terrible, entre deux sentiments profonds et légitimes.

manifested and which she used as the humour took her is used with discrimination and judgement by Daphnis: she is aware of Florame's merit, of her love for him, of her duty to her father, of the value of a promise and of the consequences of breaking one, and she decides accordingly. In Le Cid, Chimène and Rodrigue too will be aware of all that is at stake in the choice they make. Moreover, the example which Daphnis sets for her lover--

Florame, souviens-toi de ce que tu me dois:
Si nos feux sont égaux, mon exemple t'ordonne
Ou d'être à ta Daphnis ou de n'être à personne

(vv. 1296-1298)

--foreshadows that of Rodrigue for Chimène, as the latter indicates:
"Tu n'as fait le devoir que d'un homme de bien; / Mais aussi, le
faisant, tu m'as appris le mien" (vv. 911-912).

We have noted above that for Daphnis love represents a powerful master and, indeed, after Géraste has ordered her to forsake Florame for another, she gives in to her tears (v. 1243) and emphasizes the extent of her love for Florame:

Un seul Florame vaut à ma pudique flamme
Tout ce que l'on pourroit offrir à mes ardeurs
De mérites, d'appas, de biens et de grandeurs.

(v. 1273, variant vv. 2-4)

Her passion, however, does not enslave her as it did previous heroines, even Célidée who displayed considerable will-power. The reason for this is undoubtedly because passion and honour are this time in the same camp, and it is she who saves the family honour:

Si dans mes premiers feux je vous semble obstinée,
C'est l'effet de ma foi sous votre aveu donnée.

Je choisirai la mort plutôt que le parjure:
M'y voulant obliger, vous vous faites injure.
Ne veuillez point combattre ainsi hors de saison
Votre vouloir, ma foi, mes pleurs, et la raison.

(vv. 1569-1570; vv. 1577-1580)

Thus, she can justify her opposition to Géraste by arguing that she is saving him from himself. We are given no indication of what she would do were she to find herself in a situation similar to, for example, that of Célidée, but given what information we have of her, Daphnis displays the greatest self-control seen thus far in Corneille's theatre.

Daphnis, however, is not without fault, especially in regard to her suiivante, Amarante. She deceives Amarante to advance her own interests, for example, in the scenes of the unimportant errands. True, in Mélite, the heroine had said that "en fait d'amour la fraude est légitime" (v. 1743), but in the intervening plays as well as in La Suiivante nowhere do we find mention of this principle, and in fact the deceiver is forgiven only when he or she shows remorse and asks to be forgiven. On several occasions, Daphnis treats Amarante in a mocking way, for instance, in Act III, scene 10, where she is also vindictive. At the end of scene 6 in the same act, Daphnis overhears part of what Amarante was telling Géraste with regard to the supposed love Daphnis bears for Clarimond. On next meeting Amarante, she deliberately sets out to seek revenge and does so by telling Amarante that Florame is hers with the consent of her father (vv. 1005-1008). At the end of the play Daphnis redeems herself somewhat by forgiving Amarante, but even

here she pardons her souvante only at Florame's instigation. More will be said, however, concerning this trait, in the part of this chapter dealing with the ethic.¹⁰

With Daphnis, Corneille continues to develop the self-determination of his heroine, but he has given Daphnis a much easier time of it than Chimène will have: the self-control which the present character manifests encounters its difficulties, but the obstacles which the playwright has presented are, relatively speaking, of a minor nature as compared with those of Chimène. Indeed, in Daphnis' case, the dilemma is relatively insignificant, for her honour demands that she pursue the object of her love. Nonetheless, Corneille has presented, with the exception of the vindictiveness mentioned above, a heroine who, despite difficulty, keeps her self-control to the end.

Florame has "peu de biens" (v. 891), but "[son] mérite et [sa] race / Au près des gens d'honneur sont trop dignes de grâce" (vv. 897-898). Similarly to Tircis and Dorimant, he wants to remain free from the bonds of love and "Tient pour manque d'esprit de véritables feux" (v. 36, variant). Nevertheless, he cynically and defiantly plays the love game:

. . . Florame à tous les beaux visages
Fait par civilité toujours de feints hommages,
Et sans avoir d'amour offrant partout des vœux . . .

(vv. 33-35)

Confident in his ability to remain aloof, he accepts Théante's

¹⁰See below, p. 212.

challenge to court Amarante without falling in love with her. Like his two predecessors he succumbs, but to the mistress not the sui-vante. Furthermore, much to his discredit, he uses Amarante to gain access to Daphnis. More doubt is cast on his character when Damon reveals that it is her wealth that attracts Florame who "cherche ambitieux, par sa possession, / A relever l'éclat de son extraction" (vv. 75-76). As the play unravels, however, Florame is exonerated on this count, for nowhere does he himself mention any attraction for Daphnis' wealth, and we learn that Damon is a double-agent and, as such, not always to be believed.¹¹

Unable to rid himself of Amarante whose

. . . incommode affection,
Dont l'importune tyrannie
Rompt le cours de ma passion,

(vv. 374 and 375, variant)

he must wait for "L'unique sujet qui me blesse" (v. 399) to provide for him "Un peu de liberté pour lui donner la mienne" (v. 402). If he is ready to give up his freedom, he will do so only to Daphnis, "l'objet de mes désirs" (v. 386), and he quickly seizes the opportunity to do so when she sends Amarante on errands. Up to this point there are distinct similarities between Philiste and Florame: they are both noble and are in love with one who has more wealth and rank than they. However, where Philiste was very timid and overly respectful towards

¹¹It is for this reason that we can not agree with Doubrovsky, op. cit., p. 56, when he says that "son ami Damon ne nous laisse aucun doute" that Florame is interested in Daphnis' riches.

Clarice, Florame is more forceful and does not think much of the approach used by such hesitant lovers as Philiste:

Je ris de ces amants
Dont le trop de respect redouble les tourments,
Et qui, pour les cacher se faisant violence,
Se promettent beaucoup d'un timide silence.
Pour moi, j'ai toujours cru qu'un amour vertueux
Ne peut être blâmé, bien que présomptueux.

(vv. 423-427; v. 428; variant)

There and then, he declares his love for Daphnis in the most rapturous terms, admitting that he is her "captif" (v. 459) and she "son âme" (v. 494). Despite the fact that Daphnis has not reciprocated, Florame is "tout ravi dans son âme / D'avoir eu les moyens de déclarer sa flamme" (vv. 637-638), and hopes that since she has listened to his words they are perhaps accepted. When Daphnis does declare, apparently with her father's permission, her love for him, Florame's happiness reaches its height:

Surpris, ravi, confus, je n'ai que repartir.
Etre aimé de Daphnis! un père y consentir!
Dans mon affection ne trouver plus d'obstacles!
Mon espoir n'eût osé concevoir ces miracles. (vv. 927-930)

Once more he consents to give up his freedom to live "sous votre loi" (v. 948), and asks her to receive his "foi" (v. 947).

Like Philiste and Lysandre before him, Florame does not give in to self-pity and despair upon learning of the obstacle to his union with Daphnis. A man of action, he immediately asks for the name of his rival in order to vie with him for the hand of his beloved. However, like his last two counterparts, once his first effort fails, he gives way, in a

soliloquy similar in content to Rodrigue's stances in Le Cid, to the feelings of despair and powerlessness which assail and confuse him: "L'excès de ma douleur m'ôte le jugement" (v. 1300). He pours out invective against Géraste calling him "infâme vieillard" (v. 1311), "barbare" (v. 1316), "lâche" (v. 1319) and arrives at what seems a definite solution: "Tu mourras; et je veux, pour finir mes ennuis, / Mériter par ta mort celle où tu me réduis" (vv. 1323-1324). When he remembers that he is speaking of Daphnis' father, his decision quickly dissolves: he first tries to justify his previous feelings, and in so doing provides further insight into the psychology of the lover governed by his passion:

Si je suis sans respect pour ce que tu respectes,
Que mes affections ne t'en soient pas suspectes.
De plus réglés transports me feroient trahison;
Si j'avois moins d'amour, j'aurais de la raison;
C'est peu que de la perdre, après t'avoir perdue.

(vv. 1329-1333)

He becomes as irresolute as he was formerly decisive:

Rien ne sert plus de guide à mon âme éperdue,
Je condamne à l'instant ce que j'ai résolu;
Je veux, et ne veux plus sitôt que j'ai voulu.

(vv. 1334-1336)

In the following scene, however, it appears that he has made up his mind to follow his first course of action, for he threatens both Célié and Géraste with death if he does not receive what was promised him. In Act V, scene 3, when he next meets Amarante, he threatens her with reprisals as well. Like those of Philiste, Florame's words and efforts

are in vain: both are willing to act to rid themselves of the obstacle to their marriage, but the first can not discover the identity of the abductor, while the second that of his rival. Florame, however, could have recourse in vengeance on the most guilty offender, G raste, but although favouring that solution, he uses only the words and none of the actions of Rodrigue in Le Cid.

Once again, therefore, Corneille presents us with a lover possessed by passion and, although, in a number of respects, Florame resembles Philiste of La Veuve while lacking the capability or perhaps the opportunity of Lysandre in La Galerie du palais to bring about his own happy ending, the playwright has nevertheless endowed his present hero with some rudimentary character traits and tendencies which will find their full expression in the hero of Le Cid.

The r le of Amarante, the souvante in the play by that name, has evolved considerably from that of her predecessor in La Galerie du palais: she has become one of the main characters, she is young and, as a result, her outlook and behaviour have changed substantially. She is no longer a simple chamber-maid, but rather a lady-companion to Daphnis. Of as good family background as her mistress (v. 1670), only her poverty obliged her to relinquish her social position for the subordinate post she now holds. "Her position," Lancaster correctly observes, "seems to be that of a poor relation, an object of charity, tolerated, but made to feel the distance that separates her from Daphnis".¹² Friend and confidante to her mistress, she nevertheless

¹² A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, I, ii, 606.

becomes, without incurring ridicule or evoking surprise, her rival. Both Théante and Florame were able to court her without appearing ludicrous. Indeed, Théante speaks of her "puissants appas" (v. 9) and Florame of her "charme" (v. 141) and "beautés" (v. 149, variant), remaining completely credible. Amarante is quite conscious of her attributes and has a good opinion of herself (vv. 25-29; 188). Not particularly concerned at being abandoned by Théante whom she did not love, Amarante is more than amply consoled by Florame's courtship of her (vv. 59-62). In love with Florame, she very straightforwardly tries to persuade him, despite his protests, that she is his: no friendship stands in the way of true love (v. 204); there is no disloyalty in forgetting a friend for a loved one (vv. 221-226). Amarante realizes quickly that all of Florame's excuses indicate that "Vous vous trouveriez mieux auprès de ma maîtresse" (v. 229), but she decides to find out what is Daphnis' position (vv. 310-311). Having discovered that Florame's affection for Daphnis is reciprocated, Amarante resolves to do everything she can to prevent their union:

Je ferai mes efforts afin qu'on ne m'en prive,
Et j'y veux employer de si rusés détours,
Qu'ils n'aurent de longtemps le fruit de leurs amours.

(v. 334, variant vv. 5-7)

Thus, her love for Florame and, as Lemonnier indicates, "les circonstances mêmes font d'Amarante une envieuse et une intrigante".¹³ The means which she adopts are less than frank and quite unscrupulous, resorting

¹³Op. cit., p. 50.

to treacherous schemes and outright lies. When Daphnis asks her point-blank whether or not she loves Florame, Amarante, feigning loyalty to the mistress who, she admits, has often before distracted suitors from herself, replies that she does not love him to the extent of causing dissatisfaction to Daphnis (Act II, scene 7). Meeting Théante, she persuades him that Daphnis has only negative feelings towards Florame while looking upon Théante favourably (Act II, scene 8). She finds, however, a surer means of separating the two lovers: she cleverly convinces the rich Clarimond, who has just been thoroughly rejected by Daphnis, that the latter really does love him and that her harsh words are only a façade (Act III, scene 4). Amarante pursues this scheme by telling Géraste that his daughter loves Clarimond (Act III, scene 6). This deceit combined with the ensuing misunderstanding causes Daphnis to believe that her father will permit her to marry only Florame, and Géraste that his daughter loves only Clarimond. Amarante's subterfuge would have succeeded were it not for Géraste's passion for Florise, Florame's sister, for whom he is only too willing to exchange his daughter. From the outset to the clarification of the misunderstanding, the situation becomes gradually more complicated, and Amarante, having lost control of her scheme, becomes more and more confused. Despite her confusion, Amarante never loses hope in the separation of Daphnis and Florame, and finds consolation in the hostility existing between Géraste and his daughter (v. 1102). Once the union between the two lovers becomes inevitable, Amarante reveals the reason for her unscrupulous machinations:

Mon amour pour Florame en est le seul coupable:
 Mon esprit l'adoroit; et vous étonnez-vous
 S'il devint inventif, puisqu'il étoit jaloux? (vv. 1618-1620)

Thus, the reason for Amarante's behaviour is the same as that of Hippolyte and Dorise: possessed by her passion for Florame, all her efforts were directed at acquiring the object of her affection, regardless of the means.

However, in the bitter soliloquy which ends the play, Amarante also shows a kinship with the nurse of *Mélite*: the vanity of both has been wounded, both are embittered and revengeful, but Amarante to a greater degree than her predecessor. Moreover, she has been given greater depth of character and stronger reason for her discontent, in keeping with her more noble background and more elevated position, all of which serve to set her apart from the nurse. Her rôle is in fact a successful combination of that of the souvante, successor to the nurse, and that of the young lady of good family who is scorned by the one she loves.

Théante is the descendant of *Philandre*, *Pymante* and *Alcidon* of *Corneille's* first three plays. Like *Philandre*, he pretends to love Amarante when, in fact, he wants to rid himself of her who now stands in the way of his ambition (v. 12), but he does not show himself as inconsiderate as *Philandre* who simply and unceremoniously casts *Cloris* aside at the first opportunity. Théante attempts to ease himself out of his courtship of Amarante by substituting Florame. Later and in another context, however, we learn that he has acted probably not so much out of consideration for Amarante as of fear of the consequences. Like *Pymante* and *Alcidon*, he demonstrates cleverness which, in this case,

is exemplified in Théante's method of freeing himself from Amarante to pursue the more socially elevated Daphnis. He has not, however, foreseen two major obstacles to his ambition, first that Damon is deceiving him and second that Florame is playing the same game as he. When he learns the latter from Damon, he directs his efforts to keeping Florame away from Daphnis, as when, in Act I, scene 7, he uses the excuse of the approaching dinner hour which commands that he and Florame take leave of Daphnis. Moreover, having learned that Florame and Daphnis have declared their love to one another, he contrives to have Florame duel with a third party, Clarimond, in order to eliminate his rivals, for with one dead the other must flee, leaving him as the only remaining suitor (Act II, scene 9). However, the vanity which he displays in his ambition and cleverness blinds him to the cleverness of those surrounding him, and he becomes completely credulous: in Act II, scene 8, Amarante, doing her part to keep Daphnis and Florame apart, tells Théante that her mistress favours him over Florame; and Théante in his conceit accepts what he wants to believe as true. Damon rightly observes that:

Pour un homme si fin, on te dupe aisément.
 Amarante elle-même en est mal satisfaite,
 Et ne t'a rien conté que ce qu'elle souhaite.

(vv. 632-634)

In addition, Théante's cleverness serves to reveal a major character flaw: he is a coward, just like his three predecessors. The sole reason for his concocting the duel between Florame and Clarimond, as Florame points out, is to avoid exposing himself to any possible blows

(v. 1123). According to Damon, this characteristic is not newly revealed in Théante:

Depuis plus de dix ans je connois sa portée.
Il ne devient mutin que fort malaisément,
Et préfère la ruse à l'éclaircissement. (vv. 1134-1136)

Acquainted with Théante's stratagem, Florame mockingly manoeuvres his conversation with him to the point of involving Théante in the duel as a second, whereupon Théante produces a series of arguments which are presumably counsels of caution for Florame, but are in fact pretexts to avoid his having to face any direct confrontation or threat to his own welfare. When he next meets Damon (Act V, scene 1), Théante has already decided to give up his pursuit of Daphnis, but, as we expect, he continues his duplicity this time to save face: the reasons which he gives--

Leur amour est trop forte; et d'ailleurs son trépas,
Le privant d'un tel bien, ne me la donne pas.
Inégal en fortune aux biens de cette belle,
Et déjà par malheur assez mal voulu d'elle . . .

(vv. 1375-1376; v. 1377, variant; v. 1378)

--did not prevent him from pursuing Daphnis in the past. The real reason emerges indirectly when Damon refuses his request to try to dissuade Clarimond from duelling (v. 1390), and Théante concludes that the only way to prevent the duel is "Qu'on leur donne dans peu des gardes à tous deux" (v. 1396). For his part, Théante will satisfy himself with a trip to Italy under the pretext of "divertir le cours de ma mélancolie" (v. 1406).

Florame's earlier description of Théante was accurate:

Je m'étonne comment tant de belles parties
 En cet illustre amant sont si mal assorties,
 Qu'il a si mauvais coeur avec de si bons yeux,
 Et fait un si beau choix sans le défendre mieux.
 Pour tant d'ambition, c'est bien peu de courage.

(v. 1153-1157)

As ambitious as he is, Théante's cowardice wins out over his passion, which with him, much more than with his earlier counterparts, has nothing to do with love for the coveted woman. He uses the language of love simply to further his own financial and social interests. Moreover, he is more cowardly than his predecessors, for nowhere does he willingly expose himself to the slightest risk to his own welfare or tranquility.

The most striking aspect of the four characters we have just studied is the rather ignoble trait of deceptiveness Corneille has made them share, the first time our playwright has done so for all the main characters of one play. Each of the principal characters of La Suivante resorts to it with varying frequency to attain his goals: Florame and Daphnis to obtain the privacy necessary to declare their love for one another; Amarante to separate the two lovers and acquire the object of her affection, Florame; and Théante to rid himself of Florame, his rival for the hand of Daphnis with which Théante can satisfy his ambition for financial and social advancement. Passion, then, is the driving force behind this use of deception, especially with regard to Amarante and Théante. Both apply all of their faculties toward the invention and execution of schemes to retain Florame

on the one hand and to gain access to the material possessions of Daphnis on the other. In the process, Amarante emerges as a successful amalgam of Florice, the souvante of La Galerie du palais and descendant of the nurse of the previous comedies, and Hippolyte, the young lady of good background scorned by the one she loves. In the end, however, Amarante is much more bitter than any of her predecessors, the reasons for which will be discussed below while studying the ethics of this play.¹⁴ Théante's duplicity finds a worthy adjunct in his cowardice, and these attributes make of him a deserving descendant of the earlier vain and two-faced poltroons of Corneille's theatre. While Philandre, Pymante and Alcidon were mainly concerned with conserving their pride, Théante is more careful to avoid any physical threats to his person, which is his real passion.

Florame and Daphnis resemble all of the previous heroes and heroines for, like them, they share the passion of love. The extent to which they are possessed by it, however, sets them apart. Florame's initial attitude to love is the same as that of the cynical Tircis who, upon seeing a particularly attractive woman, forgets all his pretensions of aloofness to become totally ensnared in a relationship he previously regarded as foolish. At this point the resemblance changes from Tircis to Philiste, for Florame, like the hero of the second comedy is poorer than the one he loves. The resemblance is limited, for Florame is much more aggressive than was Philiste in declaring his passion to Daphnis. When an obstacle to his union with Daphnis

¹⁴See below, pp. 213-214.

appears, like Lysandre and Philiste he resorts immediately to action only to become irresolute when his first effort fails. Unlike Philiste but similar to Lysandre, Florame recovers somewhat from his despair and, in anger, plans to kill, not his rival who remains unknown to him, but the real offender, Daphnis' father. Lacking the action of Rodrigue, he exhibits at least the intentions and words of the hero of Le Cid.

Despite the intensity of her affection for Florame, Daphnis, who sees love as a powerful master, manages to retain her self-control first of all when her lover declares his love for her, and then when her father takes back his first promise in order to give her hand in marriage to a second suitor. Like Célidée in La Galerie du palais she strongly objects to her father's wishes, but in so doing does not act capriciously as did her counterpart, for her decision is honourable, as will be the case for Rodrigue and Chimène in Le Cid. The freedom which she manifests is used with discrimination and judgement in spite of her strongly passionate feelings. With her, however, this is not surprising because her freedom, love and honour are not at opposite poles as was the case with Célidée, but rather work hand in hand to achieve their own development and goals. If, therefore, Daphnis is able to maintain her self-control to the end, the reason lies in the fact that it is considerably easier for her to do so than Célidée and certainly Chimène.

While studying Daphnis, we have seen that Géraste's behaviour rarely takes into consideration the desires of his daughter. Indeed, Géraste, at this advanced stage of his life, does not appear to be a very good father, for, having fallen in love with the young Florise, he acts purely out of self-interest in using his daughter as a pawn in his

bargaining with Florame for Florise's hand. He recognizes his foolishness (v. 349), but nevertheless he yields to it arguing that "le sort en est jeté" (v. 350). Not knowing yet of Florame's conditions for giving Florise to him, we see Géraste first of all as a good father considerate of Daphnis' inclinations: in Act III, scene 6, when Amarante falsely informs him that Daphnis loves Clarimond but has not declared her love for him for fear of displeasing Géraste, the latter replies:

. . . ce respect m'oblige à l'aimer davantage.
 Je lui serai bon père . . .

 Je la veux enhardir à ne plus se contraindre.

(vv. 854-855; 858)

In the following scene, meeting Daphnis, he gives her complete freedom to declare her love. Once he has learned, however, of Florame's terms for agreement, he withdraws his earlier permission to Daphnis and becomes totally entrenched in self-interest. Although he is moved by his daughter's tears to a considerable extent (vv. 1061-1062), although he realizes that his is an "injuste rigueur" (v. 1063) (words also used to describe Don Diègue's command to his son in Le Cid [v. 294]), the argument which carries most weight with him is that "Florise ne se peut acquérir qu'à ce prix" (v. 1067). Even when Daphnis points out to him that in wanting her to perjure herself "vous vous faites injure" (v. 1578), he remains completely authoritarian, replying that "pour toute raison il suffit que je veux" (v. 1592).

It will be remembered that Pleirante in La Galerie du palais also

exercised his authority very strictly, that he, like G raste, commanded his daughter, despite her obvious aversion, to marry whom he wished. The difference, of course, lies in each of these two characters' motivation: Pleirante's arguments were based on considerations for his daughter's future, for the reputation of his family, and on the realization that C lid e's adverse wishes were merely capricious; G raste's, on the other hand, while he is for a time concerned with Daphnis' happiness, are ultimately founded simply in selfishness.

In his 'parental' r le, Florame shows himself at least as selfish as G raste, if not more so. We are told, in Act III, scene 1, that Florise is considerably less than happy at the prospect of marrying G raste. Florame informs us that

Enfin, quelque froideur que t'ait montr  Florise,
Aux volont s d'un fr re elle s'en est remise.
.
Elle se sacrifie   mes contentements,
Et pour mes int r ts contraint ses sentiments.

(vv. 681, variant; 682; 687-688)

Florise's behaviour is certainly more laudable than her brother's who gives evidence nowhere in the play of any compassion or consideration for his sister. He uses her simply as an object of trade in his negotiations with G raste who at least displayed some signs of pity towards Daphnis. He is guided solely by his self-interested desire to acquire Daphnis.

While the parents of La Galerie du palais had acted primarily out of altruistic interest with regard to their daughters, those of La Suivante conduct themselves entirely out of self-interest in dealing

with their wards. Both Florame and Géraste are guided solely by their passion without consideration for the desires or feelings of Florise and Daphnis respectively, and indeed realizing fully that, in so doing, they are running counter to their wishes. The relationship between parent and child in this play appears to be a reversion to that of La Veuve in that the parents of both plays are inflexible toward their children, and that their motivation is self-interested. However, these elements are considerably more blatant in La Suivante than in La Veuve where they are tempered by a substantial interest for the daughter. However, as we shall see shortly while studying the ethics of La Suivante, there is no condonation of the parental attitude prevalent in this play.

Among the secondary characters there appears another whose rôle is parental, namely Polémon, Clarimond's uncle, who, at the request of his nephew, has taken upon himself the responsibility of asking Géraste for the hand of Daphnis in marriage to Clarimond. He appears in only one scene (Act V, scene 5) where he displays tact, dignity and ceremonious politeness. Even more limited is the rôle of Cléon, Damon's servant, who simply fulfills the utilitarian function of warning his master and Florame of the approach of Théante (Act IV, scene 5). Better delineated is the rôle of Célie, the neighbour whose help Géraste acquires to promote his suit of Florise. A loyal confidante, she counsels Géraste as to the difficulties and dangers inherent in a marriage between young and old. Realizing Géraste's determination, she agrees to do what she can (Act II, scene 1). Having performed her duty as emissary between Florame and Géraste to the

apparent satisfaction of both parties, she becomes first of all surprised (Act IV, scene 9) and then indignant at having unwittingly taken part in Gêraste's deceitful and dishonourable behaviour (Act V, scene 6).

Another secondary character who remains straightforward and honest is Clarimond. He loves and courts Daphnis, but receives only scorn from her for his repeated efforts (Act III, scene 2). Despite Daphnis' rather harsh rejection of him, he does not resort, as did, for example, Eraste or Pymante, to any underhanded stratagem. Instead, he generously resolves to serve Daphnis by accepting his dismissal (Act III, scene 3). However, because of his despair and the intensity of his love for Daphnis, he is completely open to suggestion, and credulously accepts at face value Amarante's assertions of Daphnis' love for him.

Damon, on the other hand, is not one to be deceived. Friend to both Florame and Théante, he plays the rivals off against one another with no apparent purpose other than possibly his own amusement. He openly admits to Florame that

Si Théante sait tout, sans raison tu t'en plains:
Je t'ai dit ses secrets, comme à lui tes desseins;
Il voit dedans ton coeur, tu lis dans son courage,
Et je vous fais combattre ainsi sans avantage.

(vv. 1111-1114)

Eventually, his concern turns to uncovering Théante's cowardice and, in the process, mocking him and providing himself with even more amusement. However, his unscrupulous and frivolous toying in other

people's affairs, along with his rôle as a double agent who, as R. J. Nelson reminds us, "is by definition a slippery character [because] we never know whether he will turn out to be a triple agent, a quadruple agent, etc.",¹⁵ add further disquiet to the already uneasy atmosphere of the play.

Evidently, then, the world of La Suivante is one of pretence, trickery and selfishness which appears to ignore the standards of conduct prevalent in the previous plays. As we have just seen, Damon is a double agent who, as such, can not be trusted, and who plays upon his friendship with both Florame and Théante apparently only for his own entertainment. The only times he has recourse to words such as générosité or honneur is when he mocks and ridicules Théante (e.g. vv. 1116 and 1402).

Géraste is a scheming old man who uses his wealth to buy Florise:

Dis-lui [Florise] que si l'amour d'un vieillard l'importune,
Elle fait une planche à sa fortune;
Que l'excès de mes biens, à force de présents,
Répare la vigueur qui manque à mes vieux ans. (vv. 353-356)

Completely prepared to give his daughter to man she apparently does not love only to satisfy his own self-interest, he uses such principles as devoir, foi, and honneur simply to justify his own position, and in so doing runs directly counter to these same principles. On introducing to Daphnis the decision he has just made to give her to a new suitor, he appeals to her sense of duty (vv. 1041-1043), but in the process departs from his own duty as father. When he replies to Daphnis that

¹⁵Op. cit., p. 56.

Ma foi doit-elle pas prévaloir sur la vôtre?
 Vous vous donnez à l'un; ma foi vous donne à l'autre.
 Qui le doit emporter ou de vous ou de moi?
 Et qui doit de nous deux plutôt manquer de foi?

(v. 1585, variant; vv. 1586-1588)

he conveniently overlooks the fact that it was on his own instructions that Daphnis declared her love, and that he is, therefore, breaking his promise.

In his pursuit of Daphnis, Théante is no more than a social climber for whom deception is the favorite instrument for arriving at his goals unscathed. What he wants from Daphnis is what Amarante lacks, wealth and social stature, but he is not above using the suiivante, whom he rejects, in order to further his ambitions. Like his previous counterparts it occurs to him that violent means might also be successful, but unlike them he wants no direct hand in it, so completely a coward is he. In his advances as in his retreat, he resorts freely to the hollow use of généreux terminology and argument to the extent that Florame and Damon derive considerable amusement at his expense:

Florame: Toutefois au combat tu n'as pu l'engager.
 Damon: Sa générosité n'en craint pas le danger;
 Mais cela choque un peu sa prudence amoureuse.

(vv. 1115-1117)

Théante's means like his motives are ignoble.

Florame too uses Amarante to gain access to Daphnis by pretending to return her love. This unscrupulous self-seeking is again reflected in his total lack of concern for his sister's feelings during his conscienceless and egocentric dealings with Géraste. Florame's attrac-

tion to Daphnis appears to be two-fold, for love and money, the latter for the benefit of giving greater stature to his noble background. This last element, however, is definitely put into question because of the source of this information and also because Florame nowhere mentions Daphnis' wealth as a reason for pursuing her. Nonetheless, doubt on this score does exist.

Florame does possess some redeeming traits which indicate his familiarity with the ethics of earlier plays. He exhibits courage in his willingness to duel with his rival, and again in his readiness to right the wrong which Géraste has committed towards him and Daphnis to whom, unlike Théante, he remains faithful.

Florame learns little from this experience, however, for, once the misunderstanding has been eliminated, he still unabashedly trades his sister for Daphnis. Evidently, he becomes concerned and righteous only when his personal interests are at stake or when deceit is no longer necessary.

Daphnis too resorts to deceit in her attempts at gaining a private interview with Florame, but her mocking and vindictive attitude towards Amarante is even more manifest, and as such indicative of a feeling of superiority over her suiivante due, of course, to her greater wealth. This wealth and the rank which it gives her do not appear to satisfy her, for, in assessing the motives for which Daphnis might want to marry him, Florame says: "Elle a trop de bonté pour me vouloir de mal; / D'ailleurs sa résistance obscurceroit sa gloire" (vv. 696-697), which casts doubt upon Daphnis' behaviour and values, making of her only another self-seeking person. In all fairness to her,

however, it must be noted that nowhere in the play does she say anything to support this view. In fact, in the soliloquy in Act III, scene 8, she admits only love for Florame, and argues that the reason for which G raste has given approval of Florame despite his lack of wealth is her lover's merit, a kind of triumph of merit over wealth (vv. 891-893). Indeed, as regards her love for Florame, she speaks only in the most noble terms, and the values to which she holds are of the most elevated.

Daphnis retains these principles in her conduct towards her father as well. The predicament in which she finds herself because of G raste's wish to give her to another elicits from her very g n reux principles and feelings. Caught between her duty to her father and the promise she made to Florame, she resolves to keep her promise, to the extent that she will belong to no one else, and to do her duty as well by not marrying Florame. This self-abnegation she will carry out for the sake of both love and honour. There is no doubt that with regard to Florame and her father she acts according to the noblest motives, but her behaviour towards Amarante remains the same to the end where it is only at Florame's instigation that she forgives her suiivante.

After Th ante, Amarante is undoubtedly the most deceitful character in this play, but a major difference emerges in that she is the only one (except for Clarimond) whose motives are clearly not based on riches or status. Her efforts are directed solely towards the acquisition of the one she loves.¹⁶ Deceptive though she is, Amarante never forgets

¹⁶For this reason, we do not agree with Dorchain, op. cit., p. 114:

her noble background and, although she readily stoops to trickery to win Florame, there are limits beyond which she will not descend: in Act III, scene 4, when Clarimond attempts to give her a diamond ring as a token of his discretion, Amarante indignantly replies:

Vous voulez justement m'obliger à me taire;
 Aux filles de ma sorte il suffit de la foi:
 Réservez vos présents pour quelque autre que moi.
 . . . Gardez-les, dis-je ou je vous abandonne.

(vv. 778-781)

The inherent pride which remains in Amarante does not permit her to deceive for a salary.

However, in the bitter soliloquy which ends the play, she has come to realize the power of riches. Resentful at having been used by Florame, she is even more embittered at the thought that Daphnis' success resulted purely from her wealth:

Daphnis me le ravit, non par son beau visage,
 Non par son bel esprit ou ses doux entretiens,
 Non que sur moi sa race ait aucun avantage,
 Mais par le seul éclat qui sort d'un peu de biens.

(vv. 1669-1672)

Not that she now wishes she were rich, for nowhere does she say so. Instead, she decries the lot of all young ladies, such as herself, whose beauty and charm are neglected for lack of fortune, attacks the values of such young men as Florame who use their authority and other people to attain their own selfish goals, and calls down curses upon Géraste

". . . nous ne saurions avoir qu'antipathie pour les principaux personnages, à commencer par l'artificieuse Amarante".

who sold his own daughter in order to buy himself a wife.

In comparison to the ethic of the previous plays, the ethic of the society in La Suivante represents much of what was in the past considered unacceptable. The rule of sincerity and honour have generally broken down except where self-interest is at stake, the power of money is manifestly of much greater importance, the principle of union between two characters of the same noble background is not observed, and social rank is based on material possessions rather than on one's merit. This does not mean that Corneille has rejected the values presented earlier in his dramatic production. In fact, by making Gêraste an unsympathetic character in as far as he barter his daughter and by having Florame treat his sister as a mere chattel, the author demonstrates, as Nelson rightly observes, "an anti-bourgeois bias".¹⁷ Moreover, by portraying Amarante as a sympathetic character inasmuch as her actions, though ignoble, are motivated solely by love, he has voiced the concern of a nobility whose status is threatened by the increasing importance of wealth. This is particularly evident in Amarante's final soliloquy, but we also find it from the very beginning of the play where Théante openly admits that he repudiates the souvante in favour of Daphnis because of the latter's superior riches, and later when Amarante says of Théante to Daphnis:

Il voudroit pour m'aimer que j'eusse d'autres charmes,
Que l'éclat de mon sang, mieux soutenu de biens,
Ne fût point ravalé par le rang que je tiens. (vv. 302-304)

¹⁷Op. cit., p. 60.

The characters, then, discover that they live in a world with more limitations than seen in previous plays, that not everyone is virtuous, that many use généreux terms and arguments in the name of self-interest, or conduct themselves according to généreux ethics as and when they see fit. Corneille has also demonstrated that, try as one may, one can not always control circumstances nor manipulate events at will. Even Providence, which again plays only a very minor rôle here, does not answer every prayer favourably as Amarante finally discovers and admits with sarcastic irony:

Ciel, pour faciliter le succès de sa flamme [Florame's],
Falloit-il qu'un vieillard fut épris de sa soeur?

Oui, ciel, il le falloit: ce n'est pas sans justice
Que cet esprit usé se renverse à son tour:
Puisqu'un jeune amant suit les lois de l'avarice,
Il faut bien qu'un vieillard suive celles d'amour.

(v. 1679, variant vv. 1-6)

Thus, human efforts do not always bear fruit, for results do not always depend on acts of will, but are affected by external forces such as Providence, chance and coincidence. Moreover, the just and virtuous are not always rewarded, at least not immediately, for their noble conduct: Clarimond, the only completely virtuous character, does not receive due recognition, for he is basically passive.

Corneille, then, has given us the other side of the coin: elevated principles and behaviour are not universal; injustices exist and do not only go unpunished occasionally, but are sometimes even rewarded. Our playwright has not given up the ethics of générosité, but rather has indicated that people live in a society where good shares with bad,

where its inhabitants are surrounded by limitations, and where effort of will, self-interested or not, does not always suffice to achieve desired goals, be they ethical or unethical. Thus, the characters of future plays will find themselves in a more complex society than previously depicted, one in which good and evil will coexist much more closely and where the one or the other may triumph, although, as Stegmann has correctly observed,¹⁸ the triumph of evil is momentary and eventually gives way to the restoration of order and of généreux ethics.

Because of the extensive use of deception in La Suivante, there is less pathos than in earlier plays, for it is difficult to sympathize with falsity. However, even in the first three acts where duplicity reigns especially, we find a few isolated and weak instances of pathos. In Act II, scene 2, the audience would sympathize somewhat with Florame who, because of the ever-present Amarante, can not find the opportunity to declare his love for Daphnis. This effect, however, is greatly attenuated if not completely nullified by Florame's unrepentant admission that he has used Amarante for the sole purpose of gaining access to Daphnis. A more successful instance of pathos occurs in scene 6 of the same act: Daphnis bemoans the fact that, having heard Florame tell her of his love, she yearns to reciprocate but can not because her father has not given her permission to do so. Moreover, she feels that it is highly improbable that Géraste will ever give her this freedom, given Florame's relative poverty. In the foll-

¹⁸L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 316-318.

owing scene (Act II, scene 7), pathos shifts from Daphnis to Amarante who complains to her mistress that, the sui-vante having lost both Théante and Florame to Daphnis, "Si vous continuez à rompre ainsi mes coups, / Je ne sais tantôt plus comment vivre avec vous" (vv. 547-548). However, here as in most of the play, our sympathy for Amarante is limited, for, besides her deceitfulness, she remains hopeful and determined that Florame will be hers. Another example of pathos in this part of the play is that elicited by Clarimond's soliloquy in Act III, scene 3. Clarimond's suit of Daphnis has just been rejected in very strong and definite terms by his beloved, and now he laments his inability to stop loving her:

Je tâche à me résoudre en ce malheur extrême,
Et je ne saurois plus disposer de moi-même.
Mon désespoir trop lâche obéit à mon sort.

(v. 752, variant v. 2; vv. 754-757)

Rivaille denies the pathetic effect of this scene and bases his denial on the word "déplaisir" (v. 762) which Amarante uses, in the next scene, to describe Clarimond's facial expression.¹⁹ We agree that his speech is not as heart-rending as those of the heroes of earlier plays, but he does suffer greatly because he still loves one who has so definitely spurned him. Moreover, his généreux decision not to make a nuisance of himself and to accept his dismissal enhances the pathetic effect. What is more, Rivaille seems to have overlooked Clarimond's reply to Amarante: "Je porte, malheureux, auprès de tels outrages, /

¹⁹Op. cit., p. 184.

Des douleurs sur le front, et dans le coeur des rages" (vv. 765-766).

Thus, in the first three acts of this play we have only four instances of pathos, two of which are quite weak and two others which, although certainly pathetic, are isolated and excite only fleeting feelings of pity.

As of Act IV, scene 2, however, there occurs a major turn of events resulting in a marked increase and sustention of pathos. Its cause is, of course, based on the misunderstanding emanating from Géraste's unwitting omission of the name of the most recent husband he has chosen for his daughter. The situation which develops is reminiscent of that between Célidée and Pleirante in La Galerie du palais, but in the present play the scene is much more moving in that Géraste acts purely out of self-interest, and that Daphnis objects not out of capriciousness but according to recognized, if not always followed, principles of conduct. Géraste has earlier consented to his daughter's marrying the one she loves and now, only a short time having elapsed, he asks her to abandon this idea and to marry another. When she objects, he entrenches himself more firmly in his position; she sighs and gives in to tears whereupon he dismisses her rather harshly (Act IV, scene 2).

In scene 7 of the same act, we have a more powerful form of pathos, one which emanates from the varied feelings experienced simultaneously by two characters. Florame, happy at the certainty of marrying Daphnis, is taken aback by the tearful aspect of his beloved who informs him of her father's change of heart. Deeply hurt, Florame asks her to tell him the name of this lover in order to avenge himself. Daphnis refuses

in such glowingly loving terms that Florame, although pleased at the extent of her love for him, suffers more and despairs:

L'effet d'un tel amour, hors de votre pouvoir,
Irrite d'autant plus mon sanglant désespoir;
L'excès de votre ardeur ne sert qu'a mon supplice.

(vv. 1279-1281)

He declares that there is no happier way to die than "pour vous et par vous" (v. 1288). This demonstration of love increases Daphnis' suffering to the point that "Le coeur me serre; adieu: je sens faillir ma voix" (v. 1295, variant).

The next scene (Act IV, scene 8) continues this pathetic effect by presenting a conflict of feelings in Florame and his struggle to find the right solution. His anger at Géraste bursts forth in violent invective, and in the end he threatens to kill him. He realizes, however, that Géraste is Daphnis' father, and as such he must respect him. His indecision only increases his suffering and despair. His meeting Célie (Act IV, scene 9) serves to intensify his anger and multiply his threats, and also to extend and sustain the pathetic element.

Act V, scene 2, presents the anguished figure of Florame imploring the gods to direct their wrath away from him and to help him in his plight. In the third scene, he even turns, in his despair, to Amarante for help. Thinking that he is now making fun of her just as he previously abused her, she tells him that he knows very well that Géraste favours his suit while Daphnis rejects it. At this and because he believes the opposite to be true, his anger grows even more and he

threatens her as well.

Meanwhile, Géraste has decided to intimidate Daphnis into submission if necessary and, in Act V, scene 7, he puts his plan into effect. He permits no further argument on the subject and commands his daughter to do as he wishes. Just as matters promise to become very serious, Florame arrives and dispels Daphnis' anxiety along with the pathetic effect.

Throughout this latter part of the play Corneille has presented a legitimate tragic conflict in which, on the one hand, Florame is torn between wanting to avenge the wrong done to him by Géraste and wishing to avoid offending his beloved by killing her father; and, on the other hand, in which Daphnis is torn between her duty to her father and her honour which compels her to keep her promise to her lover. However, the tragic and pathetic elements are unfounded because there is, in fact, no conflict between the two lovers and Géraste who, indeed, does wish them to marry. All of their suffering is based on the misunderstanding which Géraste caused unknowingly by omitting a name.

Pathos is also derived from Amarante's frantic and unsuccessful attempts to keep Florame for herself, not for reasons of social or financial ambition, but solely because she loves him: "sa jalousie," says Félix Hémon, "éclate parfois en accents fort peu comiques".²⁰ As indicated by her vindictive soliloquy (Act V, scene 9), the cause of her misfortune and suffering is not lack of beauty, wit, charm or social

²⁰In his edition of Théâtre de Pierre Corneille (Paris: Delagrave, [1886-1887]), I, lxxi.

background, but insufficiency of wealth. If this soliloquy, which ends the play, is not tragic, as R. J. Nelson has observed,²¹ it nevertheless comes very close to being just that. Of the ten stanzas which form this last scene, eight contain indications that she is resigned to a fate over which she has no power, of which she can not reverse the effect. There is even mention in stanzas five and six, albeit ironical, of a metaphysical entity responsible for her misfortunes. However, Corneille avoids the tragic ending in the last two stanzas by having Amarante desire revenge upon Géraste, thereby destroying the effect of resignation created by the apparent recognition of the inevitability of her fate in the previous stanzas.

Thus, although Corneille has continued to generate and then dispel pathos according to methods already applied in this theatre, he has nonetheless intensified pathetic expression in La Suivante. There are fewer instances of pathos in this play than in, for example, La Galerie du palais, but those emanating from the predicament of Florame and Daphnis, and from the final scene of the play would indeed be tragic if the lovers were in fact caught in such a dilemma, and if the last two stanzas were omitted in the final scene. Evidently, then, Corneille has come one step closer to the genre for which he is renowned.

In fact, the dramaturgy of La Suivante contains a number of developments and acquisitions which Corneille will retain in his tragedies. Where the author had demonstrated his ability to use the rule of unity of time in Clitandre, here he shows that, while observing it

²¹Op. cit., p. 59.

even more strictly, he can also do it much more plausibly. As for unity of place, he now makes no concession to spectacle, and limits the area to one no bigger than the size of the stage. The action of the play, however, still remains faulty in that it again contains more than one plot, but it is no more faulty than that of his last play where the various plots are very closely intertwined and the outcome of the minor plots depends on that of the main. Unlike La Galerie du palais, the main obstacles are of an external nature, and result from chance and coincidence rather than from an inner psychological need or desire of the characters. In La Suivante, the efforts of the protagonists generally fail, and the action describes the lack of control of characters over events which surround them. This does not mean that the play is peopled with spectators, for the characters continue to act in spite of adversity and uncertainty. Thus, although the inner obstacle has been eliminated from this play, Corneille is still interested in the psychology of his characters as we see in their various reactions to their changing fortunes.

The driving force behind the main characters remains the love to which they are enslaved: Daphnis and Florame for one another, Amarante for Florame, Géraste for Florise, and Théante for himself. Despite their passion, however, Daphnis and Florame give evidence of a certain amount of lucidity, judgement and independence. Confronted by Géraste's change of heart, Daphnis protests her father's lack of respect for the promise he has made. She has a difficult decision to make between honour and love, and duty to her father, and, finding that she can not honourably fail in either obligation, she chooses to avoid both by

neither disobeying her father nor breaking her word to Florame. This decision foreshadows that of the type which Rodrigue and Chimène will have to make, although in the latter case there will be no compromise. Florame too must make a difficult decision: will he avenge himself by killing Géraste or will he allow the one who gave life to his beloved to continue to live? This question is very similar to that which will confront Rodrigue, as is their momentary irresolution. However, where Rodrigue decides to avenge himself on Don Gomès and acts upon his decision, Florame only seems to decide and does not act. This may simply be a case of Florame not having the opportunity to act, for, at his next meeting with Géraste, the misunderstanding is rectified.

Théante and Amarante are completely absorbed in their passions. Théante is very much like Philandre, Pymante and Alcidon of past plays, but where the latter were cowardly, Théante is much more so, carefully avoiding all risks to his own welfare. Amarante, a more interesting development in that this descendent of the nurse now becomes one of the main characters, has a noble background, and becomes rival to her mistress. As the latter she falls into a mould similar to that of Dorise and Hippolyte, but at the same time combines many traits seen in the previous sui-vante and nurses.

The world in which these and the remaining characters find themselves seems to be at the opposite pole from that seen in previous plays. Their society is one of pretence, trickery and selfishness, where the principles and terms of généreux ethics are used generally only when it is expedient. Values revolve about such materialistic ambitions as the acquisition of wealth or rank. Even when the acquisi-

tion of a beloved is the goal, the procedure deteriorates to a form of bartering by the 'parents' who remain completely devoid of consideration for their daughters' feelings and wishes. The characters are not completely lacking in généreux values, however, as witnessed, for example, in Florame's courage and in Daphnis' self-abnegation. The play taken as a whole, however, indicates a breakdown of former ethical values, a society in which sincerity and honour are declining and where social rank is based no longer on merit, but on riches. This does not mean that Corneille rejects généreux ethics, for, when the characters act in unethical ways, they become unsympathetic. It appears rather that Corneille is moving away from the still somewhat pastoral context of his previous plays towards a more accurate picture of society with all its complexities, where obstacles are external as well as internal, where chance and circumstance have a larger rôle, where good is not always immediately rewarded or evil punished.

One might expect that in a play with such serious considerations there would be considerable pathos. Indeed, there are fewer instances of pathos here than in the earlier plays, for the prevalence of selfishness and duplicity makes it difficult for the spectator to feel pity or sympathy. There are, however, two instances which are very important in that they come close to being truly tragic. First, there is the predicament in which Daphnis and Florame find themselves as a result of Géraste's change of heart: Daphnis is torn between duty and honour, while Florame struggles to make the proper decision between avenging the wrong done to him by Géraste and the respect he owes the father of his beloved. This conflict would indeed be tragic

were it not founded on a misunderstanding which is rectified at the last moment. The second instance occurs in the last scene of the play where Amarante seems to have bitterly resigned herself to a fate responsible for her misfortunes. The tragic ending, however, is averted in the last few lines where the suiivante clearly demonstrates that she does not accept her lot and that she lacks all insight into the inevitability of her fate. Corneille, then, although continuing to dispel pathos, has certainly intensified it to the point of being very nearly tragic.

Thus, La Suiivante presents further progress and evolution of Corneille's dramatic production towards the technique, psychology, system of values, and general tone of the genre for which he has become famous.

CHAPTER VII

LA PLACE ROYALE

La Place royale is in many respects a consolidation of elements from the preceding plays and, as we shall see, it is not always a happy one. From Mélite, Corneille has borrowed the basic outline of relationships between the characters, the false letter, and the initial conversation concerning the merits of fidelity in love. La Veuve provides an abduction and the ultimate marriage between one of the abductors and the rival's sister. La Galerie du palais furnishes the idea of a well-known location as well as a heroine who is ready to marry another while still loving the hero. La Suivante supplies a monologue to end the play and a direct reference to Théante's opinions on dueling (La Suivante: vv. 649-652 and La Place royale: v. 702).¹

While in La Galerie du palais the action shifted twice from its principal location to the shops of the Galerie, here the public square becomes the main location except for two consecutive scenes (Act III, scenes 5 and 6) which take place in Angélique's room. Obviously, the reason for this change does not lie this time in any desire for spectacle, but in the more important consideration of vraisemblance:

Malgré cet abus, introduit par la nécessité et légitimé par l'usage, de faire dire dans la rue à nos amantes de comédie ce que vraisemblablement elles diraient dans leur chambre, je n'ai osé y placer Angélique durant la réflexion douloureuse qu'elle fait sur la promptitude et l'imprudence de ses ressentiments, qui la font consentir à épouser

¹These similarities have already been noted by Lancaster, A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, I, ii, 609-610.

l'objet de sa haine; j'ai mieux aimé rompre la liaison des scènes, et l'unité de lieu, qui se trouve assez exacte en ce poëme à cela près, afin de la faire soupirer dans son cabinet avec plus de bienséance, pour elle, et plus de sûreté pour l'entretien d'Alidor.²

Thus the rule of unity of place has been followed to the same extent as in La Galerie du palais, albeit for different reasons, but lacks the complete adherence seen in La Suivante.

Although Corneille has given us no clear indication as to the span of time during which the action of La Place royale develops, it is evident that he has not repeated the feat of La Suivante where the duration of the action was no more than that of the play itself. Nor has he returned to the use of five consecutive days first seen in La Veuve and again in La Galerie du palais. However, in his Au Lecteur to La Veuve he mentions, in reference to the rule of unity of time, that "de six pièces de théâtre qui me sont échappées, en ayant réduit trois dans la contrainte qu'elle nous a prescrite, je n'ai point fait de conscience d'allonger un peu les vingt et quatre heures aux trois autres".³ Since we definitely know that Mélite, La Veuve, and La Galerie du palais do not follow the rule, and that Clitandre and La Suivante do, the other one that does must be La Place royale. Upon examination, it is quite feasible for the action of the present play to take place within the allotted twenty-four hours, the play beginning during the afternoon of one day and ending during that of the next.

Once more, a summary of the action will serve to show the extent

²M.-L., II, 223.

³M.-L., I, 378.

to which it is unified. Angélique is very much in love with Alidor, and is loved by Doraste, Cléandre and Alidor. The latter, however, wishing to remain independent from the permanence of any bond, agrees to do all he can to give her to his friend Cléandre. He arranges, first of all, to have his servant deliver to Angélique a false love letter supposedly addressed to another woman. The scheme miscarries, however, and Angélique, convinced by this letter and a conversation she has with Alidor that he does not love her any longer, consents to marry Doraste out of spite the next day. Cléandre, seeking to grasp his opportunity to woo Angélique, is detained by Phylis who thus enables her brother, Doraste, to obtain the hand of Angélique for himself. Cléandre informs Alidor of this new development, whereupon the latter, wishing to secure Angélique only for his friend, wins her back. His new plan is to pretend to elope with Angélique that evening after a ball that Doraste is giving in her honour, but in fact to turn her over to Cléandre. When they meet late that evening, Alidor gives her a note presumably from himself, but really from Cléandre which contains his promise of marriage. While she takes it to her room without reading it, Phylis, who had followed her earlier, is abducted by Cléandre who thinks he is carrying off Angélique. Doraste finds the note, and, discovering Angélique's infidelity, withdraws his suit for her, and turns his attention to the search for Phylis. The next morning Cléandre and Phylis return safely, she with her honour intact, and he having fallen in love with her. Phylis agrees to marry Cléandre thus permitting Alidor, who has since had a change of heart, to marry Angélique. The latter, however, realizes the futility of marrying some-

one of so little faith, and decides to enter a convent instead. Alidor ends the play with a monologue in which he is apparently pleased at having regained his freedom while at the same time not having to see his loved one belong to another.

Once again we have more than one plot; that concerning Angélique and Alidor, another Cléandre, Angélique and Phylis, and finally Phylis, Doraste and Angélique. These three stories, however, are unified by the fact that, in the first instance, Angélique acts as a kind of pivot to each of them in that she loves Alidor, is loved by Doraste and Cléandre, is a close friend of Phylis who hinders Cléandre's suit in order to facilitate her brother's; and secondly that Alidor's decisions and actions directly affect the development of each of the plots. Moreover, the greater relief given to the main plot (that concerning Angélique and Alidor) also enhances the impression of unity. Corneille, however, continues to include circumstances which, although interesting, are superfluous to the main action: Phylis' cavalier treatment of Lysis (Act II, scenes 6 and 7; Act III, scene 8) or Cléandre's chivalrous conduct toward Phylis (Act V, scene 1) are of no importance to the destinies of Alidor and Angélique.

In the Examen of this play, the playwright himself expressed dissatisfaction with the action: Alidor's first plan to unite Cléandre and Angélique fails, bringing together instead Angélique and Doraste, and causing Alidor to formulate a new plan. Corneille concludes that "ces deux desseins, formés ainsi l'un après l'autre, font deux actions, et donnent deux âmes au poëme . . .".⁴ He also criticizes the way the

⁴M.-L., II, 221.

play ends with the marriage of two secondary characters rather than that of the two principal characters. There is no reason, however, why a play should not end with the separation of two lovers given that the rôle of the dénouement in general is to determine the fate of the leading characters, and that the purpose behind the action in this play is to show, not how the lovers were united, but how they were separated. A more pertinent criticism could be directed at the fact that, unlike the two preceding plays, the outcome of the two minor plots does not depend on that of the main plot nor vice versa.

The action of La Place royale also differs from that of La Suivante in that, as we shall see, its source and motive power emanate mainly from an internal principle as was the case in La Galerie du palais. External influences, however, continue to be present, to a lesser extent than in La Suivante and more so than in La Galerie du palais. Moreover, the combination of these elements, external and internal, are such that the characters both control and are controlled by occurrences surrounding them.⁵ His love for Angélique having been given free reign by Alidor, Cléandre sets out to win her hand, under the direction of Alidor who twice sets up the situation for his friend (Act II, scene 2 and Act III, scene 6). Both times, however, Alidor's plans and Cléandre's attempts fail: Cléandre is prevented by Phylis from capitalizing on the resentment felt by Angélique due to Alidor's

⁵In dealing with this question, Rivaille, op. cit., pp. 160-165, rightly concludes that "le drame intérieur l'emporte sur le drame extérieur" (p. 160). His discussion and illustration of this point, however, are solely aimed at supporting the predominance of the internal principle and, in so doing, dismisses too easily the rôle of external influences and its importance.

deliberate betrayal (Act II, scene 7); also, chance intervenes during the abduction of Angélique when Cléandre mistakenly carries off Phylis (Act IV, scene 4). From this point on, however, Cléandre determines his own fate: he falls in love with Phylis and persuades her to marry him on condition that her parents consent (Act V, scene 2), a consent which he quickly obtains (Act V, scene 6).

Doraste too does not, at first, act so much as he is acted upon. He does go forward at the opportune moment to obtain a promise of marriage from Angélique, but only at the instigation of his sister (Act II, scene 5). However, he in turn influences events: he finds the false promise of marriage in Angélique's room, prevents the flight of Angélique with Alidor, and, because he reveals the content of the note, serves to separate Alidor and Angélique (Act V, scenes 6 and 7). The ultimate influences to this part of the action are found elsewhere, but Doraste does play an active rôle in determining the results.

More active and more decisively influential is his sister, Phylis, but again not nearly as completely as she wishes. Although she presents her brother's merits to Angélique, it is doubtful that this has any effect. She becomes more effective when, having heard of the rift between Alidor and Angélique, she sends Doraste to take advantage of Angélique's anger and resentment (Act II, scene 5). Seeing Cléandre heading towards Angélique's house, she stops him and uses a variety of pretexts in order to detain him until her brother has achieved his aim (Act II, scene 7 and 8), thus causing Alidor's plan to fail. Later, suspecting something afoot between Angélique and Alidor, she decides to keep close watch over Angélique (Act III, scene 7). That evening,

seeing Angélique leave the ballroom, she attempts to follow her, but one of her many suitors impedes her progress in such a way that, by the time she does manage to get away, Angélique has had time to speak to Alidor and is presently depositing the note containing the promise of marriage in her room. Once Phylis is outside, chance once again takes over: in the darkness of the night, she is mistaken for Angélique and carried off (Act IV, scene 4). Thus, once again Alidor's plan fails, but it is worthy of note that, if Phylis does play a rôle in its failure, chance plays at least an equal if not a more important rôle. The result of this mistaken abduction has, of course, little effect on the fates of Angélique and Alidor as we learn at the end of the play.

Although Angélique's decisions affect the action, they do so mainly in reaction to those of Alidor. When Alidor offends and abandons her, she agrees to marry, out of spite and vengeance, one whom she sought to avoid at all cost, Doraste (Act III, scene 2), a decision which she quickly regrets (Act III, scene 5). Thus, when Alidor confronts her with excuses and protestations of love, she willingly accepts to escape this marriage in favour of eloping with Alidor (Act III, scene 6). Having once again been deceived by Alidor who cowardly takes flight at the sight of Doraste (Act IV, scene 7), she resolves to part, completely and forever, with the one she loved (Act IV, scene 8). Although this final decision was reached as a result of Alidor's conduct, the ensuing position which Angélique takes is, in a decided way, her own: since Doraste has given her word back to her, she has made up her mind to enter a convent, and, no

matter how much Alidor begs forgiveness or plays upon her feelings, she stands firm (Act V, scene 7).

Alidor is the character who is most master of his own fate, for his decisions determine his own situation and influence that of the other characters. In love with Angélique who returns his love, Alidor wants to break off the relationship for fear of losing his freedom. To do this, he makes way for Cléandre (Act I, scene 4), and sets out to help him acquire Angélique: under orders from Alidor, the servant Polymas, pretending to be disloyal to his master, gives to Angélique a letter presumably from Alidor to another woman, containing statements of love for this woman while insulting Angélique (Act II, scene 1); compounding the injury, Alidor confronts Angélique, and answers her reproaches with further insults (Act II, scene 2). The way is now clear for Cléandre to attempt to gain Angélique's hand. Cléandre's failure to do so leads Alidor to contrive another plan whereby he will regain Angélique's favours, and hand her over to Cléandre (Act III, scene 4): meeting Angélique once again, he plays admirably the rôle of the lover having tested his beloved, is forgiven, and even obtains Angélique's consent to elope that very night (Act III, scene 6). Alidor intends, in fact, to substitute Cléandre for himself, and have his friend abduct Angélique. However, Alidor still loves her very deeply, and wavers seriously between giving her to Cléandre and carrying her off himself; in the end, he resolves to go through with his first plan (Act IV, scene 1). When Angélique appears that night, Alidor gives her a promise of marriage signed by Cléandre which she takes up to her room during which time he makes final arrangements for the abduction

(Act IV, scene 3). The deed accomplished (he does not know that it was Phylis who was kidnapped), he is surprised to see Angélique return and fears that his plot is uncovered; but observing that she does not suspect anything, he finds pretexts to leave without her; giving in to her despair, he is ready to take her with him, but the appearance of Doraste and his friends causes him to flee, leaving Angélique behind. This marks a turning point for Alidor: he loses the control he formerly had over his own situation. Overjoyed at Cléandre's giving him back Angélique (Act V, scene 2), he attempts to find ways of regaining her, for he now loves her more than ever, having had such convincing proofs of love from her (Act V, scene 3). Meeting Angélique, he begs forgiveness, and threatens suicide, but to no avail, for she will no longer have anything to do with him, Phylis begs her to forgive him, Alidor redoubles his pleas, but again to no avail: Angélique will not go back on her decision (Act V, scene 7). Alidor has in a sense lost his control over her and, therefore, over his own situation: his joy at having obtained his freedom in the end (Act V, scene 8) appears to be but a rationalization of the situation into which Angélique seems to have forced him in spite of his very recent wish and attempts to marry her. In fact, Alidor caused his own undoing by deceiving her once too often.

Thus, the predominance of control of events by the characters in La Galerie du palais and their predominant lack of control in La Suivante combines in La Place royale to present a more accurate reflection of the complexities of life. Human effort does succeed, but not

always, because of the impossibility of knowing with complete certainty how others will act or react, and also because of the unpredictability of chance and coincidence. Corneille has almost struck a balance, in this play, between internal and external principles but, through the somewhat greater emphasis he places on the first, concludes that man, despite outside occurrences, often brings about his own successes as well as his own downfalls.

In La Place royale, the main object of striving or failure is Angélique who is loved by Alidor, Cléandre and Doraste, and her central position is concretely indicated by the appearance of her name twelve times at the rhyme. As in past plays, words common to the language of love appear most frequently at the rhyme. Another theme which is directly related to the first, namely that of freedom and slavery, takes on greater importance in this play. We would expect, then, to find a few related words occurring frequently at this position of stress, but instead we find numerous words each of which occupy this position infrequently: maître (3 times), liberté (4 times), volonté (4 times), veux (3 times), tyrannie (twice), tyrannique (twice), fers (3 times), chaînes (4 times), captivité (twice), servage (twice), servitude (once), prison (4 times). Alidor's preoccupation with this concern leads him to formulate desseins (6 times) to escape from this bond, plans which, by their unscrupulousness, earn him the names of volage (6 times) and parjure (5 times), which elicit such words as crime (5 times), offense (4 times), perfidie (4 times), forfait (4 times), and the justification crime-légitime (3 times). The feelings provoked are underlined by the

presence at the rhyme of the words supplice (8 times), peine (8 times), ressentiment (6 times), querelle (5 times), haine (5 times), colère (4 times), and the couplets peine-inhumaine (3 times) and regret-secret (3 times).

Words generally thought of as representative of Cornelian theatre continue to appear infrequently at the rhyme and, when they do, carry about the same weight as in preceding plays. There are two notable exceptions to this statement: the word gloire, which does not appear at all, and the words générosité and généreuse, which appear once and twice respectively. The absence of gloire is not surprising because, if the goals are laudable, the means taken to achieve them are not. The increase in the use of words of the généreux family (seen once in La Galerie du palais, and not at all in previous plays) clearly indicates greater and more specific interest in this aspect on the part of the author.

A study of the characters and of their ethics will now serve to amplify the conclusions reached as a result of analysis of word frequency at the rhyme.

Angélique, like the earlier heroines, is passionately in love with one man, Alidor, and will consider no other alternative. She recognizes that Doraste has merit (v. 1, variant v. 1), but she explains to Phylis that

Vois-tu, j'aime Alidor, et cela c'est tout dire.
Le reste des mortels pourroit m'offrir des vœux,
Je suis aveugle, sourde, insensible pour eux;

Alidor a mon coeur et l'aura tout entier.

(v. 34, variant; vv. 35-36; v. 40)

Continuing her opposition to the pleas of her friend for greater consideration of her brother, Angélique exposes her theory of love: to love more than one is to be disloyal to all (v. 41); moreover,

Qui peut en avoir mille en est plus estimée,
 Mais qui les aime tous de pas un n'est aimée;
 Elle voit leur amour soudain se dissiper:
 Qui veut tout retenir laisse tout échapper. (vv. 89-92)

To theory and maxim she adds the argument of personal experience in this domain as proof of the benefits and joys of loving only one person:

Simple, tu ne sais pas ce que c'est que tu blâmes,
 Et ce qu'a de douceurs l'union de deux âmes;
 Tu n'éprouvas jamais de quels contentements
 Se nourrissent les feux des fidèles amants. (vv. 85-88)

Little wonder, then, that she deems Doraste's attentions unwelcome and decides to avoid them:

S'il vit dans une humeur tellement obstinée,
 Je puis bien m'empêcher d'en être importunée,
 Feindre un peu de migraine, ou me faire celer;
 C'est un moyen bien court de ne lui plus parler.

(v. 17, variant; vv. 18-20)

What is new here is not so much the stand which Angélique takes with regard to love, but the detailed exposition of her views. Even in the former, however, there are differences: her aspirations are for a pure form of love, not simply a union of two people, but a kind of mystical

union of two souls (v. 86).⁶ Moreover, if the previous heroines had already adopted the view that love should be directed to only one man, Angélique carries it even further, even to the extent of blind loyalty to the loved one who betrays her. Her ensuing behaviour with regard to Alidor's conduct amply demonstrates this point: having read the false letter from Alidor to Clarine, a letter not at all flattering to herself, she states: "Contre ce que je vois mon fol amour s'obstine" (v. 305, variant), realizing fully the senselessness of continuing to love a deceiver. Even after he has insolently confronted and insulted her to her face, even after she has sent him packing (v. 390) and called down the wrath of heaven upon him (v. 429), her "flamme insensée" (v. 437) persists: "Que je m'anime en vain contre un objet aimable! / Tout criminel qu'il est, il me semble adorable" (vv. 433-434). However, she must avenge herself, and does so by agreeing to wed Doraste, the one she has just repudiated. There is no question of love here as she explains during the despairing reflections which follow her acceptance:

Quel malheur partout m'accompagne!
 Qu'un indiscret hymen me venge à mes dépens!
 L'un m'est plus doux que l'autre, et j'ai moins de tourment
 Du crime d'Alidor que de son châtement.

(vv. 721-722; vv. 725-726)

Thus, when Alidor approaches her supposedly full of remorse and prepared to make amends by dying for love of her in order to free her from

⁶Introduction of the critical edition: Pierre Corneille, La Place royale, ed. J. C. Brunon (Paris: Didier, 1962), p. xxx.

her promise and allow her to marry Doraste, Angélique only too readily returns his love declaring that "Dessus mes volontés ta puissance absolue / Peut disposer de moi, peut tout me commander" (v. 822, variant; vv. 1-2), and she agrees to elope with him that very night. Despite her overpowering passion, she maintains a certain degree of lucidity:

Que promets-tu, pauvre aveuglée?
 A quoi t'engage ici ta folle passion?
 Et de quelle indiscrétion?
 Ne s'accompagne point ton ardeur dérégulée?
 Tu cours à ta ruine, et vas tout hasarder
 Sur la foi d'un amant qui n'en sauroit garder. (vv. 849-854)

This awareness, however, is of short duration, for she immediately justifies her lover's behaviour, and finds pretexts for her own decision. Her faith in and her love for Alidor are so complete that, when he hands her the note containing the promise of marriage, she takes it to her room without reading it (v. 977). Even when Alidor is surprised to see her return (he thinks that Cléandre has carried her off), even in the face of his feeble excuses for not completing the elopement, or even when he flees at the approach of Doraste and abandons her, Angélique continues to believe in him. Only when Doraste gives her to read the note which he found in her room, does she recognize Alidor for what he really is, and love for what it made her do:

Si j'ose l'appeler lâche, traître, parjure,
 Ma rougeur aussitôt prendre part à l'injure;
 L'amour m'a fait trahir . . . (vv. 1190-1191; v. 1196)

However, Angélique refuses to accept any of the guilt: Alidor is the only guilty party because "Il m'a prescrit la loi, je n'ai fait qu'obé-

ir; / Il me trahit lui-même, et me force à trahir" (vv. 1200-1201).
 Nonetheless, ashamed of her conduct towards Doraste, she puts her fate
 in his hands, for he has her "foi" (v. 1206).

When Alidor returns in Act V, scene 7 in the hope of winning her
 back once again, she gives him no quarter:

Si je t'aime jamais, je veux cesser de vivre.
 Quel espoir mal conçu te rapproche de moi?
 Aurois-je de l'amour pour qui n'a point de foi?

(vv. 1439-1441)

She offers no hope whatever to Alidor, and when Doraste frees her from
 her promise, she decides to leave the world in order to enter a convent:
 "Rien ne rompra le coup à quoi que me résous: / . . . / Un cloître est
 désormais l'objet de mes désirs" (vv. 1481 and 1484). A victim of
 continued and premeditated disloyalty at the hands of her lover,
 Angélique despairs of the union which she desired with the man she loves
 but can no longer believe or trust. Thus, "le bonheur, si proche en
 apparence, [est] manqué de si peu, mais de façon si irrémédiable".⁷

Although Angélique resembles the previous heroines to the extent
 that she is very much in love with one man, she is more akin to those
 of L'Illusion comique, Le Cid, Horace, and Polyeucte: Isabelle-
 Hippolyte will continue to love Clindor-Théagène even after his infidel-
 ity towards her; Chimène will not waver in her affection for Rodrigue
 although he has slain her father; Camille will die for her love of
 Curiace who has chosen his patriotic duty over her; Pauline will go

⁷ George Couton, "Corneille," Littérature française, ed. Antoine
 Adam, Georges Lerminier, Edouard Morot-Sir (Paris: Larousse, 1967),
 I, 194.

on loving Polyeucte despite his blasphemous and unpatriotic conduct. Thus, Angélique, in her despairing but continuing love for Alidor, prefigures a type of heroine not particularly evident in previous plays, but which will be found in ensuing plays.

Opposite Angélique, we find Alidor who is as irresolute as his loved one is determined. Earlier male characters, such as Tircis in Méliste or Florame in La Suivante, scoffed at love, and prided themselves in remaining free from its bonds only to succumb upon seeing the right woman without any feelings of regret at their loss of freedom. Alidor, on the other hand, loves Angélique, but seeks to regain his freedom from this enslaving passion. This is made completely clear as of our first encounter with this character: ". . . son objet trop charmant, / Quoi que je puisse faire, y règne absolument" (vv. 183-184). Like Célidée in La Galerie du palais, and somewhat reminiscent of Philandre in Méliste,⁸ he has become weary of Angélique's utterly faithful and teeming love: "Ce n'est qu'en m'aimant trop qu'elle me fait mourir, / Un moment de froideur, et je pourrais guérir" (vv. 187-188). When Cléandre, to whom he is speaking, comments on the oddity of a lover who complains of being loved too much, Alidor objects:

Comptes-tu mon esprit entre les ordinaires?
Penses-tu qu'il s'arrête aux sentiments vulgaires?
.

8

Ton bel oeil mon vainqueur
Fait naître chaque jour tant de feux en mon coeur,
Que leur excès m'accable, et que pour m'en défaire
Je recherche par où tu me pourras déplaire.
(v. 258, variant v. 2; vv. 260-262)

This similarity has already been observed by P. J. Yarrow, op. cit.,

Je veux la liberté dans le milieu des fers.

 . . . et quand j'aime, je veux
 Que de ma volonté dépendent tous mes vœux,
 Que mon feu m'obéisse au lieu de me contraindre,
 Que je puisse à mon gré l'enflammer et l'éteindre,
 Et toujours en état de disposer de moi,
 Donner quand il me plaît et retirer ma foi.

(vv. 201-202; 204; 207-212)

He wants to be free, free to love as he wishes and when he wishes voluntarily and not because his beloved's charms compel him to do so.⁹ Moreover, he is afraid of the permanence of marriage in an ever-changing world: Angélique is beautiful now, but will her beauty last? Will his love for her last until death?

Du temps, qui change tout, les révolutions
 Ne changent-elles pas nos résolutions?
 Est-ce une humeur égale et ferme que la nôtre?

(vv. 231-233)

He wonders "comment un amour durable est possible au milieu de l'écoulement des choses".¹⁰ The freedom which he seeks and which is based on

p. 93, note 1.

⁹ Georges Couton, in his *Corneille* (p. 27), suggests that Corneille wanted to depict, through Alidor, "un don juanisme qui revient périodiquement à la mode". It is true that Alidor has spread out his attentions, for he speaks of the "mille qu'autrefois tu m'as vu caresser" (v. 283). However, he adds immediately:

En pas une un mari pouvoit-il s'offenser?
 J'évite l'apparence autant comme le crime;
 Je fuis un compliment qui semble illégitime,
 (vv. 284-286)

a much too scrupulous attitude for a Don Juan.

¹⁰ Adam, op. cit., p. 497.

the pride and sometimes vanity of the moi (or, as we shall see, perhaps on cowardice)¹¹ has merit: it consists of not submitting to anything or anyone, of maintaining no disorder within himself, of becoming complete master of himself. In this respect, Alidor certainly foreshadows the wilful heroes and heroines of Cornelian tragedy, one of whom will be found in the next play, Médée.

Another merit, but one which appears to come as an after-thought, is that such an attitude will lead to a marriage founded not on physical attraction, but on an act of free will:

Je ne me résoudrai jamais à l'hyménée
Que d'une volonté franche et déterminée,
Et celle à qui ses noeuds m'uniront pour jamais
M'en sera redevable, et non à ses attraits, (vv. 945-948)

a rather idealistic approach to marriage, hoping unrealistically to avoid future difficulties.

As laudable as Alidor's professed goal is, he is incapable of achieving it directly or honourably. Moreover, he is unable to reconcile love and freedom and indeed can not even choose decisively for the one or the other as his frequent vacillations demonstrate. Still very deeply in love with Angélique, the only way he can see of gaining his liberty is by quitting his beloved altogether. But even this does not suffice, for he must give her to his friend Cléandre: no matter that Angélique and Doraste are to be married next day thereby liberating Alidor,

¹¹ See below, p. 267.

Je ne puis être heureux, si Cléandre ne l'est.
 Ce que je t'ai promis ne peut être à personne:
 Il faut que je périsse ou que je te le donne.

(vv. 688-690)

In so doing he resorts to lie after lie, and to plans which are downright and unnecessarily cruel to Angélique: the false letter in which he is not content to appear disloyal, but must also insult her; the apparent necessity he feels to continue these insults to her face (Act II, scene 2); the calculated attempt to regain her affections only to deceive her again when his first scheme fails (Act III, scene 6); the sustained manner in which he plays with her feelings through most of the play knowing full well the suffering he causes or will cause her. So selfish is he that the pain and sadness which he inflicts on Angélique, as well as the fact that he is using her to acquire his freedom rather than mastering his love for her, do not concern him much:

Ce trait paroîtra lâche et plein de trahison;
 Mais cette lâcheté m'ouvrira ma prison.
 Je veux bien à ce prix avoir l'âme traîtresse
 Et que ma liberté me coûte une maîtresse. (vv. 899-902)

Instead of putting into effect his original plan of subjugating his passion in order to kindle or extinguish his love at will, he shifts the burden from himself to Angélique by arranging that she leave him, or as Doubrovsky aptly puts it: "il lui faudra la forcer, alors qu'il devait se forcer".¹² This dependence on Angélique clearly shows that

¹²Op. cit., p. 70.

Alidor is controlled by her, and as a result, his enslavement is twofold: he relies on her for his freedom, and continues to love her. His frequent vacillations between love for Angélique and his desire for freedom ultimately end in defeat. In Act IV, scene 1, having overcome once again the obviously powerful influences of his affection, he reaffirms his resolution and determination: "Fuis, petit insolent," he says to love "je veux être le maître" (v. 942). Only a few lines later, however, the battle is renewed: the abduction supposedly having taken place, Alidor is struck by the 'reality' of his situation, and decides to run after Angélique in the hope that Cléandre will give her back to him (vv. 1014-1016). But he quickly returns to his former position, and, were it not for the mistaken abduction of Phylis, he probably would have achieved his goal, because now that Angélique is apparently separated from him forever he assumes a stance of self-reliance: "Je sais trop maintenir ce que je me propose, / Et souverain sur moi, rien que moi n'en dispose" (vv. 1033-1034). Yet, when Angélique reappears, he is hard pressed to withstand her arguments and charms, and in the end agrees to take her away with him. Only the sudden intervention of Doraste and a group of friends saves him, but in the process he reveals a cowardice not unlike that of Théante in the previous play. At this as well as the discovery of Alidor's plan, Angélique resolves to enter a convent. Just when Alidor seems to have achieved the independence he so eagerly sought, he submits completely to his love for Angélique:

C'en est fait, Angélique, et je ne saurois plus

Rendre contre tes yeux des combats superflus.
De ton affection cette preuve dernière
Reprend sur tous mes sens une puissance entière.

(vv. 1288-1291)

Moreover, he consciously and willingly exchanges his quest for freedom in favour of the shackles of love:

Aussi ma liberté n'a plus rien qui me flatte;
Le grand soin que j'en eus partoît d'une âme ingrate;
Je ne m'obstine plus à mériter sa haine:
Je me sens trop heureux d'une si belle chaîne.

(vv. 1310-1311; 1313, variant vv. 2-3)

However, when for once he confronts Angélique with sincere protestations of love, it is her turn to reject him. More than ever a slave of the passion he sought to master, his final soliloquy barely disguises his disappointment and failure by means of an attempt at making the best of a bad situation: "Que par cette retraite elle me favorise" (v. 1490). The attitude which Alidor reflects in this line is, however, that which he held throughout the play, for the struggle which he supposedly assumed as his he had in fact put in Angélique's hands. Therefore, as J. Maurens has appropriately indicated: "Il [Alidor] ne mène pas un combat, mais camoufle une fuite".¹³ Camouflage is certainly evident on his part when, a few lines later, he says: "Impuissant ennemi de mon indifférence, / Je brave, vain Amour, ton débile pouvoir" (vv. 1502-1503). This defiance is but a hollow and futile act of bravado because

¹³ La Tragédie sans tragique: le néo-stoïcisme dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), p. 195.

Angélique has already decided the outcome of the situation over which Alidor no longer has any control.

Thus, Alidor, the hero in search of himself, has failed on two counts: first, in his resolve to confront and master the love within himself, and then in his attempt, through Cléandre, to have Angélique do it for him. He is even incapable of the freedom of indifference which Phylis displays.¹⁴ In the end, he proves to be very much like Angélique in that he too is ruled by love. Nonetheless, he prefigures the heroes of the tragedies in his original plan to acknowledge the powers of love, and then to propose to overcome them by an act of will, thus asserting mastery of self. This does not mean that future heroes will view love as a blow against or interference with their freedom, for with them love and freedom are not mutually exclusive. As Henri Peyre rightly notes: "La volonté chez Corneille n'est nullement répressive: elle ne cherche pas à faire taire les désirs, mais à harmoniser désir et liberté".¹⁵ Furthermore, subsequent heroes will not have to seek self-control as does Alidor, for they will already possess it. However, despite Stegmann's statement that "ce 'bizarre' n'est pas l'ancêtre des héros cornéliens",¹⁶ we believe that Alidor's search for freedom and self-control indicates interest in these attributes on the

¹⁴Josane Duranteau, "Corneille et les tricheurs," Critique, XV (1959), 955.

¹⁵"Quelques ouvrages récents sur le XVII^e siècle," Romanic Review, (1949), XL, 133.

¹⁶L'Héroïsme cornélien, II, 500.

part of Corneille who will, in later plays, endow his heroes with these very same traits, have them exercise their free will rather than seek freedom through circuitous means, and thus arrive at enduring decisions.

Where Alidor sought freedom to act according to his own will and initiative, Phylis finds hers in deliberate acceptance and dependence, an attitude of complete indifference already encountered in La Veuve with Doris, and again in La Galerie du palais with Hippolyte. Phylis will remain completely detached from the limitations and dangers of a love such as that of Angélique:

Au lieu d'un serviteur, c'est accepter un maître.
 Dans les soins éternels de ne plaire qu'à lui,
 Cent plus honnêtes gens nous donnent de l'ennui.

(v. 49, variant vv. 2-4)

To love in the manner of Angélique entails fears of jealousy, of waning affection, of despair at the lover's death. Besides,

On dispose de nous sans prendre notre avis;
 C'est rarement qu'un père à nos goûts s'accommode,
 Et lors juge quels fruits on a de ta méthode. (vv. 60-62)

On the other hand, her own neutral approach to the question carries with it many compensations and no pitfalls:

Pour moi, j'aime un chacun, et sans rien négliger,
 Le premier qui m'en conte a de quoi m'engager:
 Ainsi tout contribue à ma bonne fortune;
 Tout le monde ma plaît, et rien ne m'importune.

 Mon coeur n'est à pas un, et se promet à tous.

(vv. 63-66; 68)

Furthermore, if her parents should promise her to one of them, "Il aura quelques traits de tant que je chéris, / Et je puis avec joie accepter tous maris" (vv. 79-80). Thus released from such preoccupations and worries, her existence becomes amusing, and love is no longer a serious matter of happiness or unhappiness, of good fortune or misfortune. Whether it is Lysis, Cléandre or "un million" (v. 523) of others who aspire for her attentions, she readily lends herself to the game asking no more than a pleasant courtship. Gay and cheerful; she reminds us of Cloris in Mélite, and, like her counterpart, projects this attitude even while consoling or helping her brother in the serious matter of love (Act I, scene 2). However, for all her light-heartedness, she is a good sister: she does her utmost to convince Angélique not to treat her brother so harshly (Act I, scene 1); an opportunist, she capitalizes without hesitation on the breach between Angélique and Alidor by sending her brother post-haste to take advantage of this new development (Act II, scene 5); to facilitate Doraste's mission, she prevents Cléandre in his attempt to obtain Angélique's hand (Act II, scenes 7 and 8; Act III, scene 1). This penchant for intrigue is further demonstrated by her suspicions that the rift between Alidor and Angélique has been mended (Act III, scene 7), and by her resolve to find out precisely what is the true situation between them (Act III, scene 7 and Act IV, scene 4).

Through all this, she remains lively, gay and witty, never detracting from the principles she subscribed to in the first act. When Cléandre asks her to marry him, she coquettishly replies:

Vous voulez donc enfin d'un bien commun à tous?
 Craignez-vous qu'à vos feux ma flamme ne réponde?
 Et puis-je vous haïr, si j'aime tout le monde?

(vv. 1213-1215)

True to character, she informs Cléandre that:

. . . mes desirs, toujours indifférents,
 Iront sans résistance au gré de mes parents;
 Leur choix sera le mien: c'est vous parler sans feinte.

(vv. 1248-1250)

All of these traits make for a lively and interesting character, a combination of Cloris (Mélite), Doris (La Veuve), and Hippolyte (La Galerie du palais) all of whom she resembles, but with greater depth and vitality. Phylis represents the acquisition and practice of the principle of resignation desired or hesitatingly followed by her previous counterparts, a principle which Alidor, having set aside his quest for complete independence, espouses with little success.

Cléandre, like Phylis, represents a development of characters from the earlier plays. Like Célidan in La Veuve, and Dorimant in La Galerie du palais, he is sympathetic, courageous and deeply in love. He also resembles Célidan in that he has kept silent his love for Angélique so as not to become a rival of his friend Alidor (Act I, scene 3). However, in order to relieve his suffering "Je feins d'aimer en d'autres lieux" (v. 155). Yet, there is another reason to do so, one that we met with Florame in La Suivante: "Je n'en veux à Phylis que pour voir Angélique" (v. 165); "Et je n'aimois Phylis que pour m'en approcher" (v. 264). His approach to love is similar to that of Angélique: he

describes himself as "esclave d'un oeil si puissant" (v. 161), and, speaking to Phylis, he refers to "volages / Qui peuvent en un jour adorer cent visages" (vv. 533-534), presenting next his own position: "Mais ceux dont un objet possède tous les soins, / Se donnant tous entiers, n'en méritent pas moins" (vv. 535-536).

It appears, then, as though Corneille were reactivating, with Cléandre, the rôle that he had deactivated with Clarimond in La Suivante. However, the appearance of Alidor alters the complexion of this character: his friend having revealed his feelings towards Angélique, Cléandre tests him in order to discover what he would do should someone else marry Angélique (vv. 251-256); reassured, Cléandre now feels free to tell Alidor of his affection for Angélique (vv. 261-264). At this point, Cléandre becomes the voluntary instrument of Alidor's will: the initiative for his activity originates with Alidor who uses him to satisfy his own designs: Cléandre does set out to approach Angélique, he does go through with the abduction, but in both cases only at the instigation of his friend who has cleared the way for him. The actual passivity of this character is underlined in his soliloquy in Act III, scene 3, after Doraste has obtained a promise of marriage from Angélique:

Avec si peu de coeur aimer si puissamment!
 Que faisiez-vous, mes bras? que faisiez-vous, ma lame?
 N'osiez-vous mettre au jour les secrets de mon âme?
 N'osiez-vous leur montrer ce qu'ils m'ont fait de mal?
 N'osiez-vous découvrir à Doraste un rival?
 Cléandre, est-ce un forfait que l'ardeur qui te presse?
 Craignois-tu de rougir d'une telle maîtresse?

(v. 644, variant vv. 1-7)

In this soliloquy, Cléandre incites himself to action, his arguments turning towards a possible decision to confront Doraste in a duel; but once again Alidor intervenes and prevents Cléandre from doing what he would like (Act III, scene 4).

However, a turning point in Cléandre's behaviour occurs when he discovers that it is Phylis, not Angélique, whom he has kidnapped. Expressing his feeling in terms which Racine will use concerning Néron in Britannicus, Cléandre, who has fallen in love with Phylis, says:

L'amour a pris le soin de me punir pour vous;
Les traits que cette nuit il trempait de vos larmes
Ont triomphé d'un coeur invincible à vos charmes.

(vv. 1221-1223)

This sudden change, however, is not completely unprepared because, while Phylis was delaying him from presenting his suit to Angélique earlier in the play, Cléandre said: "Ne m'aime point du tout, ou n'aime rien que moi" (v. 578, variant v. 2). But this is the only indication in the first four acts that Cléandre's interests lie in any direction other than in Angélique's. When, in Act V, scene 1, Phylis tells him she will submit to the wishes of her parents, Cléandre rushes off to seek their approval, and this time not even his closest friend, Alidor, can delay him (Act V, scene 2).

Despite this sudden outburst of initiative introduced by Corneille perhaps to satisfy his own desire to have at least one marriage at the end of this play, Cléandre remains predominantly passive and often a servant of the will of Alidor. Containing but a spark of the verve we met in Célidan in La Veuve, he is nonetheless an improve-

ment over the completely inactive Clarimond in La Suivante.

The analysis of these four characters clearly shows that La Place royale is in large part a study of the antithetical aspects of love: Cléandre and Angélique are its willing servants while Alidor and Phylis are proponents of freedom from its grip. In this respect, Cléandre resembles all the submissive characters of past plays and, more specifically, the self-denying Célidan of La Veuve in that he keeps his love a secret out of deference to his friend, Alidor. He reminds us also of Clarimond in La Suivante by the passivity manifested when he serves mainly as tool and foil to Alidor. However, he does show signs of the initiative demonstrated earlier by Célidan, and in this regard as well as in his rôle as foil to the hero possibly foreshadows characters such as Don Sanche in Le Cid.

Angélique too is a voluntary slave to love and as such reminds us of the swooning female figures of past plays. She has formulated her feelings to a greater extent than her earlier counterparts, even to the point of becoming a doctrine. She loves Alidor to the exclusion of everyone else and will not stoop to offer the slightest encouragement to anyone else. Love, for her, exists only between one man and one woman, and to diverge from this path at all denotes lack of loyalty for the lover. The intensity of her feelings as well as the energy she displays in dealing with her love for Alidor reminds us of Dorise in Clitandre and prefigures Isabelle in L'Illusion comique, Chimène in Le Cid, Camille in Horace, and Pauline in Polyeucte.

Confronting the total submission of Angélique to love, we find another theory of love as exemplified by Phylis. She refuses to

surrender herself to one man who would become her master and thus expose herself to the variety of problems and difficulties which this would entail. As a result, she welcomes all suitors, favouring each one equally. This freedom of indifference, already seen in Doris in La Veuve and Hippolyte in La Galerie du palais, stems from willingness to comply with her parents' wishes and from complete unwillingness on her part to worry about the serious aspects of love. This attitude neutralizes the influences and effects of love, and makes of Phylis the gayest and the last of the frivolous female characters in the line which began with Cloris in Mélite.

A more direct opposite to Angélique is her lover, Alidor: not that he is any less a slave to love than she, but that his goal consists of complete freedom and independence from its bondage. A Tircis (Mélite) in reverse, he loves Angélique very much, too much perhaps, and seeks to liberate himself by means of a personal, interior effort of will to rise above this passion and become master of himself. Unfortunately, he allows himself to be seduced too easily by the prospect of achieving his objective through other characters, namely Cléandre and Angélique. In the process, he stoops to less than honourable methods which earn him the rejection he receives at the end. For, ultimately, love is stronger than freedom and self-control; but Alidor is too late: Angélique, who has been rebuffed twice in the course of the play by her lover, now rebuffs him. If Alidor had had the strength to effect his first plan, Corneille would have established the prototype of the strong, wilful heroes of his tetralogy. Nonetheless, our author has come a long way since Mélite, and has made this aspect a definite

desire originating from the hero rather than, as with Célidée in La Galerie du palais, a reluctant and capricious wish suggested by another character. Although we might feel that Alidor could make better use of his will, we agree with Gustave Reynier that "avec infiniment moins de grandeur et beaucoup moins de raison il offre quelque ressemblance avec les grands volontaires qui abondent dans la tragédie cornélienne et dont l'ambition souveraine est d'être toujours 'maître de soi'".¹⁷

Although there are no parental figures appearing in La Place royale, Angélique, Phylis and Doraste are answerable to parental authority. With Phylis, as with Doris (La Veuve) and Hippolyte (La Galerie du palais), the rôle of the parents forms an integral part of the principle of resignation which guides her conduct: rather than worry about whom she will marry, she willingly puts herself in her parents' hands, prepared to accept their choice of husband for her. Of Cléandre who is at the time seeking her parents' permission to marry their daughter, Phylis says:

Il fait tous ses efforts pour gagner mes parents,
Et s'il les peut fléchir, quant à moi, je me rends:
Non pas, à dire vrai, que son objet me tente,
Mais, mon père content, je suis assez contente.

(vv. 1372-1373; v. 1374, variant 1-2)

Her parents' decision is hers, and, besides, she respects her father's wisdom to choose one who will not be disagreeable to her: as she

¹⁷Le Cid de Corneille (Paris: Editions de la Pensée Moderne, 1966), p. 24.

explains to Doraste whose anger at the abduction awaits only Cléandre's presence to burst forth:

C'est à toi de régler ton esprit sur le mien.
 Je respecte mon père, et le tiens assez sage
 Pour ne résoudre rien à mon désavantage.
 Si Cléandre le gagne, et m'en peut obtenir,
 Je crois de mon devoir . . . (vv. 1385-1389)

Thus, the duty which she owes to the family authority poses no problem for her, given the trust which she has in her father's judgement. Doraste, too, readily accepts parental judgement, and his own position as a dutiful son, demonstrated when Cléandre informs him of Doraste's father's favourable decision: "Quand j'aurois sur ce point des avis différents. / Je ne puis contredire au choix de mes parents" (vv. 1400-1401).

However, we are hard-pressed to discover what their parents are really like, whether they are lenient, authoritarian, altruistic or selfish. Phylis' reference above to her father's wisdom accompanied by an indication of altruism is offset by three earlier references to the contrary: at the beginning of the play during her discussion with Angélique on the merits of their respective attitudes to love, she points out that "C'est rarement qu'un père à nos goûts s'accommode" (v. 61). Could this be simply a generalization of the prevalent attitude in their society? We are led to believe the contrary, for only a few lines later she refers to the "choix fantasque" (v. 77, variant v. 1) which her parents might make. However, the fact that Corneille later omitted this reference seems to uphold the previous interpretation. But, in Act V, scene 1, when she informs Cléandre that "Le monde vous

croit riche, et mes parents sont vieux" (v. 1253), the implications are in fact ambiguous: they might want a rich husband for their daughter for purely selfish reasons or in order to assure a secure married life for their daughter. Because of the ambiguity of these three references, their interpretation should in all probability be based on other statements made by Phylis such as we have seen earlier and meet again in Act V, scene 2: Phylis returning after her abduction hurries home to see

. . . mes parents, que ce coup de malheur
A mon occasion accable de douleur.
Je n'ai tardé que trop à les tirer de peine.

(vv. 1264-1266)

Such consideration on the part of a daughter surely indicates a sympathetic relationship between parent and child, given the evident feelings of Phylis that they are genuinely concerned with her welfare. Thus, we know that her parents are at least in part unselfish in their attitude towards their daughter. However, we are given no indication whatsoever as to whether they fall in the mixture of altruism, selfishness and leniency we encountered in Chrysante, mother of Doris in La Veuve or in that of authoritarianism and altruism seen in Pleirante, father of Célidée in La Galerie du palais.

If the picture of Phylis' parents remains hazy, that of Angélique's is much more so. Phylis, counselling Doraste after the rift between Alidor and Angélique, tells him: "Parle au père d'abord: tu sais qu'il te souhaite" (v. 493). Later, Angélique agrees to elope with Alidor, but wishes to leave a note for her parents justifying her

sudden departure, and

Qu'ils puissent, me cherchant, trouver ici ce gage,
 Qui les rende assurés de notre mariage;
 Que la sincérité de ton intention
 Conserve, mise au jour, ma réputation.

(v. 822, variant vv. 8-11)

Alidor gives the note to Angélique who replies: "Je prends sans lire; et ta foi m'est si claire, / Que je la prends bien moins pour moi que pour mon père" (vv. 977-978). These are the only indications we have of Angélique's parents or of her attitude towards them. Because of the freedom of conduct Angélique seems to have, because it seems necessary for her to elope, it is possible to conclude that her parents are lenient towards their daughter in her choice of husband, but perhaps not so lenient as to allow her to break her promise to Doraste. Angélique is considerate towards them, but in this as in other matters she is prepared to follow Alidor to the fullest extent: "j'ose tout hasarder" (v. 824).

Thus, in La Place royale, Corneille seems little interested in the parents themselves, and only slightly more so in the daughter's behaviour towards them, in particular Phylis, part of whose attitude to love depends on her parents' contribution.

The remaining characters in this play are almost as unobtrusive as the parents. However, none of them are mere utilities, for Corneille has given each of them a few individual traits. The rôle of Polymas, Alidor's servant, goes beyond what his master has asked of him: bearer of the note supposedly addressed to Clarine, but in fact

directed to Angélique by Alidor in the hope of alienating his beloved, Polymas more than adequately discharges his obligation to his master: not only does he masterfully pretend to take the side of Angélique, but makes it even more convincing by asking her not to betray his service to her, but rather to protect him in order that he may continue to be of service to her (Act II, scene 1). Another character who goes beyond simply fulfilling his duty to his master is Lycante, Doraste's servant. He does not passively submit to his master's wishes, but offers alternative solutions: Doraste angrily seeks to avenge the wrong done to his kidnapped sister; Lycante intervenes to suggest that nothing would be gained by killing Cléandre, and that in fact Phylis' honour might be put into question. Cléandre is rich; why not have him marry Phylis instead (Act V, scene 4). In the following scene, Phylis has returned and attempts to convince Doraste to accept Cléandre as brother-in-law; Lycante again reveals his independence and individuality by giving support to Phylis rather than to his master.

Lysis, in a somewhat lengthier portrayal than the last two characters, represents the million lovers who pay homage to Phylis. Although he uses the language of passionate love--"Vous êtes ma maîtresse, et moi, sous votre empire, / Je dois suivre vos lois, et non y contredire" (v. 513, variant vv. 1-2)--he is not really an impassioned lover: on two occasions (Act II, scene 7 and Act III, scene 8), Phylis dismisses him, first because of Cléandre's arrival, and then because she wants time to sort out her thoughts on recent events; Lysis accepts these dismissals with only token objection on his part, the conventional kind which one finds in the game of love rather than in true love.

Doraste, on the other hand, appears to be truly in love with Angélique. At the very beginning Phylis informs us that she is lending a helping hand "aux tourments qu'il endure" (v. 6), for "il se meurt" (v. 7, variant v. 1). Evidently, Doraste is timid and passive, for he needs the prodding of his sister to take advantage of the dispute between Alidor and Angélique (Act II, scene 5). Although overjoyed at the prospect of marrying Angélique (Act III, scene 2), he consoles himself rather quickly at her loss, but the justification for this may lie in a point of honour: his sister having been abducted, he turns his attention away from Angélique, who has been unfaithful to him, towards the kidnapper, who has put into question the honour and reputation of his sister (Act IV, scene 7 and Act V, scene 4). Only at this point does he arrive at a personal decision independent from his sister. Once Phylis returns, however, he subdues his anger, accepts the judgement of Phylis and his parents, thanking Cléandre for exposing Angélique's lack of faith (Act V, scene 6), and assumes the stance which Cloris took in Méliste (vv. 1681-1682): "Pour moi, malaisément on me trompe deux fois" (v. 1432).

The ethics of the society in La Place royale essentially reflect those of the plays preceding La Suivante and all of the characters are at least aware of this general code of conduct. However, as noted in the last chapter, good and evil, as related to the ethics presented, coexist more closely not only in society but, in varying degrees, in each of the characters. Even Doraste, whose conduct is the most ethical, is not beyond reproach. Throughout most of the play, he seems to value love most

highly. Yet, when he discovers Angélique's infidelity, he repudiates her for breaking her promise, loyalty and integrity therefore having greater value for him than love. Furthermore, after the abduction of Phylis, he shows courage in his willingness to combat the abductor, and concern for his sister's reputation and honour, an attitude which elicits from his servant the appropriate term of "âme généreuse" (v. 1349, variant v. 2). Moreover, when Phylis reappears and informs him that Cléandre may become his brother-in-law, Doraste subdues his anger, yields to his duty as brother and son by accepting the wishes of his sister and his parents, and forgives Cléandre. However, although he willingly gives Angélique back her promise, he does so with considerably less charity than we might expect from him: not only does he not forgive her, but seems to find cruel satisfaction in repeatedly reproaching her (Act V, scene 7).

Cléandre too is a mixture of virtue and fault. At the beginning of the play, he is apparently in love with Angélique, but he denies himself in favour of his friend Alidor. Loyalty in friendship is then of greater importance to him than love, for only when Alidor decides to separate from Angélique does his affection take the upper hand. Within this context, however, he does not forget ethical standards: he displays courage in his readiness to duel with Doraste for the hand of Angélique as well as to retain his reputation and honour: "Ne diffère donc plus ce que l'honneur commande" (v. 661), he says using almost exactly the same words which Rodrigue will use in Le Cid (v. 933).¹⁸ Yet, during his earlier act of self-abnegation, he was at the

¹⁸M.-L., II, p. 258, footnote 1, with the erroneous reference

same time using Phylis to approach Angélique recalling Florame's and Théante's behaviour towards Amarante in La Suivante. And later he descends to abduction in order to obtain Angélique. However, he admits to Phylis that his act was insolent and criminal, and asks forgiveness from Doraste who grants it because, among other reasons, Cléandre has an "âme généreuse" (v. 1402).

Of greatest value to Phylis is her freedom which allows her to play at love with few of its disadvantages or dangers. Her willing reception of each of her many suitors can not be construed as deception or disloyalty, for they know of her position and, in addition, she has promised her love to no one. However, as a loyal and helpful sister, she commits a misdemeanour by detaining Cléandre under false pretences while Doraste is busily attempting to obtain a promise of marriage from Angélique. Elsewhere, we see her concerned about her honour and reputation after the abduction (v. 1242, variant vv. 8-12), duty towards and consideration for her parents, but perhaps also somewhat interested in Cléandre's wealth, although the only reference she makes to it (v. 1253) consists of a suggestion to Cléandre of an argument he might use to make himself more acceptable to her parents. However, Phylis is, by her own admission and behaviour, an adaptable person quite satisfied with her society:

Le cloître a ses douceurs, mais le monde en a d'autres,
 Qui pour avoir un peu moins de solidité,
 N'accommodent que mieux notre instabilité. (vv. 1471-1473)

to Act III, scene 3, which should read Act III, scène 4.

She recognizes the failings of the world and its inhabitants, but also the retributive qualities of each which permit flexibility and accommodation.

This view of life collides with that of Angélique to whom such an outlook seems a surrender to mediocrity. The polarity of these two opinions is evident from the very beginning where these two characters present their theories of love. For Angélique, love and integrity are of prime importance. Even if love overpowers her, her initial choice of Alidor was based also on merit (v. 428). Moreover, her continuing overwhelming affection for him remains founded on his honesty and fidelity, and it is only when Alidor demonstrates his duplicity and inconstancy that she rejects him. Having read the false note to Clarine, she exclaims: "Que la foi des amants est un gage pipeur" (v. 323). After the abduction miscarries and Alidor tries to justify putting off a further attempt, Angélique realizes that he is a coward:

Tu manques de courage aussi bien que d'amour,
Et tu me fais trop voir par ta bizarrerie
Le chimérique effet de ta poltronnerie. (vv. 1096-1098)

Her discovery of the content of the note left for her parents exposes Alidor for what he really is, "lâche, traître, parjure" (v. 1190), the sort of person she says she could not love (vv. 1438-1441).

Angélique, however, is far from being a perfect representative of virtue. In her anger at Alidor's first disloyalty, she agrees to marry Doraste whom she does not love, and thus exposes herself to breaking her promise to Doraste. This she hastens to do, for, when she next meets Alidor, Angélique is only too ready to accept his excuses and

protestations of love: she agrees to run off with him to be married. She only briefly thinks of Doraste, but she is very much concerned with her reputation and honour as well as how it will affect her parents, whereupon she asks Alidor to write a note to leave for her parents, a note which she hopes will safeguard her honour. Once alone, she recognizes that she "cour[t] à [s]a ruine" (v. 853), but also that "pour perdre Doraste il faut tout hasarder" (v. 860). Thus, she is prepared to be unfaithful and to lose her honour. The scheme uncovered, however, she regains her senses, realizes her treachery and feels remorse. Mindful of the promise she made to Doraste, Angélique places herself in his hands (vv. 1448-1449).

Once Doraste releases her from her promise, she resolves that "Un cloître désormais bornera mes desseins; / C'est là que je prendrai des mouvements plus saints" (vv. 1452 and 1453, variant). Similar to Amarante in La Suivante, Angélique speaking of herself, concludes that ". . . ton amour fidèle et ton peu de beauté / N'ont pu te garantir d'une déloyauté" (v. 1203, variant v. 2 and v. 1205). Yet, unlike Amarante, she decides to leave the social world to enter a convent, realizing that if this insincere world is at fault so is she: "C'est là que, loin du monde et de sa vaine pompe, / Je n'aurai qui tromper, non plus que qui me trompe" (vv. 1454-1455). She admits not only her dissatisfaction with this society, but the shameful part she played in it herself, and, just as earlier she desired a union of two souls in love, she now enters the convent convinced that this new life will provide true pleasures of the soul:

Rien ne rompra le coup à quoi je me résous :
 Je me veux exempter de ce honteux commerce
 Où la déloyauté si pleinement s'exerce ;
 Un cloître est désormais l'objet de mes desirs :
 L'âme ne goûte point ailleurs de vrais plaisirs.

(vv. 1481-1485)

Although Angélique is guilty of deviating from the ethical standards she would have others follow, she returns to them in the end. In addition, she rejects the principles of compromise and adaptation which Phylis professes, for, dissatisfied with a life style she deems mediocre, she aspires to perfect loyalty, sincerity and truth, and does so with an heroic conviction similar to that seen in future Cornelian tragedies.

Alidor too is not satisfied with a commonplace way of life. Like Angélique, he is aware of many généreux characteristics that are prevalent in the ethic of their society. However, where Angélique desired a society which would adhere to these strictly, Alidor's aspirations lie in the personal acquisition of the ultimate of these traits, namely self-control. However, in his attempts at achieving his goal, he breaks almost every other rule of the code. In trying to obtain mastery of self, he uses others, for he lacks the strength of will to do it himself. He cruelly deceives Angélique on two occasions, abuses the love she feels for him, causes her to deceive as well, and exposes her to loss of honour. Disloyal in love, he appears to be completely loyal in his friendship with Cléandre to whom he not only gives permission to court Angélique but even goes out of his way to ensure that she will belong to no other than him. However, this loyalty is suspect:

through Cléandre he will acquire freedom from the bonds of Angélique's love: "C'est moins pour l'obliger que pour me satisfaire" (v. 897); in his final soliloquy, commenting on the benefits he will derive from Angélique's retreat into a convent, he observes that he will never be "sujet à cette rage qui naît de voir son bien entre les mains d'autrui" (vv. 1524-1525); but Cléandre is not "autrui" in his eyes, for earlier, in Act I, scene 4, he refers to his friend as "un autre moi-même" (v. 274). Thus, in his dealings with Cléandre, it is not so much a question of loyalty as it is of selfishness. Like previous egotistical characters, he has a high, but false, opinion of himself ("un homme tel que moi"--v. 943), one which is not borne out by fact, for Alidor is also a coward: witness his dissuasion of Cléandre from duelling with Doraste for Angélique, and his flight from Doraste and his friends, leaving Angélique at their mercy. There is even a suggestion that his cowardice extends to fear of marriage: in Act I, scene 4, Cléandre asks: "Crains-tu de posséder un objet qui te charme" (v. 225) and, in Act IV, scene 6, Angélique concludes: "Alidor (quel amour!) n'ose me posséder" (v. 1099). Alidor, "ce tourmenté qui tourmente autrui",¹⁹ is indeed weak of character, and this weakness is compounded by the immensity of his love for Angélique: unable to free himself from the bonds of affection by a personal act of will, he resorts to unethical means with the unwitting help of others. However, Alidor redeems himself somewhat in the end: aware of the cruelty and injustice of his deeds, he repents:

¹⁹ Brasillach, op. cit., p. 190.

Aussi j'en fus honteux, et confus dans mon âme,
 La honte et le remords rallumèrent ma flamme,

 Aussi ma liberté n'a plus rien qui me flatte,

(vv. 1298-1299; 1310)

but in the process demonstrates that his quest for freedom and self-control has come to naught, that he was not in fact "souverain sur moi" (v. 1034). Even in his soliloquy in the final scene of the play when he says: "Je cesse d'espérer et commence de vivre: / Je vis dorénavant, puisque je vis à moi" (vv. 1506-1507), we feel that these are but empty words, given all that has preceded: Alidor having chosen deliberately to break the rules of constancy, honour, and magnanimity to arrive at mastery of self, has failed to achieve his goal.

Thus, the ethic of La Place royale consists of a reversal of that seen in La Suivante. Whereas in the latter play there was a major rejection of the ethic of générosité in favour of a materialistic code of conduct based on self-interest, with only a few vestiges of honourable behaviour, La Place royale presents a society which is in the main upright, honest and considerate, but where self-seeking often motivates deviations from the social code. In this respect, the play is not simply a repetition of former ones, for it contains more than a mere feeling of obligation to adhere to established moral standards. On the one hand we find the attitude exemplified by Phylis which is one of recognition of human frailties, toleration of deviations from accepted moral tenets, and adaptation to capricious social surroundings.

Next, we have Angélique who, despite her departures from the rules, demands strict observance of the principles of honesty, since-

rity, loyalty and honour. Unlike Amarante (La Suivante) who is content to lament the demise of virtuous conduct, verbally criticize the prevalent materialistic set of values, and curse its adherents, Angélique takes a more active, although unfortunately partly negative stance: desiring absolute fidelity by all to the rules in the belief that this will provide happiness and stability, she discovers that the "honteux commerce" of her world is too widespread for her satisfaction, and withdraws from this society in favour of another concerned completely and specifically with virtue and sincerity, namely the convent.

However, it is Alidor, the most deceptive and disloyal member of this society, who provides the greatest advancement toward the completion of the system of ethics we have seen develop in Cornelian theatre up to this point. There have been several constant, loyal, dutiful, honourable, and magnanimous characters before him, but all have lacked one trait necessary for a true généreux, self-control; and this is precisely the chief aim of Alidor in this play. This aim alone, of course, does not make a généreux of Alidor, for, besides lacking almost all of the aforementioned characteristics, he fails in his principal endeavour. Nonetheless, he foreshadows "les plus 'généreux' sacrifices de Rodrigue, d'Horace ou de Polyeucte, qui renoncent à leur plus légitimes affections pour se conformer au rôle magnifique qu'ils se sentent appelés a jouer".²⁰

In La Place royale, the end does not justify the means and the

²⁰Jacques Morel, "Le Jeune Corneille et le théâtre de son temps," Information littéraire, XII (1960), 192.

brief appearance which Providence makes once again bears this out. After Alidor's first deception, Angélique implores heaven to punish him for his unjust treatment of her:

Ciel, tu ne punis point des hommes si méchants! (v. 364)

Ciel, encore une fois, écoute mon envie:
Ote-m'en la mémoire ou le prive de vie;
Fais que de mon esprit je puisse le bannir. (vv. 429-431)

After the second deception and its miscarriage have been uncovered, Angélique exclaims: ". . . mais qu'à propos le ciel l'a fait méprendre" (v. 1175). Moreover, she will have the opportunity to do what she wished (v. 431) and send Alidor packing.

Thus, much of what was said in the conclusion of the segment dealing with ethics in La Suivante applies in La Place royale. In addition, however, the present play proposes a further enrichment of the ethic seen up to now: the acquisition of freedom from any personal enslavement by means of one's own strength of will thereby permitting mastery of self which, in combination with the previously seen ethical standards, would prevent any deviation from them to the benefit both of oneself as well as the whole of a given society. Therefore, Corneille is yet again one step closer to the sort of society he will present in his tragedies.

The confrontation of two such intransigent characters as Alidor and Angélique, where the first wants complete freedom from the second who desires exactly the opposite, could easily become tragic. However, Alidor degrades himself, and the anguish he feels initially in combatting his love turns to whim and caprice. Yet, La Place royale is

fraught with instances of pathos from the first act to the last which once again are attenuated by the presence of the comic.

Already in Act I, scene 2 we catch a glimpse of pathos in the saddened Doraste whose arrival causes Angélique's departure. However, the inclusion of Phylis' teasing makes for a scene of gaiety. The following scene, consisting of Cléandre's soliloquy in which he describes his suffering at the love he feels for Angélique and which he has kept hidden, is much more pathetic. This effect is prolonged somewhat by the arrival of Alidor (scene 4) for whom Cléandre must take up his mask of courtship to Phylis.

Heightening pathos considerably is a sequence of four scenes at the beginning of Act II where the emotion is sustained without faltering: Angélique has just received 'proof' of her lover's inconstancy; stunned by the deception, she gives in to her anguish (scene 1); Alidor, not content to leave it at that, arrives and tortures her all the more by heaping cruel insults upon her; Angélique's clever replies only serve to hide her true feelings of resentment and exasperation concretized by her tearing up the letter into pieces (scene 2); left alone, her anger and distress erupt at being so cruelly abandoned and also at not being able to hate Alidor as he deserves (scene 3); the appearance of Phylis does nothing to assuage Angélique's grief which she continues to pour out (scene 4).

Another sequence which elicits sustained pity occurs in Act III: delayed by Phylis, Cléandre learns that Doraste and Angélique will marry the following day (scene 1); alone, he vents his anger and

frustration at Phylis' obstruction and his own inaction as well as his despair at losing Angélique (scene 2); Alidor arrives and Cléandre relates his misfortune (scene 3). It is true, as Rivaille observes,²¹ that Cléandre's desire to demonstrate his indignation to Phylis and Doraste are untimely, but certainly the audience must feel compassion for a character who suspends his own desires out of politeness and consideration for one he has recently courted, who, as a result, fails to attain a goal so deeply wanted.

The pathetic effect which these three scenes produces is dissipated by Alidor's promise to secure Angélique for Cléandre (scene 4). The following scene, however, returns us to Angélique's plight where she now realizes that she still loves Alidor while continuing to dislike Doraste to whom she will soon belong: she is entrapped by the infidelity of the one she loves and the terrible thought of having to spend the rest of her life with one she dislikes (scene 5). However, she bursts out in indignation at the impudence of Alidor who dares once again to approach her. She gradually yields to his protestations of love, but what compassion must the audience feel knowing full well that her love and kindness are but being duped again by the unscrupulous Alidor who is simply setting the groundwork for further treachery. Furthermore, Angélique recognizes the indiscretion of what she is about to do, and the possibly serious consequences of running off with Alidor (scene 6).

Act IV, containing the episode of the abduction, presents yet

²¹Op. cit., pp. 182-183.

another sequence of three scenes of uninterrupted pathos: upon her return from depositing the note in her room, Angélique observes Alidor's surprise at seeing her whom he thought kidnapped, and guesses that what he had planned for her was not what she had been led to believe; when Alidor seeks to escape and abandon her to her lot, she violently reproaches him (scene 6); Doraste enters, prevents Angélique from following the fleeing Alidor and heaps sarcastic reproaches upon her who proudly and frankly justifies her behaviour as an act of loyalty; but Doraste who has discovered the note gives it to her to read whereupon she painfully learns of Alidor's second perfidious plan to abandon her (scene 7); in an ensuing soliloquy she vents her feelings of shame, anger, and despair at her own condition as well as that of her surroundings, and retires to her room to weep. (scene 7)

The second last scene of the play presents the audience with a dignified Angélique who refuses to yield to Alidor anymore, but who still grieves at the loss of her dream and despairs of the world.

With the exception of Clitandre, La Place royale undoubtedly contains more instances, more sequences, and greater sustension of pathos than any of the preceding plays, despite the continuing attenuation of this element by means of the comic. Furthermore, there is no alleviation of pathos by means of a test as in La Galerie du palais or a misunderstanding as in the same play as well as La Suivante where the audience sympathizes with the sufferings of the characters only to a limited extent as result. Angélique's misery knows in fact very little alleviation, for if we smile at Alidor's extravagant behaviour, it is a bitter smile, the audience knowing only too well

that Angélique will suffer all the more as a result. With La Place royale, Corneille has continued to increase pathetic intensity which soon will find its culminating expression in tragedy.

Indeed, although La Place royale retains some unfortunate elements from earlier plays (for example, the use of false letters and abduction), although it illustrates fewer developments in Cornelian dramaturgy than La Suivante, we nevertheless find several improvements and new features which Corneille will incorporate in his tragedies.

Despite the author's not having repeated the feat of La Suivante with regard to the rules of the unities of time and place, he has nonetheless not reverted to their use as seen in La Galerie du palais: the present play unravels over a twenty-four hour period, and is situated in the Place Royale with the exception of two scenes which take place, for reasons of vraisemblance rather than spectacle, in Angélique's room. The action continues to consist of more than one plot each very closely linked to the other, but this time the outcome of the minor plots does not depend on that of the main plot. Unlike La Suivante, the obstacles are of an internal nature emanating this time from the principal character without even being suggested by another character as was the case in La Galerie du palais. However, chance and coincidence continue to play an important rôle, for, in combination with the internal element seen also in the other main characters, they serve to reflect more accurately the complexities of life where its participants both control and are controlled by events. This in turn helps demonstrate the relative unpredictability of people and events as well as presenting success or failure as depending on both man and external influences.

The prime concern of the main characters continues to revolve about love, this time, however, not solely the acquisition of the loved one, but also freedom from the bonds of love. Each of the four principal characters evince original traits: Cléandre, self-denying like Clarimond of La Suivante, is relatively more active and shows more initiative even though, for a large part of the play, he is only the instrument of Alidor's will; but because of this initiative as well as his rôle as foil to the hero, he resembles a muted Don Sanche of Le Cid. Angélique is much more energetic and intransigent in her quest for the object of her love than either Cléandre or the heroines of previous plays. She has evolved a theory, a doctrine of love which she exposes in considerable detail. For her, affection knows but one direction and is absolute even to the extent of doing wrong, but not of being wronged. The supremacy of her love, the energy with which she seeks satisfaction, the fact that she knows no serious conflict of emotions places her in a category which will later include the heroines of L'Illusion comique, Le Cid, Horace, and Polyeucte.

Confronting these two devotees of love, we find Alidor and Phylis for whom freedom from its control is of greatest importance. Phylis, in contrast to Angélique, desires and has chosen freedom based on total dependence which, as a result, makes of her the gayest of her type of character seen thus far. As well, she has been endowed with greater depth and vitality than any of her previous counterparts.

Unlike Phylis, Alidor is deeply in love, but seeks freedom from its enslaving influence. In the first instance, he wishes to free

himself through a personal act of will, and in this resembles the wilful heroes of the tragedies. However, he never puts this desire into action, preferring instead to put the burden on others. Despite his ultimate failure, he prefigures future heroes through his desire for freedom and self-control which, of course, they will already have and exercise rather than attempt to acquire in an irresolute and vacillating fashion.

The world of La Place royale possesses a similar set of values to that seen in the plays preceding La Suivante, but also indulging in the self-interest witnessed in the latter play. Good and evil exist side by side in this society, and even, in varying degrees, in each of the main characters. The work reveals three different attitudes towards such a society: Phylis recognizes the existence of human imperfections, tolerates them, and adapts to the whims of society; Angélique, despite her deviations from the généreux code, demands strict adherence to its rules and, seeing the futility of her wishes as applied to her present social context, she decides to leave this society for one devoted to the desired principles and even to higher ones, the convent; Alidor, although breaking every rule of the established ethic does so to acquire the ultimate généreux trait, self-control: despite the fact that it never enters his mind, it is evident that mastery of self combined with the other characteristics of générosité would lead to avoidance of enslaving bonds, and permit no unwilling or unwitting deviations from the ethic as seen, for example, in Angélique. Thus, in La Place royale, the two major characters are dissatisfied with the existing social situation and seek to improve it, but each in his own

way.

The direct confrontation of these two intransigent characters could readily become tragic, but Corneille has avoided this pitfall by contrasting Angélique and Phylis, and by having Alidor's behaviour become extravagant. Nonetheless, La Place royale contains more instances and more sequences of pathos, the latter making for greater sustention of pathetic feeling than the previous plays. Serving also to prolong and intensify pathetic effect is the audience's knowledge that Angélique's suffering is real, for Corneille has omitted the attenuating device of misunderstanding found in the last two plays.

If Alidor had succeeded in his first wishes, if he had not become whimsical and irresolute, and if Phylis had been less cheerful and care-free, La Place royale could very well have become Corneille's first tragedy, for, according to the author's opinion in his Discours de l'utilité et des parties du poëme dramatique the "dignité" of tragedy "demande quelque grand intérêt d'Etat, ou quelque passion plus noble et plus mâle que l'amour, . . . , et veut donner à craindre des malheurs plus grands que la perte d'une maîtresse".²²

With Alidor, we have the first character to surrender a peaceful happy love relationship (just as will be seen in Le Cid, Horace, and Polyeucte, for example) in favour of a value deemed of higher importance, in this case his freedom.

²²M.-L., I, 24.

CHAPTER VIII

L'ILLUSION COMIQUE

Before turning to L'illusion comique, we will consider briefly Médée. Why only a brief study of this play while an entire chapter was devoted to Clitandre? Because the aim of this dissertation is to show the development of comedy into tragedy in Corneille's theatre and, given the fact that Médée is already a tragedy, we can leave aside those tragic elements newly introduced and concentrate on the comic traits still remaining. Corneille, as we shall see, has failed to disentangle himself from comedy to make a complete transition to tragedy.

Although Corneille has introduced the principle of raison d'état, the predominant theme remains love: Médée's killings of Créuse, Créon, and her own children are acts of jealous vengeance upon her disloyal husband Jason. Couton is correct when he observes that "l'auteur de comédies fort originales paraît avoir oublié qu'il savait déjà nuancer des caractères".¹ It is a portrait in black and white with, on the one hand, Médée who, persistently single-minded and pure in her devotion to the generally worthless Jason, is placed in very sharp relief to the trivial characters who surround her. Moreover, Jason has many traits which hark back to the comedies. As Couton notes concerning this character: ". . . un coureur de royaume a succédé aux coureurs de dot",² for Jason is, like certain characters seen in the

¹ Corneille, p. 36.

² Ibid., p. 37.

comedies, fickle, and believes in the philosophy of inconstancy:

Aussi je ne suis pas de ces amants vulgaires:
 J'accommode ma flamme au bien de mes affaires;
 Et sous quelque climat que le sort me jetât,
 Je serois amoureux par maxime d'Etat,

(vv. 29-30; v. 31, variant)

words worthy of Philandre (Mélite), Alcidon (La Veuve), and Théante (La Suivante). In an offhand and cynical manner, he relates to Pollux, who is too reverently dazzled by the exploits of his friend, his previous abandonment of Hypsipyle for Médée and his readiness to leave Médée for Créuse. However, like Tircis, at the approach of Créuse, his cynicism vanishes, for "l'éclat d'un tel visage / Du plus constant du monde attirerait l'hommage" (vv. 173-174). His concern with Médée's dress which he wants to offer Créuse is comic as well, especially in the light of the possible horrible consequences, which he can scarcely ignore, of his disposal of Médée. Furthermore, in the presence of the dying Créuse, his speech becomes inappropriately florid for such a tragic occasion:

Ma reine, si l'hymen n'a pu joindre nos corps
 Nous joindrons nos esprits, nous joindrons nos deux morts;
 Et l'on verra Charon passer chez Rhadamante,
 Dans une même barque, et l'amant et l'amante. (vv. 1471-1474)

This is but one example of numerous adorned with the style of refined gallantry.

Créuse, who resembles the heroines of the previous comedies, is another comic figure: like Clarice in La Veuve or Daphnis in La Suivante, part of her project consists in righting the injustice done

to her lover whose merit has not been recognized (vv. 552-556); for her part in this project, "les races futures / . . . / Vanteront à jamais mon amour généreux" (vv. 561 and 563); her desire for Médée's dress is out of place in tragedy and belongs to comedy, just as does the unsuccessful attempt at abducting her by Aegée.

Médée is much too grandiose a character to be surrounded by such uniformly trivial characters, and their rapprochement makes for lack of consistency. Unfortunate too is the deliberate elaboration of Médée's sorcery: we see her fly away in a chariot, busy herself with her potions, stop a messenger by waving her wand, and similarly open the prison of Aegée. Despite this, Médée continues the wilful character of Alidor, but she personally asserts the moi which Alidor sought and acquired only through others. Again like Alidor, she is a solitary character prepared to defy the world, but, in her case, not only for her own benefit through vengeance, but also to prevent "ce mélange odieux, / Qui déshonore ensemble et ma race et les Dieux" (vv. 879-880). This quotation indicates an extension of the ethic, hinted at in the preceding plays, which will preoccupy Corneille in future tragedies: the concern of the hero not only for a personal goal, but also for one which will serve society as ordered by a superior being through his agent. Furthermore, the inner struggle of Médée, the abandoned wife torn between allowing her children to be taken away from her and killing them in an ultimate act of revenge upon her husband, produces many fine pathetic scenes. In fact, with this character, Corneille possesses the formula for heroic pathos to be found in his later tragedies:

L'âme doit se roidir plus elle est menacée,
 Et contre la fortune aller tête baissée,
 La choquer hardiment, et sans craindre la mort,
 Se présenter de front à son plus rude effort.

(vv. 309-312)

In spite of these, Médée remains a weak tragedy, for Corneille has relied too heavily on purely theatrical effects to arouse emotion in the spectator: he does not yet seem to know that the tragic does not depend on the number of deaths, deaths, in this case, which are too long and verbose. He has not yet succeeded in making the characters consistent with one another, presenting a towering and tragic Médée surrounded by characters still enmeshed in some of the more petty preoccupations and gallant conversations of the comedies.

Nonetheless, according to Lancaster³ and Stegmann,⁴ Médée was at least a relatively successful play. Why then did Corneille return to comedy, and furthermore to the type of comedy presented in L'illusion comique? Adam suggests that he wanted to defend "la cause du théâtre et des acteurs".⁵ R. Garapon observes that the theatrical company of the Marais, having lost Jodelet and L'Espy, were in danger of losing a good part of their audience, but the acquisition of Bellemore, noted for his rôle of fanfaron, prompted Montdory to ask Corneille to return

³ A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, II, i, 33.

⁴ In the introduction to Médée in his edition of Corneille, Oeuvres complètes, p. 173.

⁵ Op. cit., I, 504.

the favour of having accepted his first works.⁶ For J. Marks, the reason emerges from the author's "constant desire to please and entertain his public, of his awareness of the trend of the moment, and of his innate and ever-present passion for 'nouveau-té' and experiment".⁷ J. B. Segall explains that Corneille "was groping about and feeling in all directions for what was most congenial to his talent".⁸

Each of these reasons probably played some part in influencing our author to write L'illusion comique. However, the notion of experiment put forward by Marks and later adopted by L. Wang,⁹ as well as the statement by Segall imply that Corneille, with Médée, was perhaps dissatisfied with his first attempt at tragedy, and had not really found the type of tragedy suited to his talents. Thus, our author returned to the mode of writing with which he was familiar and wrote his "étrange monstre"¹⁰ in the light of continuing experimentation. For here, as in the past, he continues to borrow elements from his previous plays, sometimes happily, sometimes not, but in a form which appears definitely transitional between the comedies and Le Cid. The

⁶In the introduction to his edition of Pierre Corneille, L'illusion comique (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1965), pp. xliv-xlvi.

⁷In the introduction to his edition of Pierre Corneille, L'illusion comique (Manchester: The University Press, 1944), p. xvii.

⁸"Corneille and the Spanish Drama" in Columbia University Studies in Romance Philology and Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1902), III, 8.

⁹"The 'Tragic' Theatre of Corneille," French Review, XXV (1952), 182.

¹⁰M.-., II, 430.

rules of the unities, for example, have been at the same time strictly adhered to as in La Suivante, and loosely followed as in Méliste. However, in order to explain this and other points clearly let us review what happens in the play.

Dorante brings his friend Pridamant to the cave of a magician, Alcandre, in the hope of finding out what has happened to Clindor, the son Pridamant feels he has unjustly banished ten years ago. Alcandre acquiesces and proceeds to conjure up before the father's eyes the principal incidents in Clindor's life since he left home. Having attempted all sorts of trades, we see Clindor in the service of Matamore, a swashbuckling braggart who is in love with Isabelle who in turn loves and is loved by Clindor. However, Isabelle's father, Géronte, wants her to marryAdraste. The latter, discovering Isabelle's love for Clindor, intrigues with Lyse, servant of Isabelle who has been scorned by Clindor, to have his rival taught a lesson. During a secret meeting of the two lovers, Clindor is attacked and, defending himself, killsAdraste. He is arrested on orders of Géronte, imprisoned, and condemned to death. Lyse, finding this turn of events more serious than she had anticipated, repents and plots with the jailer to free Clindor. The plot succeeds, and the four, Clindor, Isabelle, Lyse, and the jailer, flee. Alcandre intervenes to explain to Pridamant that the fugitives were not caught. He adds that two years have elapsed between this episode and the one he will now show Pridamant. We then see Lyse and Isabelle lamenting Clindor's infidelity: he is having a love affair with one Rosine, wife of his benefactor, Florilame. Confronted by Isabelle, he manages to absolve himself, but is also swayed by his

wife's manifestations of love and courage, and remains faithful to her now despite Rosine's pleas and threats. Suddenly, the servants of Florilame led by Eraste enter and kill both Clindor and Rosine, and Isabelle is led off to a nearby castle to become the plaything of Florilame. It is needless to say how distressed Pridamant is at his son's apparently tragic end. However, Alcandre comforts the father by telling him that this last episode was but a play, and by conjuring up a scene of the actors including Clindor and Isabelle counting the money that they have just earned in their esteemed profession. The play ends in the well-known praise of the theatre by Alcandre in which he is supported by the newly converted Pridamant.

Technically speaking then, the rules of the unities have been strictly obeyed: the place is Alcandre's grotto; the time, the duration of the play; the action, the revelation, by Alcandre, of Clindor's whereabouts and actions which Pridamant sought from the magician. However, not even Corneille stretched the rules that much, for he looked upon the first act, which contains the information just mentioned, as simply a prologue in both his dedicatory preface¹¹ to the first edition in 1639 and in the Examen¹² of 1660. Indeed, the adherence to the unities is more apparent than real, for the chief interest lies in and the principal relief is given to the adventures of Clindor. Thus, the location shifts from Touraine to Bordeaux to yet another area which might be England, and while in Bordeaux, before

¹¹M.-L., II, 430.

¹²M.-L., II, 432.

the house of G ronte and in prison. The time consists of many months, at least two years as we have just seen in the summary of the play. The action involves the adventures of Clindor which are episodic, and contains more than one plot, the main one concerning Clindor,Adraste, and Isabelle to which is closely linked that of Lyse and the jailer, but which could easily do without that of Matamore and Isabelle.

The structure of the play is that of a play within a play within a play: the "trag die assez courte"¹³ of Act V within the "com die imparfaite"¹⁴ of Acts II, III, and IV within the conjuration of Alcandre in Act I, the prologue. Of the middle layer Corneille says: "L'action n'y est pas compl te, puisqu'on ne sait,   la fin du quatri me acte qui la termine, ce que deviennent les principaux acteurs, et qu'ils se d robent plut t au p ril qu'ils n'en triomphent".¹⁵ However, the first part of this quotation is true only if we limit the action of this section to the three acts mentioned, for completion occurs in the fifth act which reveals to us the fate of Clindor and his friends: they have become actors. Concerning the "trag die assez courte" Corneille explains:

Clindor et Isabelle,  tant devenus com diens sans qu'on le sache, y repr sentent une histoire qui a du rapport avec la leur, et semble en  tre la suite. Quelques-uns ont attribu  cette conformit    un manque d'invention, mais c'est un trait d'art pour mieux abuser par une fausse mort le p re de Clindor qui les regarde, et rendre son retour de la douleur   la joie plus surprenant et plus agr able.¹⁶

¹³M.-L., II, 432.

¹⁴M.-L., II, 430.

¹⁵M.-L., II, 432.

¹⁶M.-L., II, 432.

This "trait d'art", however, was not intended solely to delude the father, but also the spectator into thinking that the story of the tragedy is a further development in the life of Clindor: Clindor, Isabelle, and Lyse never use their stage names of Théagène, Hippolyte, and Clarine respectively; Théagène's infidelity towards Hippolyte is prepared by the earlier hesitations of Clindor between Lyse and Isabelle; Hippolyte regrets having left her father for the ungrateful Théagène, and this seems to be a reference to what Isabelle did do; Hippolyte's authorization of Théagène's inconstancy reflects the sacrifice of Isabelle giving up the security of her family. There is no break between the Clindor and Théagène stories to reveal that they are quite different except in hindsight as R. J. Nelson has so accurately and thoroughly indicated in his studies of L'Illusion comique as a dramatization of Corneille's own dramaturgy.¹⁷ Once we know that the tragic scenes of Act V are but scenes from a play acted by Clindor and his friends, a number of veiled allusions by Alcandre become clear: for example: "en public de la sorte il aime à se parer" (v. 144); "spectres parlants" (v. 212); also, the rôle of spectator which Pridamant plays in regard to both the tragedy and the conjuration. In fact, as Nelson correctly observes, "the whole play is written with the play-scene in mind; the clear preoccupation with the theatre in

¹⁷"Pierre Corneille's L'Illusion comique: the Play as Magic", Modern Language Association Publications, LXXI (December 1956), 1127-1140 and Play within a play: the Dramatist's Conception of his Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), pp. 47-61.

Act V only makes explicit what is implicit in the preceding acts".¹⁸

In keeping with the idea that Corneille is dramatizing his own methods, the "trait d'art", as G. May notes, "est l'un de ceux qui lui viennent directement de la comédie":¹⁹ for example the chance meeting of Géraste, Daphnis, and Florame in La Suivante, the mistaken abduction of Phylis instead of Angélique in La Place royale, the discovery that Tircis and Méliste are still alive in Méliste. But the dénouement of L'illusion has shown our playwright how to mystify the audience even more, and he will resort to this technique in Le Cid where right up to the last scene Chimène and the spectators believe that Rodrigue has been slain by Don Sanche.

Further indications that L'illusion is a play of transition for Corneille are present. Most evident of all is the switch from comedy to tragedy in the play itself. Furthermore, at the end of Act IV, Alcandre says to Pridamant:

Je vous les vais montrer en leur haute fortune.
 Mais puisqu'il faut passer à des effets plus beaux,
 Revenons pour évoquer des fantômes nouveaux.
 Ceux que vous avez vus représenter de suite
 A vos yeux étonnés leur amour et leur fuite,
 N'étant pas destinés aux hautes fonctions,
 N'ont point assez d'éclat pour leurs conditions.

(vv. 1326-1332)

This passage has been correctly interpreted by A. D. Sellstrom .

¹⁸"Pierre Corneille's L'illusion comique: the Play as Magic", p. 1130.

¹⁹Tragédie cornélienne, tragédie racinienne (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948), p. 76.

to mean: "The new spell that needs to be cast is, of course, the spell that governs tragedy, for Clindor and Isabelle will presently be engaged no longer in a comic action, as in Acts II, III, and IV, but rather in a tragic action apparently ending in death for both".²⁰ He pursues this by pointing out that certain expressions used in these lines contain some of the important elements of traditional definitions of tragedy: "leurs conditions", "leur haute fortune", and "hautes fonctions". Thus, Clindor and Isabelle pass, in Corneille's words, from "personnes communes" to "personnes illustres".²¹ Yet another facet which looks forward to the plays which follow is the open-ended conclusion of L'Illusion comique, a structural element found in his very next play, Le Cid.

While we saw, in La Place royale, that the motive power of the action was found in one of the main characters, Alidor, here we find it in external circumstances and in a number of characters, sometimes in one of the principals. In the middle section Clindor controls the action, like Florame in La Suivante, through his initial desire for financial security and the hand of Isabelle: seeking a means to overcome his penury, he first becomes valet to Matamore, the suitor to Isabelle. However, in so doing, he neglects Lyse who loves him, and exposes himself to her revenge as well as that of his formidable rival Adraste. Although Clindor is responsible for these threats, it

²⁰"L'Illusion comique of Corneille: the Tragic Scenes of Act V," Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (1958), 422.

²¹Discours de la tragédie et des moyens de la traiter selon le vraisemblable ou le nécessaire, M.-L., I, 96.

is in fact external influence which obstructs his goal.Adraste attacks him, Clindor slays him, and is consequently imprisoned to await death. From this point on, Lyse controls the action: it is thanks to her conscience and her feminine wiles that Clindor is set free. The distribution of influences in this part of the play is reminiscent of that in a number of the earlier plays.

In the third part, Théagène is responsible for the action: his infidelity brings about the confrontation with his wife, and the ultimate death of Rosine and himself. However, he does not control these events. The strongest influence in this section comes from Hippolyte who causes Théagène to change his mind and become loyal again, and, much as will occur between Rodrigue and Chimène in Le Cid, the influence of her good example on Théagène continues into his confrontation with his mistress. Thus, at least to some degree, the source of action foreshadows that of Le Cid.

The action of the outer shell of L'illusion comique is governed mainly by Alcandre, the magician. As Don Diègue instigates the action of Le Cid by presenting his case to Don Rodrigue who will then control it for the rest of the play, so too does Pridamant ask Alcandre to find his son for him. From this point to the end of the play, Alcandre governs all: he informs Pridamant about his son, he influences the action of the other two segments by his choice of events to conjure up for the father, he even controls the feelings of sadness, horror, and happiness of Pridamant by forcing the latter to remain, on pain of death, in the cave to view the images evoked.

La Place royale presented a hero who sought to control events, and, in fact, did (albeit with evident clumsiness) for most of the play, but in the process created a disorder which, in the end, did not result as he wished. In the following play, Médée too controlled events by confusing the order of things, but this time achieving the desired results. However, Médée did not feel right about the confusion or her methods: "Mais je hais ce désordre, et n'aime pas à voir / Qu'il me faille pour vivre user de mon savoir" (vv. 1263-1264). L'Illusion comique presents three levels of the same problem in keeping with the three levels of the play. Théagène causes his own downfall in a way similar to Alidor. On the other hand, Clindor does achieve his goals, overcoming all the obstacles except the imprisonment. Alcandre does too, but, like Médée, by means of magic: a superior person thanks to his supernatural powers. Like Médée, Alcandre is confronted with obstacles which, though unequal, are inferior to him from the beginning. Clindor, then, is of greater interest: lacking supernatural powers, he depends almost entirely on himself to overcome impediments which appear superior to him in his path towards achievement. In Le Cid, Corneille will give a more complete picture of this as yet incomplete aspect of his theatre: the struggle for control between the hero and external influences or obstacles which appear superior to him will end in victory for the hero; or, as J. D. Hubert has observed: "On peut regarder le Cid comme une série de confrontations inégales, aboutissant au dénouement à l'incontestable supériorité du héros, qui est resté

parfaitement fidèle à un ordre idéal",²² an 'ideal' order suggested in L'illusion comique in the reunion of Clindor and Pridamant effected by Alcandre.

The action of this play, then, shows the author hesitating and experimenting with ways to affirm the power of internal influence over external.

Because the largest part of the action revolves about Clindor's amorous adventures (including his rôle as Théagène), it is only natural that the words most frequently found at the rhyme belong to the language of love, and these remain the same as in past plays. That the situation is more threatening than thus far seen in the comedies is revealed by peine (11 times), larmes (6 times), misère (5 times), ennui (5 times), supplice (5 times), the couplets charmes-larmes (4 times), misère-père (4 times), culminating in effroi (5 times), vie (13 times), trépas and mort (7 and 10 times respectively), moi-effroi (5 times), vie-envie (4 times) and mort-sort (4 times). This turn for the worse is due to Théagène's risks which lead to his death; to Clindor's slaying of Adraste; the menace, which hangs over Clindor, of death by execution; Isabelle's threat to kill herself rather than submitting to marriage with Adraste; Pridamant's worries concerning his son; and Alcandre's warning of death to Pridamant should the latter leave the grotto without the magician's consent.

In studying the frequency of 'Cornelian' words at the rhyme, it

²²"Le Réel et l'illusoire dans le théâtre de Corneille et dans celui de Rotrou," Revue des sciences humaines, XXII (1958), 337.

is particularly striking to find the word honneur appear nine times. La Veuve which contains the next highest frequency of this word (5 times) dealt with a situation similar to that which exists in L'Illusion comique: Philiste was of a lower rank than Clarice. Here the same is true of Clindor and Isabelle as well as Théagène who has been elevated through his friendship with Florilame. The couplets honneur-seigneur (3 times) and honneur-bonheur (4 times) as well as the positioning of the latter in the scenes which frame the second and third sections of the play (Acts I, IV, V, scenes 2, 10, and 5 respectively) reinforce this concern. Also noteworthy is the presence of the word gloire three times at the rhyme. Although this word does not appear in this position in the tragic segment of the play, we do meet it in a reference to the tragic portion by Alcandre in the first act. Later (Act II, scene 4), Isabelle speaks of gloire in relation to Matamore's 'heroic' exploits. Finally, Clindor is concerned with gloire while in prison awaiting death. This word appeared four times in Clitandre and Médée respectively while in each of the comedies twice at most. This seems to indicate a correlation with the genre of the play written, L'Illusion comique being a comedy which contains an entirely mock-heroic figure, three deaths, and the threat of a fourth. Another concept of interest is that of générosité which appears once at the rhyme, and is complemented by the word généreux which also appears once. It is not the number of appearances that interests us, but rather simply their presence, for, in all the plays which preceded La Place royale, the word did not appear at all at the rhyme, while in La Place royale it appears three times, in Médée twice, and in

L'illusion comique twice. Thus, Corneille's interest in this concept, if not as great as in Le Cid, where we meet it seven times, is at least present and sustained. For expansion of these conclusions, let us now turn to the study of the characters and their ethic.

The most striking character by far in this play is Matamore, a braggart swashbuckling soldier of Plautine descent whose mistresses are queens and goddesses, from whom sovereigns from the four corners of the earth seek favours, who has the capacity for separating his physical good looks from his courage: "Lorsque j'ai ma beauté, je n'ai point ma valeur" (v. 340, variant). He is a stock character whose boasts are nourished by false messages from kings and queens brought to him by a page specifically employed for that purpose (vv. 478-480), and by Clindor and Isabelle who humour him. His extravagant bragging and terrifying threats are equalled only by his cowardice in the face of real danger, and his great ability to explain away his lack of bravery. One very comic example of this occurs in Act III, scene 4: having just been told by G ronte that he may no longer see Isabelle, Clindor suggests he mock G ronte by seeing Isabelle while her father is elsewhere; Matamore, afraid of G ronte's valets justifies his reluctance in a long enumeration of every conceivable part of the house which would be thrown into disorder by his fury, and ends by saying to Clindor:

Juge un peu quel d sordre aux yeux de ma charmeuse;
Ces feux  toufferoient son ardeur amoureuse.
Va lui parler pour moi, toi qui n'est pas vaillant.

(vv. 757-759)

However, Matamore has no structural importance in the play: he is an episodic character who has no influence on the development of the plot. He simply provides, in this respect, a handy cover for Clindor's courtship of Isabelle, and thus serves to illustrate one stage in Clindor's adventurous life. A rival for Isabelle's hand, his disappearance at the end of Act IV, scene 4 does not technically affect the play in any way, and the presence of two other rivals, Adraste and Clindor, provide sufficient conflict in the earlier part of the play. R. Garapon is correct when he states that "ce n'est que par la fantaisie verbale que s'explique un tel personnage".²³ Of course, the recent acquisition of such an actor as Bellemore probably affected this aspect of the play as well.

Nonetheless, Matamore provides a link in the evolution of Corneille's theatre, notwithstanding the dangers of such a view indicated by critics such as Garapon,²⁴ Couton,²⁵ Maurens,²⁶ and Sage.²⁷ The boasting coward is not new in Corneille's production: we find him there from the very beginning with Philandre in Mélite and continuing on to Théante in La Suivante; in fact, there is even some of this in Alidor of La Place royale. The rapprochement to be made with Le Cid

²³La Fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théâtre français (Paris: Armand Colin, 1957), p. 159.

²⁴Ibid., p. 172.

²⁵Corneille, p. 41.

²⁶Op. cit., p. 227.

²⁷Le Préclassicisme (Paris: del Duca, 1962), p. 309.

though lies in the use of rhetoric. The language of the mock-heroic Matamore sometimes possesses certain qualities which cause us to look forward to the noble lines of Le Cid. In Act III, scene 4, Matamore has just been denied access to Isabelle because of her father:

Respect de ma maîtresse, incommode vertu,
 Tyran de ma vaillance, à quoi me réduis-tu?
 Que n'ai-je eu cent rivaux en la place d'un père,
 Sur quoi, sans t'offenser, laisser choir ma colère.

(vv. 735-738)

These lines certainly prefigure the dilemma which Rodrigue will face and describe in his stances (Act I, scene 6) in Le Cid. This does not mean that Corneille, with Matamore, is preparing Rodrigue,²⁸ for, in another speech--"Le seul bruit de mon nom renverse les murailles, / Défait les escadrons, et gagne les batailles" (vv. 233-234)--Matamore closely resembles Don Gomès, "ce fanfaron de tragédie qu'un jeune homme vaincra sans tant parler":²⁹ "Reposer tout armé, forcer une muraille, / Et ne devoir qu'à soi le gain d'une bataille" (vv. 181-182). However, these resemblances are purely verbal, and there exists considerable distance between the word and the act as witnessed in Matamore's case where heroic speech comes easily, where only acts of cowardice are seen, and where support from others rather than from within himself is necessary to his heroism. To say, however, that there are no links between Matamore and the characters of Le Cid would be equally error-

²⁸As Robert Brasillach would have it in his Pierre Corneille, p. 131.

²⁹R. Garapon in his edition of L'Illusion comique, p. xlix, n. 1.

eous: similarities exist, if only in language.

Matamore's servant, Clindor, is, like Florame in La Suivante, an opportunist. Having tried his hand at various trades, he enters into Matamore's employ as one of the latter's flatterers only to become his rival, and woo Isabelle in his own right rather than his master's, much as the nurse in La Veuve will speak unfavourably to her mistress of the one who is paying her to do the contrary. Also, he makes love to both mistress and servant, Isabelle and Lyse, and would gladly marry both if he could, one for money and the other for pleasure as he frankly tells Lyse: "J'adore sa fortune, et tes perfections" (v. 784). If he uses a tactic similar to that of Théante in La Suivante--court the servant to approach the mistress--he is more spontaneous and less premeditating than his earlier counterpart, prepared for any accommodation: as a form of apology to Lyse, he suggests adultery: "Mais si tu ménageois ma flamme avec adresse, / Une femme est sujette, une amante est maîtresse" (v. 792, variant vv. 2-3). Although, like Jason in Médée, he sometimes appears calculating--"L'amour et l'hyménée ont diverse methode: / L'un court au plus aimable, et l'autre au plus comode" (vv. 789-790)--he more often seems simply to follow a strong bent for pleasure. Yet, if there is initially, uncertainty as to whom he really loves, there is subsequently, as we shall see, no question of his love for Isabelle.

In his courtship of Isabelle, Clindor is at a disadvantage reminiscent of that of Philiste in La Veuve: his mistress is wealthier than he. Isabelle, however, quickly reassures him that this is of little importance, to which he replies: "Dieux! qui l'eût jamais cru, que

mon sort rigoureux / Se rendit si facile à mon coeur amoureux" (vv. 495-496). Later, upon witnessing the extent of Isabelle's affection for him, he is prepared to lay down his life for her:

Vous me rendez confus, et mon âme ravie
 Ne vous peut, en revanche, offrir rien que ma vie:
 Mon sang est le seul bien qui me reste en ces lieux,
 Trop heureux de le perdre en servant vos beaux yeux.

(vv. 901-904)

He will soon get his opportunity to prove it, for he has another rival more formidable than his master. When he encountersAdraste for the first time in the play, Clindor displays some of the youthful readiness manifest in Don Sanche in Le Cid, to defend the principle of honour: "Si le ciel en naissant ne m'a pas fait grand seigneur, / Il m'a fait le coeur ferme et sensible à l'honneur (vv. 559-560). Thus, when he is attacked byAdraste in Act III, scene 11, he acquits himself well of the promise he made to Isabelle, and of the test of his courage in his first meeting withAdraste. There is no longer any doubt as to where his affection lies. Arrested and imprisoned for having killedAdraste, he soliloquizes on his lot and on his love for Isabelle, and nowhere is there a reference to Lyse. Only thoughts of his beloved console him, happy to die for having served her:

Quel bonheur m'accompagne à la fin de ma vie!
 Isabelle, je meurs pour vous avoir servie;
 Et de quelque tranchant que je souffre les coups,
 Je meurs trop glorieux, puisque je meurs pour vous.

(vv. 1241-1244)

These lines are worthy of Don Rodrigue in Le Cid who will also be

prepared to lay down his life in the service of his beloved Chimène: "Je mourrai trop heureux, mourant d'un coup si beau" (v. 939). When the jailer, pretending the time has come to take him to the gallows, comes to set him free, Clindor courageously but simply replies: "Fais ton office, ami, sans causer davantage" (v. 1294). Upon seeing Isabelle, his resignation turns to joy, and he and his friends flee to safety and to the honourable profession of acting.

Indeed, when we meet him in the next act, he has become Théagène, a soldier of fortune who has been elevated in rank to captain, and has become one of the king's favourites thanks to his princely friend, Florilame. However, just as Clindor proposed adultery to Lyse earlier, Théagène is at present having an affair with Rosine, the wife of his benefactor. Confronted by his own wife, Hippolyte, he defends himself, using an argument familiar to the love struck characters of previous plays: "Que ne fait point l'amour quand il possède une âme" (v. 1410), and then recalling a situation similar to that of Clindor and Isabelle:

J'étois lors peu de chose: oui, mais qu'il te souvienn
 Que ta fuite égala ta fortune à la mienne,
 Et que pour t'enlever c'étoit un foible appas
 Que l'éclat de tes biens qui ne te suivoient pas,

(vv. 1413-1416)

a situation vaguely reminiscent also of that of Jason and Médée in the last play. Théagène's attraction to Rosine is so great that even fear of death does not deter him: "Crois-tu qu'aucun respect ou crainte du trépas / Puisse obtenir sur moi ce que tu n'obtiens pas?" (vv. 1463-

1464) However, even though he is attracted to Rosine, he says that he still loves Hippolyte: ". . . à nos feux sacrés ne fait plus tant d'injure: / Ils conservent encore leur première vigueur" (vv. 1466-1467), words which again remind us of those of Jason to Médée:

Ton amour vertueux fait ma plus grande gloire:
Ce seroit me trahir qu'en perdre la mémoire;
Et le mien envers toi, qui demeure éternel,
T'en laisse en cet adieu le serment solennel.

(vv. 933-936)

Théagène realizes that his affection for Rosine is only a "fol amour" (v. 1468) while he assures Hippolyte that theirs is a lasting love:

L'amour dont la vertu n'est point le fondement
Se détruit de soi-même, et passe en un moment;
Mais celui qui nous joint est un amour solide,
Où l'honneur a son lustre, où la vertu préside:
Sa durée a toujours quelques nouveaux appas,
Et ses fermes liens durent jusqu'au trépas,

(vv. 1479-1484)

describing a love which, as Rodrigue and Chimène³⁰ as well as Polyeucte and Pauline³¹ will experience, survives apparently insurmountable ob-

³⁰That Rodrigue has slain Don Gomès does not make Chimène love him less, for she recognizes that he has only carried out the duty of "un homme de bien" (v. 911). Moreover, the two occasions where Chimène is led to believe that Rodrigue is dead (Act IV, scene 5; Act V, scenes 5 and 6) bear witness to her enduring love. Likewise, Rodrigue is ready to confront any obstacle to obtain Chimène: "Pour posséder Chimène, et pour votre service," he says to the King, "Que peut-on m'ordonner que mon bras n'accomplisse?" (vv. 1833-1834)

³¹Polyeucte, despite his subordinating of his love for Pauline in favour of love of God, continues to love his wife. The "Hélas!" (v. 1253) which he utters following the despairing evocations by Pauline of more intimate times as well as his attempt to save her spiritually--

stacles.

Théagène, struck by Hippolyte's courage and intense affection for him, returns to marital fidelity of which she has provided such an eloquent example. Just as Emilie in Cinna will be converted by Auguste's example--"Ma haine va mourir, que j'ai crue immortelle; / Elle est morte, et ce coeur devient sujet fidèle" (vv. 1725-1726)--so too is Théagène:

Je ne sais qui je dois admirer davantage,
Ou de ce grand amour, ou de ce grand courage;
Tous les deux m'ont vaincu: je reviens sous tes lois;
Et ma brutale ardeur va rendre les abois;
C'en est fait, elle expire, et mon âme plus saine
Vient de rompre les noeuds de sa honteuse chaîne.

(vv. 1549-1554)

He then proceeds to prove his love for Hippolyte by rejecting Rosine's advances. However, in his newfound générosité, he invents a lie which would allow Rosine to escape from this embarrassing situation, and at the same time save face. This new infidelity, justified in that he is opting for the higher fidelity to his wife, foreshadows the infidelities of Rodrigue and Horace, the one to his mistress Chimène,³² and

"Vivez avec Sévère, ou mourez avec moi. / . . . / Je ne vous connais plus, si vous n'êtes chrétienne". (vv. 1609; 1612)--bear this out. Pauline's attempts to save her husband from death and her last words to Polyeucte--"Je te suivrai partout, et mourrai si tu meurs" (v. 1681)--show the love which she continues to have for the husband who prefers God to her. Moreover, as Couton points out, "Polyeucte et Pauline, l'un mort, l'autre vivante, n'ont jamais été plus véritablement unis: le sang de son mari, baptisant Pauline, a transformé un mariage célébré selon les rites païens en une communion en Dieu" (Corneille, p. 83).

³²After the insult which the honour of Rodrigue's family has suffered at the hands of Chimène's father, Rodrigue, confronted with a

the other to his friend Curiace,³³ which are justified by their higher sense of duty to family honour and the state. Thus, with Théagène, the hero rises above his own selfish desires, something which neither Alidor nor Jason were able to do, to a higher, more noble cause.

Isabelle too is a transitional character reflecting some of the heroines of the past as well as of the future in Cornelian theatre. When we first meet her she is attempting to discourageAdraste from continuing his suit for her, and she does so in the strong terms Daphnis used to reject Clarimond in La Suivante: "Ce que vous appelez service, affection, / Je l'appelle supplice et persécution" (vv. 367-368), and ". . . bien que vous m'aimiez, je ne vous aime point" (v. 360). Self-possessed and outspoken, she knows her own mind: of her three suitors, she has no difficulty in choosing Clindor, and in so doing becomes, as Daphnis to Amarante in La Suivante, rival to her servant. Likewise, in both plays, the mistress proves the winner over her servant because of her greater wealth, at least that is what we are

choice between loyalty to his family and loyalty to his beloved, chooses the former, but only after a hesitation which shows the continued intensity of his love for Chimène. Given the importance placed on family honour in the society of Le Cid, Rodrigue's decision to avenge the affront justifies his infidelity to Chimène. Once Rodrigue has slain her father, Chimène too, and for the same reasons, becomes unfaithful to her lover by demanding his death.

³³Horace's infidelity to Curiace stems from his high sense of patriotism to his country which has chosen him as its champion in Rome's war against Alba which has similarly selected Curiace as its champion. Without deliberation, he readily accepts his country's decision despite the friendship and family ties which unite him and Curiace. Although reluctantly, Curiace too will place patriotism above other considerations.

led to believe by Clindor's words to Lyse. When she is left alone with her lover in Act II, scene 6, she stops short a litany of protestations of love, and forces things back into perspective:

Epargnez ces propos superflus;
Je les sais, je les crois, que voulez-vous de plus?
Je néglige à vos yeux l'offre d'un diadème;
Je dédaigne un rival: en un mot, je vous aime. (vv. 487-490)

This straightforward character easily brushes aside considerations of wealth in her love for Clindor because "C'est comme il faut choisir. Un amour véritable / S'attache seulement à ce qu'il voit aimable" (vv. 505-506). She recognizes that her father's wishes run directly counter to her own, "Mais l'amour sur mon coeur a pris trop de puissance / Pour écouter encor les lois de la naissance" (vv. 513-514). The matter will not be so easily resolved for the Infante in Le Cid for whom the same question will pose a difficult conflict between her birth on the one hand and the intensity of her love on the other:

T'écouterai-je encor, respect de ma naissance,
Qui fais un crime de mes feux?
T'écouterai-je, amour, dont la douce puissance
Contre ce fier tyran fait révolter mes vœux.

(vv. 1565-1568)

However, Isabelle is mistress of her own heart and, in addition, is lucidly aware of the obstacles in her path, but is determined to overcome them: "Mon père peut beaucoup, mais bien moins que ma foi: / Il a choisi pour lui, je veux choisir pour moi" (vv. 515-516). Having made her choice, she is not afraid to resist her father's wishes all the while recognizing his paternal rights: speaking of Adraste to

Géronte, she rejects the suitor in the following way:

. . . si votre bonté me permet en ma cause,
 Pour me justifier, de dire quelque chose,
 Par un secret instinct, que je ne puis nommer,
 J'en fais beaucoup d'état, et ne le puis aimer.

(vv. 637-640)

Créuse, in Médée, rejected Aegée for similar reasons (vv. 635-638; 643-646).

Isabelle presents to her father a series of arguments that are well founded and end in convincing fashion: "Ce que vous appelez un heureux hyménée / N'est pour moi qu'un enfer si j'y suis condamnée" (vv. 665-666). Géronte's command at the end of this scene (Act III, scene 1) has little effect on his daughter, for, when we meet her next she is as determined as ever, and prepared to undergo hardship in order to marry the one she loves:

Votre amour seul a droit de triompher de moi:
 Il n'est point de tourments qui ne me semblent doux,
 Si ma fidélité les endure pour vous. (vv. 896; 899, variant)

Moreover, she reaffirms the strength and the independence of her will: "Il suffit que sur moi je me rends absolue" (v. 914), much as Emilie will say concerning Auguste in Cinna: "Mais le coeur d'Emilie est hors de son pouvoir" (v. 943).

Clindor imprisoned, Isabelle decries the tyrannical power that placed an innocent person there, and the humiliating death which her lover must suffer. The only course left open to her who feels that she is the ultimate cause of Clindor's impending death is to die too:

"Et le même moment verra par deux trépas / Nos esprits amoureux se rejoindre là-bas" (vv. 1007-1008), a feeling echoed later in Horace by Camille. In death, Isabelle hopes also that her memory will haunt her father, "Accabler de malheurs ta languissante vie, / Et te réduire au point de me porter envie" (vv. 1021-1022), again echoing similar feelings of Camille towards Horace (vv. 1291-1292). However, before she can implement her decision, Lyse enters with a plan of her own. She participates enthusiastically in this plan, and helps to free Clindor with whom she flees only after having obtained from him a promise of marriage.

We next see her appearing in a tragedy under the name Hippolyte (only in the stage directions), wife of Théagène. In the first scene, she surprises her husband in the garden where he was to meet Rosine, and castigates him for his infidelity. Even more, however, she tries to dissuade her unfaithful husband from continuing this dangerous affair any longer. She uses all the arguments she can muster--ingratitude towards herself who, like Médée, abandoned her father and her home to run away with a man who has become unfaithful and ungrateful, ingratitude towards his benefactor to whom he owes all that he has, the danger of being uncovered by Florilame--all to no avail. Nonetheless, it is not her arguments, but her example which succeeds in changing his mind. Having been overcome by jealousy, she now calms down, asks her husband to forgive her heated words caused only by love, and is now ready to stand by her husband until his love for Rosine wanes. However, she advises him to "Cours après tes plaisirs, mais assure ta vie" (v. 1514). If his liaison with Rosine should end in his

death, she vows that she will kill herself. This complete fidelity and courage is successful in transforming Théagène into a faithful husband. Hippolyte's part in Théagène's change of heart is that of setting the example to show to her husband the right path, the higher principle. While Angélique and Médée were also faithful to Alidor and Jason, they lacked the ultimate selflessness which Hippolyte displays towards her husband. Hippolyte's example, showing the way to higher fidelity to Théagène, can not but make us think of the example which Rodrigue sets for Chimène, an example of loyalty to family honour at the price of losing the beloved, a model which Chimène also follows selflessly: "Tu n'as fait le devoir que d'un homme de bien; / Mais aussi, le faisant, tu m'as appris le mien" (vv. 911-912). In the first example the direction of influence occurs from the heroine to the hero while in the second from the hero to the heroine. This reversal of direction indicates an interaction of the heroes in the sense of reciprocal emulation.

Transitional also is the servant, Lyse. She immediately reminds us of Amarante in La Suivante in that she too is a rival to her mistress who apparently wins out because of her greater wealth. Vivacious and witty, she is equally shrewd and cunning: jealous of her mistress, and angry at being slighted by Clindor, she joins forces with the equally jealous Adraste who will make certain that Clindor will be "Chargé d'autant de bois qu'il en pourra porter" (v. 608). Although her lover says that he is "gentilhomme, et riche" (v. 586), she believes that they are equals: "Je ne suis que servante: et qu'est-il que

valet" (v. 615), and sets out to remind him. She accepts payment for her services from Adraste, but her pride prevents her from overstepping the bounds of decency any farther: when Clindor suggests that she be his mistress after his marriage to Isabelle, she replies: "Vous me connoissez trop pour m'aimer de la sorte" (v. 792, variant v. 11), and in the soliloquy of the next scene:

Perfide, qu'as-tu vu dedans mes actions,
Qui te dût enhardir à ces prétentions?
Et juger mon honneur une conquête aisée.

(v. 824, variant vv. 407)

Throughout their conversation, and despite this affront to her honour, she was able to maintain appearances of good humour so as not to warn him of what was to come. However, her desire for revenge finds itself in conflict with her love:

Ruiner ce que j'aime! aimer qui veut ma honte!
Mon amour me séduit, et ma haine m'emporte,
L'une peut tout sur moi, l'autre n'est pas moins forte.

(v. 845, variant vv. 6 and 9-10)

Although she eventually decides to participate in Adraste's plan, this soliloquy, which Corneille felt a little too eloquent for a servant,³⁴ prepares us for the about-turn she makes once Clindor is in prison condemned to death.

In this return to virtue, she parts company with Amarante, and

³⁴M.-L., II, 433.

prefigures the Infante of Le Cid. We next meet Lyse speaking to a heart-broken Isabelle whom sadness has rendered inactive. Lyse's good humour has been more fruitful, however, as she explains:

Ma belle humeur, qui rit au milieu des malheurs,
Fait plus en un moment qu'un siècle de vos pleurs:
Elle a sauvé Clindor. (vv. 1051-1053)

The resemblance to the Infante is not in Lyse's cheerfulness, but in her reason for it: "Ainsi, Clindor, je fais moi seule ton destin" (v. 1136). Just as Lyse has the power to give Clindor to Isabelle, so too will the Infante give Rodrigue to Chimène: "Elle aime don Rodrigue, et le tient de ma main" (v. 67). With Lyse, love takes the upper hand once more and dictates that, Clindor condemned to death, "c'est trop me venger" (v. 1144). However, this act of free will, which enables her, "à mon choix, faire mourir ou vivre" (v. 1138) Clindor, is accompanied by an act of altruism and self-sacrifice in that to free Clindor she must marry the jailer, a man she does not love. All she asks for, from Clindor, in return is that

Tu réduiras pour moi tes vœux dans l'innocence,
Qu'un mari me tenant en sa possession,
Sa présence vaincra ta folle passion,

(v. 1145, variant vv. 2-4)

preparing thereby the "fol amour" which Clindor (Théagène) will display in Act V. With this act of self-sacrifice, Lyse prefigures such heroic characters as the Infante (Le Cid) and Sévère (Polyeucte).

Judging by the four characters we have studied thus far, L'illusion

comique quite certainly presents itself as a work of transition, for all of these characters contain traits with which their earlier counterparts were endowed as well as characteristics which announce the future heroes and heroines of the tragedies, and provide the present personages with individuality and originality. Matamore resembles the braggart cowards which appeared earlier in Mélite and La Suivante, for example, and also, through his heroic mode of speech, such characters as Rodrigue and Don Gomès in Le Cid, but here the resemblance is purely verbal, for, in him, a great distance exists between the word and the act. Clindor reminds us not only of opportunists such as Florame in La Suivante, of impecunious lovers like Philiste in La Veuve, but also of Rodrigue in his readiness to die in the service of his beloved. Clindor, as Théagène, follows Alidor (La Place royale) and Jason (Médée), and, like them, he is first of all unfaithful and selfish, but, after his change of heart, prefigures Rodrigue and Horace in his choice of a higher cause. Isabelle recalls Daphnis of La Suivante in that both have servants as rivals and both turn away suitors who annoy them, and whom they do not love. Similarly, she announces characters, such as Emilie in Cinna, who assert the strength and independence of their will, and Camille in Horace, both of whom call down curses upon a member of their families who are responsible for the impending or actual death of their lovers. Isabelle, as Hippolyte, reminds us of Médée who has forsaken father and home to run away with a man who has become unfaithful. The example which Isabelle-Hippolyte sets, and which ultimately shows her husband the path to the more noble cause looks forward to that which Rodrigue will set for Chimène. Lyse,

like Amarante of La Suivante, loses out to her rival, her mistress Isabelle, for lack of money, and also prefigures the Infante of Le Cid and Sévère in Polyeucte by her act of self-abnegation, assuring that her rival be triumphant. In the characterization of his principals, then, Corneille seems to be well on his way to achieving that found in Le Cid.

Although his secondary characters are in the main based on rôles seen in earlier plays, some continue to point to the future. Rosine, who does not appear in the editions posterior to 1657, is the wife of Florilame and mistress of Théagène. Happy to see her lover waiting for her in the garden, she is astounded to find that he has had a change of heart, and refuses to accept her favours. At first disbelieving his words, she tries to find a reason for his new behaviour, but comes to realize that love blinds her from seeing the truth: "Son coeur n'est plus que glace, et mon aveugle ardeur / Impute à défiance un excès de froideur" (v. 1560, variant vv. 40-41). She rebukes him for his belated concern with fidelity and honour, refuses to accept the face-saving exit which he provides, preferring instead to try to win him back. She belongs to the category of blindly passionate women like Angélique, but, unlike the latter, she has made a decision, and no one and nothing will change her mind:

Je consens de périr à force de t'aimer.
 Bien que notre commerce aux yeux de tous se cachent,
 Qu'il vienne en évidence, et qu'un mari le sache,
 Que je demeure en butte à ses ressentiments,
 Que sa fureur me livre à de nouveaux tourments:

J'en souffrirai plutôt l'infamie éternelle
Que de me repentir d'une flamme si belle.

(v. 1560, variant vv. 109-115)

Thus prefiguring Camille in Horace, she is prepared to take all risks rather than detract from her love. Surprised by Eraste who slays her, her dying words reflect the end desire of all such passionate women: to meet Théagène in death (v. 1560, variant vv. 120-121), just as Camille will join her Curiace once again.

The parental rôle is also interesting in its rapport with the plays which precede and follow L'Illusion comique. Gêronte represents the authoritarian father of tradition. He has given permission to Adraste to court and marry his daughter Isabelle who does not love him and resists her father's wishes. Gêronte will not be swayed by her tears, for "Contre ma volonté ce sont de foibles armes" (v. 626). This is not to say that he is completely hard-hearted: "Mon coeur", he says to Isabelle, "quoique sensible à toutes vos douleurs, / Ecoute la raison, et néglige vos pleurs" (vv. 627-628). Like Pleirante, he has his daughter's welfare at heart:

Je connois votre bien beaucoup mieux que vous-même,

 . . . ce jeune baron, avecque tout son bien,
 Passe encore chez vous pour un homme de rien!
 Que lui manque après tout? bien fait de corps et d'âme.
 Noble, courageux, riche, adroit et plein de flamme,
 Il vous fait trop d'honneur. (v. 629, variant vv. 1; 3-7)

These are good, sound reasons for providing a stable and secure future life for his daughter. When Isabelle replies that she does not love Adraste, and explains that the laws of Providence do not always decree

what appears best for us, G ronte lashes out at this philosophical justification of disobedience, and becomes more entrenched in his position: "Vous en savez beaucoup; mais tout votre savoir / Ne m'emp chera pas d'user de mon pouvoir" (vv. 655-656). Isabelle objects, G ronte becomes more obstinate: "Apr s tout, je le veux; c dez   ma puissance" (v. 669), and two lines further "Je le veux" (v. 671), reminding us of G raste's "Et pour toute raison il suffit que je veux" (La Suivante, v. 1592). Like Pleirante and G raste before him, G ronte exercises his authority, but lacks Pleirante's consideration for his daughter's love and the self-interest evident in G raste. Also, he is even more actively dictatorial than Pleirante, for, in Act III, scene 11, he is obviously part ofAdraste's plan of attack against Clindor. Furthermore, Isabelle attributes the entire blame for her lover's imprisonment and impending death to her father (Act IV, scene 1). Needless to say, G ronte is not presented as a sympathetic character.

Considerably more sympathetic is Pridamant, Clindor's father. It appears as though, ten years ago, he was a father of G ronte's ilk, for, at that time, he treated his son too severely:

Sous ombres qu'il prenoit un peu trop de licence,
 Contre ses libert s je roidis ma puissance;
 Je croyais le dompter   force de punir,
 Et ma s v rit  ne fit que le bannir. (vv. 25-28)

Soon, however he realized that he had been too inflexible and unjust towards his son:

Mon âme vit l'erreur dont elle étoit séduite:
 Je l'outrageois présent, et je pleurai sa fuite;
 Et l'amour paternel me fit bientôt sentir
 D'une injuste rigueur un juste repentir. (vv. 29-32)

Consequently, he set out in search of "ce cher objet de mes inquiétudes" (v. 21), a search which reached far and wide, but with no results, bringing him, in his despair, to Alcandre to whom he asks: "Rends-moi l'unique appui de mes débiles ans" (v. 115). These words can not but make us think of Don Diègue (Le Cid) who, insulted by Don Gomès, must rely, because of the weakness of his old age, on Don Rodrigue, to whom he refers as "Appui de ma vieillesse" (v. 1035), to save the honour of the family. Another parallel to be drawn between Don Diègue and Pridamant is each one's search for his son: the circumstances differ, but there remains the pursuit of a beloved child by an old father anxious about his son's welfare (Le Cid, vv. 1009-1012). Pridamant's love for Clindor is translated by the concern he displays in the scenes which form the outer shell of the play, notably his reaction at the death of Clindor-Théagène in Act V, scene 5: "Adieu; je vais mourir, puisque mon fils est mort" (v. 1604). The happiness he feels at the sight of the living Clindor looks forward to the joy of Don Diègue (Act III, scene 6) finding Rodrigue alive, unharmed by Don Gomès' friends. Pridamant, discovering that his son has become an actor, exhibits a concern again worthy of Don Diègue: "Est-ce là cette gloire, et ce haut rang d'honneur / Où le devoit monter l'excès de son bonheur?" (vv. 1643-1644)

Many similarities exist then between Pridamant and Don Diègue, and Clindor's father is certainly the sympathetic father of the play. He

has come to realize that his original authoritarian attitude is now out of place. G ronte's concern for his daughter's welfare would be sympathetic too, were it not for his complete intransigence towards Isabelle's wishes. He insists on doing things in the traditional fashion:

Qu'  pr sent la jeunesse a d' tranges manies!
 Les r gles du devoir lui sont des tyrannies,
 Et les droits les plus saints deviennent impuissants
 Contre cette fiert  qui l'attache   son sens. (vv. 673-676)

G ronte does not move with the times. As we have just seen, there exists no bond of understanding and trust between Isabelle and G ronte, just as earlier there existed none between Pridamant and Clindor. The only solution open to the children seems to be to run away from their parents, thus acquiring greater autonomy. However, Pridamant's new attitude points the way to that of the fathers of the following plays. Having relaxed his former authoritarianism, he is nonetheless concerned with his son's honour and reputation (v. 1643). This aspect, along with the greater autonomy of the young people to do what they think is best, will combine with the strictness of the authoritarian fathers and the bond of trust between the earlier lenient parents and their children to form the basic attitudes of parent and child in the next plays.³⁵

³⁵The "Meurs ou tue" (Le Cid, v. 275) of Don Di gue is a very strong counsel to Don Rodrigue as to the only possible solution open to him, and shows the father's concern for what should be, in the context of the play, his son's first consideration, his own and his family's honour. That Rodrigue hesitates and then heeds this advice displays both independence and trust.

The severity demonstrated in the "Qu'il mour t" (Horace, v. 1021) of Le Vieil Horace in reference to his son betrays once again a concern for the son's reputation. That Horace's retreat was simply tactical,

The figure who looms largest in matters of authority in L'illusion comique is Alcandre, the magician who knows all, and who regulates the lives of the other characters in the choice he makes of events to present. In this capacity, he closely resembles Corneille, the playwright, who chooses circumstances and events to please his audience, just as Alcandre does for his spectator, Pridamant. He controls Pridamant's feelings of joy, sadness and surprise just as Corneille hopes to do with his audience. As Nelson has indicated:

Alcandre is an extremely Cornelian playwright: he cares little about the unities of time and place. With a sleight of hand, Alcandre shifts his scene from grotto to public square to prison to stage . . . the "grotte obscure" is his theatre. His double-entendres are so many black handkerchiefs to conceal his techniques and excite the curiosity of his audience; his "coups de théâtre" are so many tricks to surprise and delight them.³⁶

Alcandre is Cornelian in yet another way: just as Corneille began by writing comedies and will now proceed to write tragedies, Alcandre begins with a comic conjuration, and ends with a tragic one. The magician's need to conjure up "des fantômes nouveaux" to give the cha-

that he did defend his country in keeping with his own and his father's wishes bears witness to the understanding which exists between them. Horace's slaying of his sister as a subversive element, and Le Vieil Horace's defence of this deed display the independence of the son, and the trust and understanding of the father.

Pauline (Polyeucte) will accept her father's decision that she part with Sévère and marry Polyeucte. However, when Félix puts to death the converted Polyeucte, Pauline, in an act of independence, rejects her father's decision and turns to the Christian faith with no fear of the consequences. But Félix soon joins her in her new belief, he too in full knowledge that death probably awaits him as a result. Once again the relationship between father and child combines strictness, independence, trust and understanding.

³⁶R. J. Nelson, "Pierre Corneille's L'illusion comique: the Play as Magic," p. 1131.

racters "assez d'éclat pour leurs conditions", "leur haute fortune", their "hautes fonctions" displays knowledge on his part of the differences between comedy and tragedy, as Corneille, having just written Médée, and about to present Le Cid, undoubtedly knew. As Corneille's prime concern in writing plays is to please his spectators, so too is Alcandre's as we see in his praise of the theatre: besides having provided a happy ending to Pridamant's quest, he explains that the theatre

Est aujourd'hui l'amour de tous les bons esprits,
L'entretien de Paris, le souhait des provinces,
Le divertissement le plus doux de nos princes,
Les délices du peuple, et le plaisir des grands.

(vv. 1648-1651)

Thus, Alcandre, in addition to lauding the art form which Corneille has chosen as his life's work, manifests Cornelian dramaturgic tendencies, and foreshadows the change which our author will make from comedy to tragedy.

The remaining characters convey little that is new and individual. Eraste, in slaying Rosine and Théagène, is merely carrying out the orders of his master, Florilame, but he does so with energy and conviction. The page who bears royal messages to his master, Matamore, is simply doing what he is paid to do, but the incident serves to add further humour to an already very comical figure. The jailer who allows himself to be swayed to free the prisoner is a familiar figure.³⁷

³⁷H. C. Lancaster, A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, II, i, 108.

Yet, he is resourceful in carrying out the plan of escape and, like Alcandre, has a gift for making pleasant surprises, albeit in a grim way: freeing Clindor, he tells his prisoner to prepare for the gallows only to confront him with Isabelle. Dorante's function is to introduce his friend, Pridamant, to his recent acquaintance, the magician, Alcandre. He prepares Pridamant and the audience for the first meeting with Alcandre, praising his talents and offering his friend hope. Adraste is the jealous lover who has been spurned and whom we met in the very first play, Mélite. He is favoured by Géronte because he is rich, courageous and of the nobility, but rebuffed by Isabelle who simply does not love him. To rid himself of his rival, Clindor, he conspires with Lyse, rival of her mistress for Clindor, to have him beaten. In the attack, he is slain by Clindor who is imprisoned and awaits death. Adraste provides Lyse, then, with the opportunity to make her généreux self-sacrifice.

Evidently, the ethic of générosité continues to form the core of the system of values found in the society depicted in L'illusion comique. However, this system continues to be endangered by the power of love, material gain, deception and selfishness, but nonetheless wins out in the end. Matamore uses words such as honneur, gloire, and courage constantly, but in his mouth they are devoid of true meaning because he is a liar and coward, but even more so because everyone sees him for what he really is, even the audience who sees him simply as a very comic character whose raison d'être is to make his companions and the spectators laugh.

The same is not true of the other characters who are more human

and susceptible of deviation from the accepted mode of conduct. Wealth and monetary gain are of significant importance once again. Adraste is a rich nobleman, conscious of his rank and financial situation, and quite prepared to use them to influence G ronte in order to obtain Isabelle. G ronte is quite receptive to Adraste's suit, for he is aware of his wealth, and, as Isabelle informs us, he would willingly reject Clindor who is poor. Because of his desire to escape his indigence, Clindor wishes to marry Isabelle for her money. Pridamant is swayed in part to accept Clindor's new career by the evidence of a very comfortable living to be made in the theatre. Lyse readily accepts payment from Adraste for her part in the plot against Clindor. The jailer agrees to free Clindor partly because of Lyse's promise of substantial profit.

However, in none of these cases is money the prime interest or motive. Adraste is motivated primarily by love for Isabelle and jealousy of Clindor. Unable to overcome these passions, he resorts to plotting against his rival in a rather ignoble fashion preferring, like Th ante in La Suivante, to avoid single combat. Moreover, he pays no attention to his beloved's wishes, threatening her with fatherly intervention.

Although the jailer is a sympathetic sort, he is not ethical. Accepting a bribe, the decisive factor is the promise of Lyse's hand in marriage. Love leads him to break the social code and free Clindor.

If G ronte is attracted by Adraste's wealth, he is also influenced by his nobility and the honour and security he would bring his daughter. However, he does join in Adraste's plot, and is largely responsible for the condemnation to death of an innocent man.

Pridamant's values seem to be similar to G ronte's. Happy to see his son making a good living at the end of the play, he is at least equally glad to learn that the vocation of actor is an honourable one, providing amusement to the highest ranked people, and escape from the worries of the state for the king himself. He is pleased to see Clindor alive and secure in an honourable profession.

Lyse's deception of her mistress and Clindor are motivated, as was the case with Amarante in La Suivante, solely by love and jealousy. Otherwise, she is a completely upright and honest person. She rejects Clindor's offer of adultery, for she will not sacrifice her honour. Moreover, at the end of her soliloquy in Act III, scene 7, she suggests that the real reason for her part in the plot is to "assurer mon honneur" (v. 845, variant v. 12). If her deceit is somewhat attenuated by her motives, Lyse eventually redeems herself completely through her g n reux act of self-abnegation in setting Clindor free, and thus assuring his marriage to Isabelle. In so doing, Lyse has risen above her passion in a splendid act of free will, sought for, but not achieved by Alidor in La Place royale, for her own benefit, and for that of others.

Completely self-possessed and frank, Isabelle has no use for deceit. She tellsAdraste frankly that she does not love him, and wastes no time in telling Clindor she does love him. Of highest priority for her, love for Clindor motivates her actions because without him:

. . . tout l'univers ensemble ne m'est rien:
Oui, je fais plus d' tat d'avoir gagn  votre  me

Que si tout l'univers me connoissoit pour dame.
 Votre amour seul a droit de triompher de moi.

(v. 891, variant vv. 2-4; v. 896)

The last line of this quotation, however, explains that, were it not for her intense affection for Clindor, she would be entirely free and within the bounds of the généreux code of behaviour. Because of her passion, she disobeys her father, a lack of duty perhaps excusable by the obvious absence of trust between father and daughter, and yet contrary to the totally submissive attitude of, for example, Pauline toward Félix in the early part of Polyeucte. However, in her disobedience, Isabelle continues to assert her independence and freedom, albeit misguided when compared to that found in the following plays. Her refusal to submit to Gêronte's wishes are also based on elevated reasons:

Qui regarde les biens ou la condition
 N'a qu'un amour avare, ou plein d'ambition,
 Et souille lâchement par ce mélange infâme
 Les plus nobles desirs qu'enfante une belle âme.
 Je sais bien que mon père a d'autres sentiments.

(vv. 507-511)

In keeping with these words, she courageously runs away with her lover at the risk of being caught and punished by her father, leaving behind all means of the material well-being to which she is accustomed.

We noted in the character study of Isabelle how the change from Isabelle to Hippolyte was imperceptible due to their many similarities as well as to the logical development of Isabelle's traits to those of

Hippolyte. The latter's constancy and love for her husband simply echo that witnessed in her counterpart. She refuses to disguise the fact that she knows of Théagène's adultery. Material things continue to be secondary to affection for her. It is only normal that one so devoted to her passion as was Isabelle should, as Hippolyte, set such a généreux example of courage and self-denial for her husband. Not only does she forgive Théagène, but asks forgiveness of him as well:

Pardonne, cher époux, au peu de retenue
 Où d'un premier transport la chaleur est venue:
 C'est en ces incidents manquer d'affection
 Que de les voir sans trouble et sans émotion.
 Puisque mon teint se fane et ma beauté se passe,
 Il est bien juste aussi que ton amour se lasse.

(vv. 1493-1498)

Likewise, in Le Cid, Rodrigue will set an example of générosité for Chimène. Hippolyte fulfils her duty to her husband just as Rodrigue will fulfil his to family honour. She displays courage in her willingness to follow her husband in death (v. 1560, variant vv. 126-131) just as Rodrigue is willing to die in the service of his beloved.

In a similar development, Clindor too gradually approaches générosité. Away from home, he has had to resort to various trades which, according to Alcandre, "ne vous font pas honneur" (v. 164). He is obliged to engage himself as valet to Matamore, of whom he subsequently becomes the rival. Perhaps out of necessity once again, but nonetheless unacceptable to Lyse and probably to Isabelle (although we are never given the opportunity to find out), he pursues Isabelle for her money all the while loving Lyse: at least that is what he tells Lyse (v. 784).

If this is so, and we can not be certain at this point, then Clindor breaks the cardinal rule of foi in telling Isabelle that he loves her while later proposing an adulterous affair to Lyse. Once he is attacked by Adraste and his followers, the généreux traits of Clindor emerge. Having demonstrated courage by facing his attackers single-handedly, he is imprisoned and condemned to death. There, he ponders the "infâmes supplices" (v. 1226) to which he and his reputation will be subjected, but, even more so, his love for Isabelle. There is no longer any question, not even any mention of Lyse: he finds solace in dying in the service of Isabelle, just as Rodrigue will offer his life in the service of Chimène. As Clindor says: "Je meurs trop glorieux, puisque je meurs pour vous" (v. 1244), so Rodrigue will reply: "Je mourrai trop heureux, mourant d'un coup si beau" (v. 939).

As Théagène, Clindor reverts to his old ways only to return once again to the path of générosité. Unfaithful to his wife, he has given in to the adulterous proposition which Clindor had made earlier to Lyse. He compounds this failure in his duty to Hippolyte with ingratitude to his closest friend, Florilame, with whose wife he is having the affair. He cares neither for his honour nor for his life, so enamoured is he of Rosine. However, Hippolyte's example of généreux altruism, courage, and magnanimous love causes Théagène to return to ethical ways much as Emilie will revert to the established code in response to Auguste's example in Cinna. To do so, Théagène must be unfaithful to Rosine, but this is a case of infidelity for the sake of a higher fidelity just as will be the case in the next play, Le Cid, for Rodrigue. Théagène, like Rodrigue, sacrifices his own wishes for someone else,

a sacrifice which is, of course, not devoid of benefit to the giver, but which runs counter to a very strong desire deemed of lesser value.

Rosine, on the other hand, yields completely to her personal desire, foresaking her duty to her husband, willingly exposing herself to dishonour in order to satisfy what is of prime importance to her, her love for Théagène. Her lover attempts to apply the example set for him by Hippolyte in order to sway Rosine:

Par l'effort que je fais à mon amour extrême,
Madame, il faut apprendre à vous vaincre vous-même,
A faire violence à vos plus chers desirs,
Et préférer l'honneur à d'injustes plaisirs,
Dont au moindre soupçon, au moindre vent contraire
La honte et les malheurs sont la suite ordinaire,

(v. 1560, variant vv. 102-107)

but to no avail, for Rosine replies: "J'en souffrirai plutôt l'infamie éternelle / Que de me repentir d'une flamme si belle" (v. 1560, variant vv. 114-115). Deviation from ethical behaviour in her case is deliberate and energetic, totally committed to the fulfilment of her love for Théagène culminating, as with Camille in Horace, with union in death.

As in past comedies, Providence plays a minimal part in this play, but the rôle of Alcandre is of interest in this respect. Possessing supernatural powers, not only does he govern air, earth, fire and water, but

. . . il lit dans les pensées,
. . . il connoît l'avenir et les choses passées;

Rien n'est secret pour lui dans tout cet univers,
Et pour lui nos destins sont des livres ouverts.

(vv. 57-60)

Indeed, he seems to be Providence itself. When he appears, however, he seems more a providential agent who will reveal to Pridamant "ce que le ciel vengeur refusoit à vos larmes" (v. 122). As Isabelle says, in another context, and Pridamant has discovered,

Aller contre les lois de cette providence,
C'est le prendre à partie, et blâmer sa prudence,
L'attaquer en rebelle, et s'exposer aux coups
Des plus âpres malheurs qui suivent son courroux.

(vv. 649-652)

Heaven has punished Pridamant for his injustice, but now sends Alcandre to end its punishment.

At the end of the play, Clindor (Théagène) having just been 'slain', Alcandre says to Pridamant:

Ainsi de notre espoir la fortune se joue:
Tout s'élève ou s'abaisse au branle de sa roue;
Et son ordre inégal, qui régit l'univers,
Au milieu du bonheur a ses plus grands revers,

(vv. 1589-1592)

seemingly denying completely the idea of the existence of Providence. However, Alcandre's control over earlier events in the play, and now his revelation of Clindor's false death in his new acting career refute, at least in part, the ideas of this quotation. The lesson would be, then, that, despite tribulations and difficulties which we do not always understand, heavenly will intervenes to regulate events, as Don Fernand,

the king in Le Cid, points out to the still dissatisfied Chimène:

Ton père est satisfait, et c'étoit le venger
Que mettre tant de fois ton Rodrigue en danger.
Tu vois comme le ciel autrement en dispose. (vv. 1767-1769)

Evidently, the social ethic in L'Illusion comique is one of générosité, but which is, as in La Suivante and La Place royale, in the process of breaking down. All major characters are aware of its tenets, but nonetheless break its rules. Although a number of the principals return to its guidance, and continue to think highly of this way of life, we find several comments on changing attitudes or justification of them. Géronte generalizes the difficulty he is having with his daughter, indicating how widespread disobedience is among the youth of his day. In a soliloquy informing us of the struggle in Lyse's mind between vengeance on Clindor and acceptance of his ambition to marry Isabelle for money, she says: "Tu m'aimes, mais le bien te fait être inconstant: / Au siècle où nous vivons, qui n'en feroit autant" (vv. 843-844). When Hippolyte threatens to expose the adultery of her husband, Clarine suggests it might be better to pretend that it does not exist. Hippolyte refuses and adds: "Sans crime, d'un hymen peut-il rompre la loi? / Et ne rougit-il point d'avoir si peu de foi" (vv. 1359-1360) to which Clarine replies:

Cela fut bon jadis; mais au temps où nous sommes,
Ni l'hymen ni la foi n'obligent plus les hommes:
Madame, leur honneur a des règles à part,
Où le vôtre se perd, le leur est sans hasard,
Et la même action entre eux et nous commune
Est pour nous déshonneur, pour eux bonne fortune.
La chasteté n'est plus la vertu d'un mari;

La princesse du vôtre a fait son favori:
 Sa réputation croîtra par ses caresses;
 L'honneur d'un galant homme est d'avoir des maîtresses.

(vv. 1361-1362; 1363, variant vv. 1-8)

One could hardly expect the acceptance of such general behaviour and attitude in the society presented in Le Cid. Clarine's words are not simply an attempt on her part to persuade her mistress to let the matter drop: it is as well a commentary on the state of transition of the social code, a commentary which is seconded by Rosine. Théagène, in his généreux change of heart, tries to bring about a similar change in his mistress by using the same argument we have just heard from Hippolyte: "Madame, est-ce vous rendre un si mauvais service, / De sauver votre honneur d'un mortel précipice" (v. 1560, variant vv. 90-91). Rosine will have none of it:

N'as-tu jamais appris que ces vaines chimères
 Qui naissent aux cerveaux des maris et des mères,
 Ces vieux contes d'honneur n'ont point d'impressions
 Qui puissent arrêter les fortes passions.

(v. 1560, variant vv. 94-97)

"Ces vieux contes d'honneur" were good for days gone by, but now are looked upon merely as old wives' tales.

Corneille's interest in the ethic of générosité has been amply demonstrated in his early plays. However, in his comedies, he has limited the scope of the society to that of his own period, a period where the established code of conduct is in a state of flux and collapse, giving way to values such as the number of mistresses and material gain. Yet, as depicted in these same plays, the author

sympathizes with those characters who adhere most closely to the more noble généreux rules. With such a keen interest in this code and in this type of figure, it is not surprising that Corneille, with Le Cid, goes back in history to a period when perhaps such rules of conduct were in favour and their followers looked upon them as the only means of achieving lasting satisfaction. This does not mean that struggles between desires within or without the ethic will not exist: far from it, the conflicts will, in fact, increase as a result, for there will be no justification of derogation from the ethic. The intensity of human desires will exist along with the knowledge of the almost inevitable consequences. In addition, there will always remain difficulties and uncertainties stemming from chance, as Alcandre, the omniscient playwright, indicates near the end of the play (vv. 1589-1592).

This is precisely the substance of which pathos is made and L'illusion comique, although a comedy, contains numerous instances of it. Pridamant, throughout the play, oscillates between happiness and unhappiness, hope and despair, at the mercy of what Alcandre chooses to show him, and of events which have happened to his son, but over which none had control. At the beginning of the play, Pridamant despairs at ever finding the son he has banished so unjustly (Act I, scene 1). In his meeting with Alcandre, his hopes begin to rise until the magician has convinced him of his powers (scenes 2 and 3). Upon seeing Clindor, his joy breaks through (Act II, scene 1). At the end of Act II, Pridamant is very worried about the threats of revenge made byAdraste and Lyse (scene 10). The end of Act III brings to the father

nothing but despair, for Clindor is in prison awaiting death (scene 12). Joy springs from Pridamant at the end of the following act, Clindor having been set free (scene 10). In Act V, he completely despairs at the death of the dear son to whom he has been unable to make amends, only to become joyful once again to learn that Clindor was simply acting in a play (scene 5). The audience undoubtedly undergoes the same feelings of joy and grief as the spectator of the conjurations, for like him upon seeing the play for the first time, he pays no attention to Alcandre's reassurances.

In the first conjuration, the comic alternates regularly with the pathetic. It opens with an amusing conversation between Matamore and his valet (Act II, scene 2), followed by the dispute betweenAdraste and Isabelle which brings the first feeling of anxiety to bear upon the spectator (scene 3). The arrival of Matamore and Clindor dissipates this feeling (scene 4), and the comic is heightened by the arrival of the page whose task it is to bear false messages to his master (scene 5). Anxiety sets in once more when Isabelle worries about her father's reaction to her love of Clindor (scene 6). It increases because of the altercation between Clindor andAdraste, ending in threats (scene 7), and even more whenAdraste meets Lyse to plan revenge on Clindor (scene 8), or when, after a bitter struggle, Lyse emerges more convinced than ever of the necessity to teach Clindor a lesson (scene 9). The next act of this conjuration opens upon a quarrel between G ronte and his daughter, the former completely intransigent in his desire to see Isabelle wedAdraste (Act III, scenes 1 and 2). The entrance of Matamore and Clindor again alleviates tension

momentarily (scenes 3 and 4) only to be followed by a scene of jest between Clindor and Lyse which ends on an ironic note which, the spectator knows, hides the revenge of Lyse (scene 5) which is totally uncovered in Lyse's soliloquy (scene 6). But again Matamore enters and creates laughter (scene 7). Shortly afterward, however, Isabelle confides to Clindor her father's entrenched position, andAdraste's jealousy from whom the lovers fear the worst (scene 8). Having hidden to listen to their conversation, Matamore enters to dispel the tense atmosphere (scene 10), when suddenly the cause for anxiety erupts in the attack ofAdraste and his band of men on Clindor (scene 11). The final act of the "comédie imparfaite" continues this pattern, but with gradually decreasing pathos. The first scene presents a soliloquy in which Isabelle suffers terribly at the approaching execution of her innocent lover whom she is prepared to join in death. Lyse enters with her plan to free Clindor to the great joy of Isabelle (scene 2). However, Lyse's decision results from deep repentance at the too harsh punishment of Clindor, and in an heroically pathetic soliloquy, she informs us how courageously she has overcome her own feelings in favour of those of the two lovers (scene 3). For the last time, Matamore enters to dispel the gravity of the situation (scene 4). Isabelle and Lyse, anxious to secure Clindor's freedom, are upset at the loss of their precious time by Matamore (scene 5), reveal their anxiety to the jailer who has just come upon the scene, but who reassures them (scene 6). The location switches to the prison where Clindor, unaware of Lyse's plans, prepares to die (scene 7). The fact that the spectator knows he probably will not die attenuates the pathos felt by his none-

theless real suffering. The same is true when the jailer arrives to set him free, but saying instead that the time for his execution has come (scene 8). The sight of Isabelle, however, completely dissipates the pathos of the situation (scene 9).

The alternation of pathos and its attenuation continues into the "tragédie" as well. Hippolyte is tormented by her husband's unfaithfulness (scene 2), and when Théagène enters lets her suffering break through in a series of reproaches and eventual self-effacement which, to her great happiness, leads to Théagène's reversal and promise of undying love (scene 3). Rosine arrives and is bitterly torn by her lover's change of heart (scene 4). Being a tragic piece, it is only fitting that the end sees Théagène and Rosine slain, and Hippolyte carried away by Eraste (scene 5 of the variant).

This oscillation between the comic or joyful and the pathetic is done with such regularity on all three planes of the play that it appears to be an exercise in composition by Corneille who has evidently arrived at very skilful and remarkable ability in creating and dissipating pathos. Of course, the three levels of the play make it impossible to have sustained pathos related to any one level for any extent of time. However, there is one main thread which serves to maintain it for most of the play: the anxiety felt by Pridamant and the spectator concerning the fate of Clindor. This question is the basis for the entire play and, although Alcandre reassures us at intervals, we continue to fear for his welfare. If we follow Pridamant's reactions, and consider them typical of the audience, then, from the point of view of pathos, the play begins with a worry which develops into hopelessness,

and finally utter despair for the hero. Thus, even in the disposition of pathetic situations, Corneille has, in L'Illusion comique, pointed the way to his future tragedies.

With Médée, Corneille must have felt prepared to turn to a genre which was new to him, tragedy, having come near it in his two previous plays, but adroitly avoiding it. Although the play was successful, Corneille apparently felt he had not yet achieved what he wanted, for his next play, L'Illusion comique, is in large part one of experimentation and transition as well as a play about his own theatre, presenting some aspects of past works, and developing them to the point seen in his tragedies.³⁸ The unities are at the same time loosely and closely followed: the conjurations display the carefree attitude to the unities seen in Mélite, while the outer shell, the strict adherence of La Suivante. However, it is the story of Clindor's adventures which, at least during the first viewing of the play, interests the spectator most. Corneille complained that the "comédie" was "imparfaite" because it was incomplete, while in fact it is completed in the last act. However, he was proud of the "trait d'art", the "tragédie" which, although only the continuation of Clindor's life as an actor, deludes Pridamant and the spectator as to the truth behind the events it represents. This "trait d'art" or surprise is found in his first play, but here achieves more mystification of the audience, an effect which the playwright will continue in Le Cid. Transition occurs also in the sequence of the conjurations, for Alcandre, like Corneille, begins with the comic and ends with the tragic. Furthermore, the con-

³⁸Maurens' statement that "tout ne serait qu'imitation de soi-même,

clusion of L'illusion comique is open-ended just as will be that of Le Cid.

The presence of external influences and obstacles continues, but, as in La Place royale and Médée, the internal influences predominate. In the former, Alidor controlled events for most of the play, but in the end did not get what he wanted, while, in Médée, the heroine does, but through the use of her supernatural powers. In the present play, Alcandre does too, but again through magic. Clindor, however, overcomes most obstacles (except prison) by his own powers, and attains his goal. In Le Cid, Rodrigue will overcome all obstacles in his path which appear superior to him, and the hero becomes the undeniable victor. The action, then, in its structure, development, and motive power evinces experimentation on the part of the author.

The same can be said of the main characters, and even of Matamore whose rôle is strictly comic and not structurally important. A stock-character, he is an exaggeration of the boasting cowards seen in preceding plays, such as Philandre in Mélite and Théante in La Suivante. He also resembles Rodrigue and Don Gomès in Le Cid through his eloquent rhetoric, but the resemblances here are purely verbal and, in context, add to the comic.

Lyse, the servant, is in a similar position to Amarante of La Suivante in that she rivals her mistress for Clindor, and loses out to Isabelle. Unlike Amarante, however, though bitter and vengeful at first,

s'il n'y avait le maître de Clindor, Matamore" (op. cit., p. 227) is certainly much too categorical.

she achieves the freedom of will sought, but not gained by Alidor in La Place royale and, in a splendid act of générosité and independence, frees Clindor, knowing full well that, in so doing, she is not only giving him to her mistress, but sacrificing herself in marrying the jailer whom she does not love. Her deed certainly looks forward to the free and conscious self-denial of the Infante in Le Cid and Sévère in Polyeucte.

Clindor, the opportunist, recalls Florame and Théante of La Suivante, but he is more spontaneous and less calculating. In one instance, he appears just as calculating as Jason in Médée, but he is simply following his bent for pleasure. His situation mirrors that of Philiste in La Veuve, for he is in love with a woman of greater wealth. However, he foreshadows Rodrigue in Le Cid by his readiness to give up his life for his mistress. In his development as Théagène, he describes his love for his wife as one which survives even death, calling to mind Polyeucte's love for Pauline. Like Emilie in Cinna, he is swayed by the généreux example of Hippolyte and chooses, like Rodrigue and Horace, to be disloyal in favour of a higher, more noble loyalty, rising above selfish desires which neither Alidor nor Jason manage to do.

Isabelle echoes Daphnis in La Suivante in that she too must discourage an unwanted suitor, and also is rival to her servant. Very self-possessed, she is the mistress of her own heart and, aware of the obstacles in her path, she asserts the strength and independence of will which Emilie will display in Cinna. The intensity of her love for Clindor is such that, less blindly passionate than Théagène's mistress

but still resembling Camille in Horace, she is prepared to join her lover in death. As Hippolyte, we see her in a situation reminiscent of Médée who abandoned her home to follow a man who has become ungrateful. Unlike Médée, she is completely selfless and her courage, love, and self-denial set such a généreux example that her husband returns to the right path. This example can not help but make us think of that set for Chimène by Rodrigue.

In Géronte, we have the traditional authoritarian father who, like Pleirante of La Galerie du palais, is sensitive to his daughter's tears, but acts according to what is good for her, unlike Géraste in La Suivante. However he is an unsympathetic figure who goes to extremes in his severity. Pridamant too had been too severe and unjust toward his son, but repented and changed his ways. Like Don Diègue in Le Cid, he is old and needs the support of his son. Pridamant is the sympathetic father in this play, but Corneille will in fact draw from both of these fathers to depict Don Diègue and Le Vieil Horace. The authoritarian fathers of the comedies were somewhat out of place in the contemporary setting in which Corneille placed them. Not that there were no dictatorial parents during this period, but a change was occurring in that offspring were becoming more independent and rebellious,³⁹ while parents often acted out of self-interest⁴⁰ or were becoming relatively

³⁹N. Benjamin Kumpwo, La Vie familiale dans les six premières comédies de Pierre Corneille (de Méliete à l'illusion comique) (Diss., Université Laval, June 1967), p. 8.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 7.

more lenient.⁴¹ Corneille will, therefore, in Le Cid, go back in history where parental authority was, or so he thought, much stronger, and more plausible and sympathetic, but maintain the tie of understanding and trust between father and son.

Our playwright will do the same with regard to the ethic. In the comedies, the code of générosité is breaking down, encompassing widespread use of deception, selfishness and the desire for material gain. In L'Illusion comique, all of the main characters are subject to deviations from the code, but générosité wins in the end, for the characters redeem themselves by various acts of self-denial, favourable to others and to themselves as well, which strongly foreshadow those of the next tragedies. Several comments by different characters indicate that the code of social behaviour is not what it was in days of old, that many of its rules are now looked upon as old wives' tales which belong to the past. While Corneille certainly sympathizes with the characters who adhere most closely to générosité, the contemporary version of it is not its purest form, and too many deviations are now acceptable. So our author will go back in history to a period when a certain code of ethics was in full force, when struggles were greater as a result. Human nature, retaining its weaknesses, would then be confronted with more formidable obstacles: these conflicts would lend themselves more readily to greater pathos and heroic tragedy.

Judging from the disposition of the pathetic and non-pathetic instances in L'Illusion comique, Corneille appears quite ready to attack

⁴¹Ibid., p. 10.

the kind of pathos found in Le Cid. The regularity of alternation between the two in the present play suggests a remarkable ability to create particular feelings in his audience at will. Because of this alternation on the three levels of the play, we have few instances of sustained pathos. However, if we omit the rôle of Matamore which is superfluous to the plot, the play would be considerably more pathetic, and this feeling would be much more sustained. Obviously, pathos is more concentrated in the Théagène episode where only for a very brief instance is it interrupted. Also, the confrontation of wills seen between Isabelle and Gêronte, Hippolyte and Théagène, Théagène and Rosine, and within Lyse herself seems to be an attempt by Corneille to approach what Maurens calls "la tragédie de la volonté".⁴² Furthermore, as the play develops, so too does the pathos increase in intensity: the anxiety the audience feels for Clindor at the beginning becomes hopelessness at his impending death, and finally utter despair when, as Théagène, he is slain.

On the whole, L'illusion comique is a play of transition from the comedies to the tragedies of Corneille's theatre. It reflects hesitation and experimentation on the part of the author who certainly appears ready to write Le Cid, for, with all the differences which remain between L'illusion comique and Le Cid, they are no greater than those between La Place royale and L'illusion comique.

⁴²Op. cit., p. 228.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

In our study of the early comedies of Corneille, we have tried to show that much of what is found in any one play (except the first) is present in the preceding plays; that they contain in germ the foundations of his tragic production, and as such can not be separated from his tragic works; that these first comedies follow a linear progression in which our playwright gradually perfected his technique to the degree seen in Le Cid; that this first masterpiece owes much to the preceding plays, and that its writing should not be viewed as a saltus in the evolution of the dramatic world of our author.

Each of the aspects studied in this dissertation corroborates these conclusions. There is gradual improvement in Corneille's ability to apply the rules of the unities. Mérite develops over a number of weeks in several locations of the city of Paris. Its action consists of two plots only superficially linked one to the other, the progress of which is halting because of the alternation between the major one which is given greater relief and the minor one. Contributing to this lack of continuity is the omission of necessary details and the shifting of the motive power from one secondary character to another. Excepting the application of the rule of the twenty-four hours, Clitandre represents a retrograde step, for the only changes made are for the worse: too many events occur in too little time, there are three plots none of which dominates, it contains more occurrences for which we are not prepared, there is a heavy reliance on coincidence. However,

Corneille has certainly satisfied his critics' thirst for effects.

La Veuve introduces several improvements: a compromise has been struck concerning the duration of the action, for each of the five acts represents one day; the location is concentrated on one street with one change to a garden on the same street; the action is not unified, but has received considerable preparation and justification of events making them more plausible and avoiding the fortuitous. Progress continues in La Galerie du palais: unity of place has been achieved, but Corneille has deliberately chosen to break the rule by locating the action, in two instances, at the Galerie for the sole purpose of pleasing his audience by its spectacle; the two plots are so closely linked that unity is practically achieved; for the first time, the main characters participate directly in the entire dénouement; the obstacle is no longer melodramatic, but arises from a simple misunderstanding between the two protagonists, which, once established, is resolved by them; as a result, Corneille develops the formerly temporary influence which the main characters of La Veuve had on the course of events, for now it extends over the greater part of the play. La Suivante is Corneille's first regular play: situated in one place no larger than the size of the stage, the action lasts for the duration of the presentation of the play; not only are the plots very closely linked, but the outcome of the minor plots depends on that of the first; once again the obstacle is a misunderstanding, but this time of an external nature due merely to the inadvertent omission of a name unlike the more desirable internal need of the heroine of the last play. This is not necessarily a backward step, Corneille wishing to vary his subject

and to present the reverse side of the question seen in La Galerie du palais where the characters controlled events to a degree not quite true to life. La Place royale displays continued progress: the action unravels within twenty-four hours in one location except for two scenes in the heroine's room inserted for reasons of vraisemblance; the plots are closely linked, but the outcome of the secondary one does not depend on that of the primary; the impediment, however, not only emerges from an inner desire of the principal protagonist, but is even initiated in this character, an improvement over the fourth play; a balance is struck between internal and external influences giving a truer reflection of the complexities of life. The structure of the play within a play within a play of L'illusion comique enables Corneille to review what has preceded and experiment with new techniques. If the main interest lies in discovering the whereabouts of the exiled son, then the rules of the unities have been very strictly followed. If it lies in the actual adventures of this son, then there is no adherence to the rules at all. Characteristics which look backward to the comedies and forward to Le Cid are evident: the surprise conclusion comes directly from the comedies, but the greater mystification of the audience here precludes that seen in Le Cid; the change from the comic to the tragic in the play itself parallels the same movement on the part of the author who will now abandon comedy for tragedy. Whether or not Corneille adheres to the rules of the unities now seems to be purely a matter of choice, for he has certainly acquired the ability to apply them in a plausible fashion as well as in a way which will reflect as accurately as possible the complexities of life.

The characters of these first plays also show a similar development. Their main preoccupation is love to which they are willingly or unwillingly enslaved. From the outset, we find this concern for freedom in the cynical Tircis, the champion of change. When he meets Mélite, however, both willingly give in to love and, like Eraste, the spurned lover, all of their efforts are directed towards union in love. They are incapable of dealing with obstacles, for their great passion renders them either helpless or mad. Cloris is perhaps an exception, for, when the fickle and self-interested Philandre deserts her, she remains rational, only too happy to be rid of such as he. Caliste and Rosidor in Clitandre are no different than their earlier counterparts with regard to love. Dorise follows a similar awakening to Cloris, but there is a hint of Lyse in L'Illusion comique in her: Rosidor owes her his life although through no deliberate effort on her part. Pymante seems to represent a major step forward in his revolt against love, but it is not a true one, for he simply substitutes hatred and vengeance born of love. Nonetheless the principle of revolt is introduced. Clitandre too seems to overcome his passion because, in the end, he prefers to give himself to being a dutiful subject to the King, choosing therefore a more elevated cause. However, we are not told how he arrives at this decision, through what mechanism the passive Clitandre has evolved. The hero and heroine of La Veuve are more active than the previous ones in overcoming impediments. The reluctance to exchange affirmations of love due to Philiste's timidity before the greater wealth and rank of the modest Clarice is overcome by the principals themselves. Very much in love, they are still more practical than

their forerunners. The main advances, however, continue to be found in the secondary characters. Alcidon's ruse is less risky than Eraste's, but his passion is himself not Clarice. Célidan possesses self-control to the extent that he has kept his affection secret in deference to his friend. He also exhibits lucidity and judgement quite consistently, but he is never really tested. In Doris, we have the first true revolt, not against love, but against parental authority which, in the end, she accepts. In so doing, however, she has chosen a freedom based on dependence, and thus foreshadows many future characters. In La Galerie du palais, we have the first protagonist to arrive at freedom through her own decision: Célidée loves Lysandre who loves her, but, knowing that his affection for her has not yet been tested, she does so in full knowledge that, as a result, she may lose him. No longer a slave to her passion, she finds freedom from within herself to test not only Lysandre's love for her, but his worthiness to be loved in what amounts to a self-test of her own will as well. Having succeeded in all her goals, she allows herself to be persuaded to continue only to lose all the self-control she had earlier. Lysandre, on the other hand, is the first protagonist to regain his beloved by his own active efforts brushing aside all obstacles. With Florame in La Suivante, Corneille examines the effect of external influence on the lover, the achievement of whose goal depends not on the beloved, but on her father who has apparently promised her to another after giving her permission to engage herself to the one she loves. After a soliloquy foreshadowing Rodrigue's stances in Le Cid, Florame decides to seek vengeance on the father, but he lacks the

opportunity which Rodrigue will be given later. Daphnis continues the trend towards self-determination of the heroine. Unlike Célidée whose manifestations of freedom were ultimately capricious, Daphnis' are based on judgement and discrimination: she is aware of Florame's merit, of her love for him, of her duty to her father who objects, of the value of a promise, of the consequences of breaking one, and she chooses accordingly. The struggle which she wages between filial duty and love prefigures that of Rodrigue and Chimène in Le Cid, but she has a considerably easier choice, for love and honour are in the same camp. A most interesting character emerges in the person of Amarante, Daphnis' souvante and descendant of the nurses of Mélite and La Veuve. Like them and the souvante of La Galerie du palais, she is cunning, unscrupulous and intriguing, but she has become a main character in her rôle of rival to her mistress. She has been given greater depth of character and stronger reasons for discontent as befits her more noble background and more elevated position than the nurses. As rival, she resembles the young ladies of good background scorned by their lovers in past plays. It is interesting to note that it is in part this character, through that of Lyse in L'Illusion comique, that eventually leads us to the Infante of Le Cid. In La Place royale, the battle-lines between love and freedom are clearly set out. All of the past impassioned heroes and heroines find their most ardent defender in Angélique whose love is so blind and of such prime importance, knowing no serious conflicting emotions, that she easily prefigures future heroines. The enemy is, unfortunately for her, her lover himself. Alidor loves Angélique, but wants to be free to love as and

when he wishes, voluntarily without being compelled by her charms. Unlike Célidée, this quest for freedom originates within himself. In his search, Alidor is the first character to surrender a peaceful happy love for a value deemed of greater importance. The mastery of self which he seeks is based on pride in the moi, and as such foreshadows the wilful heroes of the tragedies. For the latter, however, love and freedom are not mutually exclusive nor will they seek a self-control which they already possess, but rather will exercise it. Alidor weakens, however, and resorts to indirect methods to achieve his goal, thus, in fact, failing in his quest. Phylis is the finished picture of the gay and witty young ladies such as Cloris and Doris. In her deliberate acceptance of dependence she recalls Doris and prefigures the Infante. In his rôle of foil to Alidor as well as in his qualified initiative, Cléandre anticipates Don Sanche in Le Cid. L'Illusion comique is a play of transition and experimentation with respect to the characters. Matamore, the stock character of the braggart soldier, resembles such boasting cowards of the past as Philandre, Théante, and Alidor, but sometimes in his use of language strikes tones which are found in Rodrigue and Don Gomès of Le Cid. Clindor is very much like the opportunists Florame and Théante of La Suivante and Jason of Médée, although less calculating and premeditating than they. In his youthful readiness to defend the principle of honour he resembles Don Sanche of Le Cid, and like Don Rodrigue he is prepared to die in the service of his mistress. As Théagène of the tragic piece, he recalls the ungrateful and unfaithful Jason of Médée. Like Rodrigue and

Polyeucte, his love for Hippolyte will survive all obstacles. As Emilie will be converted by Auguste's example in Cinna, so Théagène by his wife's, and his new disloyalty to Rosine is caused by the greater loyalty to his wife just as Rodrigue, Horace and Polyeucte will choose the higher duty to family honour, the state, and God. Unlike Jason or Alidor, he is able to rise above his personal selfish desires.

Isabelle, like Daphnis in La Suivante, is rival to her servant and wins out because of her greater wealth. Despite the intensity of her love, she faces all obstacles lucidly and, like Emilie in Cinna, she reaffirms the strength and independence of her will when confronted by these obstacles. Her willingness to join Clindor in death also foreshadows Camille in Horace. As Hippolyte, she recalls Médée who abandoned father and home to follow an ingrate. Just as Rodrigue's example shows the right path for Chimène to follow, so does Hippolyte's example of complete fidelity and courage for Théagène. Angélique and Médée too were faithful to Alidor and Jason, but lacked the utter selflessness of Hippolyte or Rodrigue. Lyse, like Amarante in La Suivante, is a cunning and vengeful rival to her mistress. Also conflicted between revenge and love, she, unlike Amarante, gives her lover to her mistress in a marvelous act of free will and self-denial bringing to mind a very strong resemblance to the Infante in Le Cid. Transitional too is the blindly passionate Rosine, reminiscent of Angélique, but even more determined than she to love Théagène, for Rosine is more than willing to flout the ethic of her society to do so, much as Camille will do in Horace.

Thus, from Mélite to L'Illusion comique, the characters have found

the strength to relinquish their selfish desires for a principle or cause of higher value, or have entrenched themselves even farther in a personal desire to which they give themselves completely, preparing thereby such characters as Rodrigue, the Infante and Camille.

The development of the parental figures is in the direction of increasing use of authority. In Méliste, Tircis is completely indulgent towards Cloris while Méliste's mother shows herself somewhat concerned for her daughter's welfare. The Queen in Clitandre repeats the attitude of Méliste's mother and the King, although much like Tircis, takes very stern measures towards those who would hinder his favourite's suit. La Veuve presents two considerably more stern and authoritarian figures, but this time towards their children: Chrysante both out of selfishness and for the welfare of her daughter, and Philiste on a point of honour. While Chrysante in La Galerie du palais echoes Tircis' attitude, Pleirante adopts that of Philiste, but this time for the welfare of his daughter. La Suivante presents the most authoritarian figures of these first plays, Géraste and Florame, who exercise their authority for purely self-interested reasons. In La Place royale, no parents appear, and any reference to them remains ambiguous. L'Illusion comique sets out the two types of parent in clear cut fashion: on the one hand, Géronte who is completely dictatorial; on the other, Pridamant who was like Géronte, but has become more lenient while still concerned for his son's honour and welfare. An allusion by Géronte to the changing times and the obvious lack of sympathy the audience has for his severe attitude, along with the

equally evident sympathy for Pridamant lead us to the conclusion that in future plays Corneille will go back into history where the exercise of parental authority is not ludicrous, where selfish interests will continue to be unsympathetic, and where the best solution will reside in the father as a figure of authority who, although he trusts his child who has acquired independence, will severely exercise his authority should the offspring endanger himself or his family.

The rules of social conduct found in these first plays show a noticeable development towards the code of générosité seen in the tragedies. The first suggestion of this is presented in Mélite in the pairing of characters at the end of the play according to a hierarchy based on merit, honesty and constancy. Wealth is highly valued as well, but the just mentioned qualities are of greater importance. There is no question of money in Clitandre, for the characters are all of high stature. There is a major step taken in this play towards achieving the ultimate généreux trait: Pymante's incomplete revolt against love seems to materialize with Clitandre who, through some mechanism not made known to the audience, rises above his passion to give himself entirely to a higher ambition, namely to serve the King dutifully, thereby augmenting his gloire. In doing this, however, he is making an unnecessary choice in favour of a line of conduct which is not really superior, for he only does what any subject, in love or not, must do. Money again emerges as an important value in La Veuve with Chrysante trying to marry her daughter to a rich husband, and Philiste hampered in his suit for Clarice by her greater wealth. However, more noble considerations win out, for most characters hold very

dearly to the principle of honour. Philiste in fact discovers, unlike Clitandre, that to submit to this ethic is not to deny love, but is rather to co-operate with and even advance it. Also, to reject this ethic for self-interested reasons incurs disfavour and disrepute as we see in the case of Alcidon. Duty to parents is viewed by Doris as enslaving, so she revolts against it, but, in deliberately choosing to return to duty, she has achieved freedom based on dependence, a free decision to submit to authority and the established code. The code of générosité remains that of the society of La Galerie du palais. Deviation from it is more frequent than in the preceding play, though all but one of its detractors redeem themselves at the end. Célidée, the only principal character so far to do so, attains freedom from the bond of love. The importance of this occurrence with regard to the ethic is underscored by the self-control which it entails enabling the character to avoid being swayed from the social rules by a dominating passion. Célidée, however, lacks the strength to maintain this self-control to the end. Given the deceit which is widespread throughout the play, it seems that, at the end of the play, deviation from the code is rewarded. However, most return to the established rules. The world of La Suivante, on the other hand, is dominated by pretence, trickery and selfishness. Much of the use of généreux terminology is hollow or self-interested. Amarante, in the soliloquy which ends the play, sums up the prevailing ethic of her society: young men marry for money, not for love, beauty and charm; people use others to achieve their selfish goals; the wealthy buy their wives. We find also that

the union of those with the same background no longer occurs and that social rank is based on material possession rather than merit. However, we hasten to add that Corneille does not sympathize with his characters when they deviate from the ethic. Also, despite this breakdown of générosité, the playwright has continued to develop the code: Daphnis, caught in a struggle between filial duty and honour, arrives at a solution which involves self-abnegation of the sort seen in Le Cid. Corneille therefore presents a society with greater limitations, where its constituents are not always virtuous, where virtue is not always rewarded, nor its absence punished. La Place royale returns to a society where générosité still exists as a code of social behaviour, but where it is in transition. Good and evil, according to the ethic presented, coexist not only in society, but in each of the characters as well. This society seems mainly honest and true to the code, but self-seeking often leads to deviations. This is not simply a repetition of that seen in past plays, for there exists more than just a feeling of obligation to adhere to the rules: on the one hand, we are presented with a theory of adaptation to capricious social surroundings; on the other we are told of the necessity of strict observance combined, not only with criticism of society's deviations, but also with action. We are confronted not simply with a quest for freedom and self-control, but the actual steps towards achieving them: first the decision to be free, then the personal victory over any bond that enslaves, finally the possession of the strength to maintain self-control. The quest fails, but the mechanism is well delineated. Achievement of mastery of one's self combined with généreux traits would certainly prevent

deviation from the ethic to the benefit of both the self and society. This is amply concretized in L'Illusion comique which, in this respect as well, is a play of transition. The values of the comic part reflect those of the earlier comedies: générosité continues to be in a state of flux threatened by deceit, self-interest and wealth. One character, Lyse, has a change of heart: from bitter revenge, she redeems herself through a généreux act of self-denial giving her lover Clindor to Isabelle. She has risen above her passion in a splendid act of the free will, which Alidor sought to achieve, for her own benefit and that of others. If we view the tragic part as a continuation of the comic, then Lyse's act is even more far-reaching: she has brought about a situation which redeems both Isabelle and Clindor as well. As Hippolyte, Isabelle provides, like Rodrigue, a most généreux act of self-abnegation and courage for her husband who is in turn converted. Clindor, as Théagène, like Emilie in Cinna, returns, as a result, to the established code. In so doing, Théagène accepts an infidelity in favour of a higher fidelity, just as Rodrigue, Horace, and Polyeucte will in the tragedies to come.

In the comedies, we have witnessed a society whose code of conduct is in a state of flux. This is especially noticeable in La Suivante and L'Illusion comique, the latter of which contains several allusions to widespread disobedience of daughters, to the normalcy of inconstancy to gain wealth, to the glory of adultery, and to the honour derived from the number of mistresses one possesses. Despite this, we have observed both constant development of the elements of générosité in the characters presented, and the sympathy of the author for its

adherents. If the period contemporary to the comedies reflects the decomposition of the established rules, then Corneille, because of his obvious interest in this ethic, will have to go back in history for his tragedies, to a time when it seemed legitimate for rules to be in force, where deviations exist, but are unacceptable. Because there are no justifications for breaches of the code, conflicts, and thus pathos, will increase in intensity.

Just as Corneille progresses in the development of the parts of the plays so far mentioned, so too does the pathetic element evolve from one comedy to the next. Already in Mélite, the tone becomes somber, and pathos forms a significant part of the play. However, the author has consistently attenuated it, as in future plays, by the proximity of the comic, or by shifting attention from one pathetic situation or from one plot to another. One naturally expects Clitandre to be more moving because it is a tragi-comedy, but pathos here is mainly of a melodramatic sort consisting of sensational incidents and violent appeals to emotion which in turn alleviate the instances of more profound pathos. La Veuve returns to the emotion felt in Mélite, but with greater depth. Two pathetic scenes are brought together in a position of high relief, at the end of one act and at the beginning of the following. The scenes of Philiste's anger recall those of Eraste, but without the mock-epic quality of the latter. For the first time we have a pathetic conflict caused not by an outside agent but by the sufferer, Doris. Also, we are presented with the inner struggle and pain of two different characters based on the same circumstances. While this is true for two acts in La Veuve, it extends

over most of La Galerie du palais where a misunderstanding early in the play causes much suffering for Célidée and Lysandre, and drives them apart. The greatest sustention of pathos seen thus far in Corneille's theatre results from three sequences of four pathetic scenes each. Attenuation continues by means of the machinations of the intrigues and the use of misunderstanding, but pathos is not as dispelled here as in La Veuve. In La Suivante, there is considerably less pathos, owing to the widespread deception in the play. The first three acts contain only two quite pathetic but isolated instances. In the last two acts, there is a marked increase in and sustention of pathos due again to a misunderstanding which once more creates a conflict between father and daughter, and threatens to separate the two lovers. However, this time one is more moved than in the previous play, for the daughter and lover are in the right. We are also presented with two conflicts which, were they not based on misunderstanding, would indeed be tragic: Florame is torn, as will be Rodrigue, between vengeance and the wish to avoid offending his beloved by slaying her father, while Daphnis is torn between filial duty and honour. Also, were it not for the last four lines of the play, Amarante's final soliloquy would be tragic as well. Although there are relatively few instances of pathos in La Suivante, they are much more intense than previously. La Place royale is filled with pathetic moments from beginning to end with no alleviation by misunderstanding. The confrontation of the two opposite and intransigent characters, Angélique and Alidor, could easily become tragic. However, Alidor's behaviour turns to whim and

caprice, and the comic aspect of his conduct attenuates the nonetheless constant pity felt for Angélique. Furthermore, in addition to the ever-present sympathy for Angélique, there are three long sequences of pathetic scenes in the play. Thus, in La Place royale, there are more examples, more sequences, and greater sustention of pathos than before. L'illusion comique again describes the passage from comedy to tragedy with respect to pathos. The comic portion reflects the very pathetic moments of the comedies which are frequently disrupted by the intrusion of the comic. Following this, the tragic part, which appears as the continuation of the previous section, is predominantly pathetic, and ends in the death of the principal characters. Even in the middle section, if the character of Matamore, who is superfluous to the action, were omitted, pathos would increase considerably. According to Pridamant's reactions which evolve from worry and anxiety to hopelessness, and then to utter despair, pathos increases in intensity as the play develops. Perhaps most noteworthy is the regularity of alternation between the pathetic and nonpathetic on all three planes of the play. This regularity suggests that Corneille has acquired the ability to create and dissipate pathos. It is evident, therefore, that our author shows strong tendencies towards pathos, and even the tragic, and appears quite ready to embark on a more serious genre.

Thus, the aspects we have studied of Corneille's first comedies--structure, characters, ethical concepts, pathos--and undoubtedly others which we have not studied, announce and are found in Le Cid and future plays. His early comedies are similar in a number of respects to several of his tragedies, but they deal with affairs which are private

rather than public. With Le Cid, Corneille situates his characters in a world which contains more than simply problems of love or family, where the hero is of feudal noble background and participates directly in a society in which a new order is being founded around the person of the King. Because of this more specific situation, the hero, who is as legendary as Médée, takes on new dimensions which make him more true to life. Set in a political context, the action receives greater seriousness, the characters are more strongly conflicted because of the widespread nature of the consequences. However, this is basically a further development of the gradually expanding horizons of the comedies which have led to L'Illusion comique where Corneille displays "la preuve d'une parfaite possession de son métier et fait véritablement les gammes du Cid".¹

¹Couton, Corneille, p. 42.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Corneille, Pierre. Clitandre, ed. R. L. Wagner. Genève: Droz, 1949.
- _____. La Galerie du palais, ed. Thomas B. Rudmose-Brown. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920.
- _____. L'Illusion comique, rev. ed. Robert Garapon. Paris: Marcel Didier, 1965.
- _____. L'Illusion comique, ed. J. Marks. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1944.
- _____. Mélite, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre. Genève: Droz, 1950.
- _____. Oeuvres, ed. Charles Marty-Laveaux. Les Grands Ecrivains de la France. 12 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1862-1868.
- _____. Oeuvres complètes, ed. André Stegmann. Paris: Seuil, 1963.
- _____. La Place royale, ed. Jean-Claude Brunon. Paris: Marcel Didier, 1962.
- _____. Théâtre, ed. Félix Hémon. 4 vols. Paris: Delagrave, [1886-1887].
- _____. Théâtre complet, ed. Pierre Lièvre and Roger Caillois. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. 2 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1957.
- _____. La Veuve, ed. Mario Roques and Marion Lièvre. Genève: Droz, 1954.

Secondary Sources-Bibliographies and Dictionaries

- Cabeen, David C., and Jules Brody eds. A Critical Bibliography of French Literature. 4 vols. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1947-1961.

Cioranescu, Alexandre. Bibliographie de la littérature française du dix-septième siècle. 3 vols. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1965-1966.

Cotgrave, Randle. A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues. Reprint of the original edition, London, 1611. New York: Da Capo Press, 1971.

Dictionnaire de Paris. Paris: Larousse, 1964.

Furetière, Antoine. Dictionnaire universel. Reprint of the original edition, The Hague and Rotterdam, 1690. Genève: Slatkine, 1970.

Le Verdier, Pierre J., and Edouard Pelay. Additions à la bibliographie cornélienne. Reprint of the original edition, [Paris], 1908. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970.

Naaman, Antoine. Guide bibliographique des thèses littéraires canadiennes de 1921 à 1969. Montréal: Editions Cosmos, 1970.

Picot, Emile. Bibliographie cornélienne. Reprint of the original edition, Paris, 1876. Naarden: Bekhoven, 1967.

Secondary Sources-Books

Adam, Antoine. Histoire de la littérature française au XVII^e siècle. Editions Mondiales. 5 vols. Paris: del Duca, 1962.

Barnwell, H. T. The Tragic in French Tragedy. Belfast: The Queen's University, 1966.

Barras, M[oses]. The Stage Controversy in France from Corneille to Rousseau. New York: Columbia University Institute of French Studies, 1933.

Barzun, Jacques. Classic, Romantic and Modern. Toronto: Little, Brown, 1961.

Bénichou, Paul. Morales du grand siècle. Paris: Gallimard, 1948.

Boorsch, Jean. "L'invention chez Corneille: comment Corneille ajoute à ses sources," Essays in Honor of Albert Feuillerat, ed. Henri M. Peyre. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943.

_____. "Remarques sur la technique dramatique de Corneille," Studies by Members of the French Department of Yale University. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.

- Borgerhoff, Elbert, B. O. The Freedom of French Classicism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.
- Brasillach, Robert. Pierre Corneille. Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1938.
- Bray, René. La Formation de la doctrine classique en France. Paris: Hachette, 1927.
- Brunetière, Ferdinand. Etudes critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature française. 8 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1896-1907.
- _____. Le Dix-septième Siècle. Vol. II of Histoire de la littérature française classique (1515-1830). 3 vols. Paris: Delagrave, 1912.
- Buffum, Imbrie. Studies in the Baroque from Montaigne to Rotrou. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Couton, Georges. Corneille. Paris: Hatier, 1958.
- _____. "Corneille," Littérature française, ed. Antoine Adam, Georges Lerminier, Edouard Morot-Sir. 2 vols. Paris: Larousse, 1967.
- _____. Réalisme de Corneille: deux études. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1953.
- Delacour, André. Corneille et notre France. Paris: Floury, 1944.
- Déroulède, P. Conférence sur Corneille et son oeuvre. Paris: Bloud, 1911.
- Descotes, Maurice. Les Grands Rôles du théâtre de Corneille. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962.
- Dorchain, Auguste. Pierre Corneille. Paris: Garnier, [1918].
- Dort, Bernard. Pierre Corneille, dramaturge. Paris: l'Arche, 1957.
- Doubrovsky, Serge. Corneille et la dialectique du héros. Paris: Gallimard, 1963.
- Emery, Léon. Corneille: le superbe et le sage. Lyon: Cahiers Libres, n.d.
- Faguet, Emile. En lisant Corneille. Paris: Hachette, 1914.
- Forsyth, Elliott. La Tragédie française de Jodelle à Corneille (1553-1640): le thème de la vengeance. Paris: Nizet, 1962.

- Fournel, Victor. Le Théâtre au XVII^e siècle: la comédie. Reprint of the original edition, Paris, 1892. Genève: Slatkine, 1968.
- Frye, Prosser Hall. Romance and Tragedy: a Study of Classic and Romantic Elements in the Great Tragedies of European Literature. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.
- Garapon, Robert. La Fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théâtre français du Moyen Age à la fin du XVII^e siècle. Paris: Armand Colin, 1957.
- Guizot, François. Corneille et son temps: étude littéraire. Paris: Didier, 1866.
- Henriot, Emile. Courrier littéraire: XVII^e siècle. 2 vols. Paris: Albin Michel, 1958-1959.
- Herland, Louis. Corneille par lui-même. Paris: Seuil, 1954.
- Huszar, Guillaume P. Corneille et le théâtre espagnol. Paris: Bouillon, 1903.
- Kumpwo, N. Benjamin. La Vie familiale dans les six premières comédies de Pierre Corneille (de Méliete à l'illusion comique). Diss., Université Laval, 1967.
- La Bruyère, Jean de. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Julien Benda. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1951.
- Lancaster, Henry Carrington. The French Tragi-Comedy: Its Origins and Development from 1552 to 1628. Reprint of the original edition, Baltimore, 1907. New York: Gordian Press, 1966.
- _____. A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century. 9 vols. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929-1942.
- Lanson, Gustave. Corneille. Paris: Hachette, 1898.
- _____. Esquisse d'une histoire de la tragédie française. Second edition. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1927.
- _____. Histoire de la littérature française. Paris: Hachette, 1912.
- Le Brun, Roger. Corneille devant trois siècles. Reprint of the original edition, Paris, 1906. New York: Burt Franklin, 1970.
- Lemaître, Jules. "Corneille," Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française des origines à 1900, ed. Louis Petit de Julleville. Vol. IV. Paris: Armand Colin, 1897.

- Lemonnier, Léon. Corneille. Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1945.
- Lièvre, Pierre. Corneille et son oeuvre: quatre causeries pour la radio à l'occasion du tricentenaire du Cid. Paris: Le Divan, 1937.
- Lintilhac, Eugène. Histoire générale du théâtre en France. Vol. III. La Comédie; dix-septième siècle. Paris: Flammarion, n.d.
- Marsan, Jules. La Pastorale dramatique en France à la fin du XVI^e et au commencement du XVII^e siècle. Reprint of the original edition, Paris, 1905. New York: Burt Franklin, 1971.
- Martinenche, Ernest. La Comedia espagnole en France de Hardy à Racine, 1600-1660. Paris: Hachette, 1900.
- Maurens, Jacques. La Tragédie sans tragique: le néo-stoïcisme dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille. Paris: Armand Colin, 1966.
- May, Georges. Tragédie cornélienne, tragédie racinienne. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948.
- Michaud, Guy. L'Oeuvre et ses techniques. Paris: Nizet, 1957.
- Nadal, Octave. Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille. Paris: Gallimard, 1948.
- Nelson, Robert J. Corneille: His Heroes and Their World. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963.
- _____. Play Within a Play: the Dramatist's Conception of His Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958.
- Parfaict, Claude and François. Histoire du théâtre français. 3 vols. Reprint of the original 15 vol. edition, 1734-1749. Genève: Slatkine, 1967.
- Pascal, Blaise. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Lafuma. L'Intégrale. Paris: Seuil, 1963.
- Poulet, Georges. Etudes sur le temps humain. Paris: Plon, 1950.
- Reynier, Gustave. Le Cid de Corneille. Paris: Pensée moderne, 1966.
- Riddle, Lawrence, M. The Genesis and Sources of Pierre Corneille's Tragedies from Médée to Pertharite. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1926.

- Rigal, Eugène. De Jodelle à Molière: tragédie, comédie, tragi-comédie. Paris: Hachette, 1911.
- Rivaille, Louis. Les Débuts de Pierre Corneille. Paris: Boivin, 1936.
- Rostand, François. L'Imitation de soi chez Corneille. Paris: Boivin, 1946.
- Rousset, Jean. La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon. Paris: José Corti, 1954.
- Sage, Pierre. Le Préclassicisme. Paris: del Duca, 1962.
- Sainte-Beuve, Charles Augustin. Nouveaux Lundis. Paris: Michel Lévy, 1867.
- Scherer, Jacques. La Dramaturgie classique en France. Paris: Nizet, 1959.
- _____. "Le Retour des personnages dans les comédies de Corneille," Mélanges d'histoire littéraire offerts à Daniel Mornet. Paris: Nizet, 1951.
- _____. "Les Trente-sept Ans de Corneille," Littératures françaises, connexes et marginales. Vol. III of Histoire des littératures, ed. Raymond Queneau. 3 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.
- Schlumberger, Jean. Plaisir à Corneille. Paris: Gallimard, 1936.
- Segall, Jacob Bernard. "Corneille and the Spanish Drama," Columbia University Studies in Romance Philology and Literature. Vol. III. New York: Columbia University Press, 1902.
- Serban, Nicolas. Les Comédies de Corneille. Jassy: Cercle d'études franco-roumaines, 1923.
- Siciliano, Italo. Corneille. Venezia: La Goliardica, [1952].
- Simon, Pierre-Henri. Procès du héros. Paris: Seuil, 1950.
- Starobinski, Jean. L'Oeil vivant. Paris: Gallimard, 1961.
- Stegmann, André. "Corneille: 1606-1684," Histoire de la littérature française, ed. Jacques Roger and Jean-Charles Payen. Paris: Armand Colin, 1969.
- _____. L'Héroïsme cornélien: genèse et signification. 2 vols. Paris: Armand Colin, 1968.

- _____. "Seneca and Corneille," Roman Drama, ed. T. A. Dorey and Donald R. Dudley. New York: Basic Books, 1965.
- Sweetser, Marie-Odille. Les Conceptions dramatiques de Corneille d'après ses écrits théoriques. Genève: Droz, 1962.
- Taschereau, Jules. Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de P. Corneille. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1869.
- Tastevin, Maria. Les Héroïnes de Corneille. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1924.
- Van Roosbroeck, Gustav L. The Genesis of Corneille's Mélite. Vinton, Iowa: Kruse, [1921].
- Vedel, Valdemar. Deux Classiques français vus par un critique étranger, trans. E. Cornet. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1935.
- Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet de. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Louis Moland. 52 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1877-1885.
- Waith, Eugene M. and Judd D. Hubert. French and English Drama of the Seventeenth Century. Los Angeles: University of California, 1972.
- Wellek, René. Concepts of Criticism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.
- West, A. W. H. The Cornelian Hero. Bulletin No. 65, French Series No. 3. Auckland, New Zealand: University of Auckland, 1963.
- Yarrow, P. J. Corneille. London: Macmillan, 1963.

Secondary Sources-Periodicals

- Adam, Antoine. "Sur la première époque de Corneille." Information littéraire, II (1950), 43-46.
- Ault, Harold C. "The Tragic Genius of Corneille." Modern Language Review, XLV (1950), 164-176.
- Aussoleil, R. "Une Source ignorée d'Andromaque: Mélite de Corneille." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XL (1933), 237-238.
- Barnwell, H. T. "Review of The Cornelian Hero, by A. W. H. West; Corneille: His Heroes and Their Worlds, by Robert J. Nelson; Corneille et la dialectique du héros, by Serge Doubrovsky." French Studies, XIX (1965), 407-410.

- Bray, René. "Compte rendu de Les Débuts de Pierre Corneille de Louis Rivaille." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XLV (1938), 99-102.
- Caillois, Roger. "Résurrection de Corneille." Nouvelle Revue française, LI (1938), 659-665.
- Caillois, Roland. "Une éthique de la gloire: Pierre Corneille." Critique, IV (1948), 788-792.
- Castex, Pierre. "Compte rendu de Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille d'Octave Nadal." Revue des sciences humaines, LIII (1949), 47-49.
- Charlier, Gustave. "La Clef de Clitandre." Publications de l'académie royale de langue et de littérature françaises de Belgique, III (1924), 5-21.
- Couton, Georges. "Etat présent des études cornéliennes." Information littéraire, VIII (1956), 43-48.
- Droz, Edouard. "Corneille et l'Astrée." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, XVIII (1921), 161-203 and 361-387.
- Duranteau, Josane. "Corneille et les tricheurs." Critique, XV (1959) 952-958.
- Garapon, Robert. "Rotrou et Corneille." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, L (1950), 385-394.
- Gillot, Hubert. "Les Origines de l'héroïsme cornélien." Revue des cours et conférences, XXIII (1922), 629-637.
- Gross, Nathan. "Review of Corneille et la dialectique du héros, by Serge Doubrovsky." Romanic Review, LVII (1966), 132-137.
- Harvey, Lawrence E. "The Dénouement of Mélite and the Role of the Nourrice." Modern Language Notes, LXXI (1956), 200-203.
- _____. "Intellectualism in Corneille: the Symbolism of Proper Names in La Suivante." Symposium, XIII (1959), 290-293.
- _____. "The Noble and the Comic in Corneille's La Veuve." Symposium, X (1956), 291-295.
- Herval, René. "L'Eternelle Jeunesse de Corneille." Revue de l'université Laval, XI (1956-1957), 26-39.
- Hubert, J. D. "Le Réel et l'illusoire dans le théâtre de Corneille et dans celui de Rotrou." Revue des sciences humaines, XXIII (1958), 333-350.

- Knight, Roy C. "A Minimal Definition of Seventeenth-Century Tragedy." French Studies, X (1956), 297-308.
- Kuechler, Walther. "Pierre Corneille's Mélite." Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift, V (1913), 677-689.
- Lancaster, Henry Carrington. "The Dates of Corneille's Early Plays." Modern Language Notes, XXX (1915), 1-5.
- _____. "La Galerie du palais." Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (1922), 117-118.
- Lebègue, Raymond. "Corneille et le théâtre anglais." Revue d'histoire du théâtre, II (1950), 200-202.
- Legouis, Pierre. "Le Thème du rêve dans le Clitandre de Pierre Corneille et The Dreame de Donne." Revue d'histoire du théâtre, III (1951), 164-166.
- Magne, Emile. "Corneille évocateur de Paris: le Palais de Justice et la Place Royale." Mercure de France, LXI (1906), 524-547.
- May, Georges. "Sept Années d'études cornéliennes." Romanic Review, XLIII (1952), 282-292.
- Morel, Jacques. "Le Jeune Corneille et le théâtre de son temps." Information littéraire, XII (1960), 185-191.
- Nelson, Robert J. "Pierre Corneille's L'illusion comique: the Play as Magic." Modern Language Association Publications, LXXI (1956), 1127-1140.
- Peyre, Henri. "Quelques Ouvrages récents sur le XVII^e siècle." Romanic Review, XL (1949), 122-134.
- Rousseaux, André. "Corneille et le mensonge héroïque." Revue de Paris, XLIV (1937), 50-73.
- Rudmose-Brown, Thomas B. "La Galerie du Palais." Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (1922), 117-118.
- Sacy, Samuel S. de. "L'illusion comique." Mercure de France, CCCXXXII (January-April 1958), 731-736 and CCCXXXIII (May-August 1958), 147-152.
- _____. "Un Nouveau Corneille." Mercure de France, CCCIII (1948), 724-726.

Sellstrom, A. Donald. "L'illusion comique of Corneille: the Tragic Scenes of Act V." Modern Language Notes, LXXIII (1958), 421-427.

Simon, Pierre-Henri. "Le 'je ne sais quoi' devant la raison classique." Cahiers de l'association internationale des études françaises, XI (1959), 104-117.

Truchet, Jacques. "Compte rendu de Corneille et la dialectique du héros de Serge Doubrovsky." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, LXV (1965), 506-511.

Van Roosbroeck, Gustav L. "A Commonplace in Corneille's Mélite: the Madness of Eraste." Modern Philology, XVII (1919-1920), 141-149.

_____. "Corneille's Early Theories." Neophilologus, XII (1927), 166-172.

_____. "Preciosity in Corneille's Early Plays." Philological Quarterly, VI (1927), 19-31.

Varga, A. Kibédi. "La Perspective tragique: éléments pour une analyse formelle de la tragédie classique." Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, LXX (1970), 918-930.

Wang, Leonard. "The 'Tragic' Theatre of Corneille." French Review, XXV (1952), 182-191.