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Playwrights on the Threshold Between Stage and Study: paratexts and polemical texts in
seventeenth century French theater

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A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2012

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

French and Italian Studies

University of Washington

Abstract

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The seventeenth century in France was a golden age of “Neoclassical” theater, where the Dramatic Poem was subject to a two-step reception by its publics for judgment as both performance and print. While scholars have explored the rapport of theater to its abstract public, and of plays to stage and page, the articulation of a hierarchy of judgment by the public in terms of spectators and readers has remained largely underappreciated. This dissertation analyses the treatment of the Dramatic Poem’s judgment in the Theater and Study as seen in the paratextual and polemical spaces where playwrights communicate directly with their public. Based on prefaces, dedications, and related materials from over 210 plays by 70 authors from 1630 to

1680, the analysis begins by re-reading the famous Quarrel of the *Cid*. In Chapter 1, I demonstrate that Corneille departed in his management of the *Cid*'s publication from the norms of civility of a two-step reception of his work in the Theater and in the Study, elevating spectator approval in a way that invited critique from learned readers who associated legitimate judgment with Neoclassical rules in the Study. In Chapter 2, I show that Molière—*l'homme de théâtre*—chose to print his theater pieces, thus opening himself to the judgment of readers and evaluations by dramaturgical rules, but using his theatrical persona and blurring of boundaries between conventions of stage and page to *distraindre*—to distract his public through entertainment—from the role of readers as judges of his work. In Chapter 3, I show that tragic authors such as Jean Racine were working under different constraints and precedents in the relationship of their work to Stage and Study. After comparing tragedy and comedy and analyzing paratexts to tragedies from the 1640s to 1660s, I offer an interpretation of Racine's choice to re-write several prefaces to his most famous plays. Taken together, these three chapters reveal a dynamic legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* in the way that poets and publics perceive of the Dramatic Poem and its judgment in both the Theater by spectators and the Study by readers.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the support I received as the Alvord Fellow in the Humanities for 2010-2011 through the generosity of Mrs. Nancy Alvord and the late Dr. Ellsworth Alvord. In addition, I thank the Simpson Center Society of Fellows 2010-2011 as well as colleagues at the SSCFS/NASSCFL 2011 joint conference in London for the stimulating, cross-disciplinary conversations that helped advance my research that year. Many thanks to Geoff Turnovsky for his insightful reading and constructive criticisms of my work-in-progress. Finally, I offer the deepest gratitude to my husband, Mark Kamin, whose loving support has nurtured my body and soul, challenged my perceived limitations, and celebrated every small victory along the way.

Introduction

"...cette Tragicomedie aura l'approbation qu'elle merite, et qui se doit attendre en semblables Pieces, du Jugement qu'on en peut faire sur le papier, plutôt que de l'applaudissement du Theatre"

Les Cinq Auteurs, *l'Aveugle de Smyrne* (1638)

"J'en laisse le jugement aux habiles des-interessez qui l'ont veu représenter [sic], et te conseille, LECTEUR, de suspendre le tien, jusques à ce que tu l'ayes ouy par la bouche des originaux. Les Comediens y donnent des graces que tu ne sçaurois t'imaginer en le lisant, de sorte que ceux qui luy font visite dans l'Hostel de Bourgogne, l'estimeront tousjours d'avantage que les autres qui ne le cognoistront que par la lecture"

Le Vert, *Le docteur amoureux* (1638)

In the heat of the famous Querelle du *Cid*, these two very different prefatory remarks accompany printed plays into readers' hands. Both appear in 1638, the year that Jean Chapelain's *Sentiments de l'Académie Française sur la tragi-comédie du Cid* hit the press as an official response in a chain of publications sparked by Pierre Corneille's successful play and George de Scudéry's critical *Observations* in 1637. Both prefaces speak of the play in two forms—as paper to be read, and performance to be appreciated in the Theater. Both associate the reception of the work by readers and spectators with a judgment of the play's worth. But they present divided views on *which* form, reception, and judgment is the legitimate one for deciding the merit of a theater piece. The view espoused by Richelieu's cohort of 'Cinq Auteurs' (down to four without Corneille, in this case) upholds judgments made "sur le papier, plutôt que de l'applaudissement du Theatre" while the lesser-known playwright Le Vert grants superiority of judgment to spectators, encouraging readers to suspend their judgment until seeing the play performed for themselves. The tension evident between these two positions is indicative of an undercurrent running through the entire corpus of the Quarrel, where the judgments of spectators and readers are pitted against each other by opponents in the polemic. While the Querelle du *Cid*

is famous for helping codify the 'neoclassical' rules, and form a kind of 'republic of letters', little has been said about its relationship to the dual nature and reception of the Dramatic Poem as a genre, and its effect on the authorial presentations of plays to the 'public' in the decades that followed.

The fact that the quarrel comes to be articulated in terms of performance versus paper and Theater versus Study is possible, in part, because of the specificity of the genre of the Dramatic Poem as well as its context in seventeenth century France. A play, or *poème dramatique*, inherently straddles two realms—that of the written word, and that of spectacle. Unlike a novel, which is intended solely for reading, or a piece of sheet music, whose paper form only serves its performance, a play is intentionally presented to its public as both dramatic performance and dramatic text, spectacle and literary object. Theater is “un art oral *et écrit*, un art qui doit être entendu, vu *et lu*” (Biet, "C'est un scélérat qui parle" 58). Christian Biet goes so far as to argue that seventeenth century playwrights crafted their works with both spectators and readers in mind, creating different kinds of dramatic tension in the unraveling of the action for its “double réception” on stage and on the page ("C'est un scélérat qui parle" 55-70). Fascinated by the game of manipulating receptions in different forms through one text, Biet remarks:

Il m'a toujours semblé que le théâtre, art neuf du XVIIe siècle, se constituait en jouant sur ces instances, dégageant plusieurs espaces: celui du *lieu théâtral*, avec ses spectateurs incommodes, mouvants, bruyants, et qu'il faut séduire; un espace intermédiaire, l'espace des professionnels du théâtre, qui s'appuie sur la lecture du texte--publié ou non--, pour le représenter; enfin l'espace du lecteur, *le cabinet*, qui permet la pensée, l'arrêt, une autre distance, *a priori* plus doxale et plus proche de ce qu'un d'Aubignac aimerait voir au théâtre ("C'est un scélérat qui parle" 56, emphasis added).

The dramatic poem inherently belongs to two distinct spaces: the Theater and the Study. It is in these two spaces that the play is received in its two forms, and in an ordered sequence increasingly established around the time of the *Quérelle du Cid*.

While in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and again later in the eighteenth century, it is common for plays to be published without having been staged, the golden age of France's theater production in the majority of the seventeenth century sees "une inversion du système: représentation, puis publication" (Biet, "C'est un scélérat qui parle" note 2, 59). The play comes into book form having already been tried on the public: "Plus que toute autre oeuvre littéraire, une pièce de théâtre est au XVIIe siècle *éprouvée* sur le public avant de faire l'objet d'une édition" (Forestier, "Du spectacle au texte" 95). Not only does representation usually precede publication in this period, but publication usually follows representation. In the 1630s, we see a shift toward the increased publication of plays due to many factors, undoubtedly including the establishment of permanent playhouses in Paris, such as the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1629, and changes to contracts with writers that allowed them to sell their works as free agents rather than working for one troupe as a *poète-à-gages* (Forestier, "Du spectacle au texte" 85-93). The printing of plays was often avoided from the Renaissance to mid seventeenth century by troupes who wanted to retain rights to the plays that would be lost upon rendering the work public (Viala, *Naissance* 98) and by playwrights because "it diminished a writer's standing by creating an identity not based on his personal comportment" (Brown 17). This selective publication became harder to control in the 1640s when printers published dramatic editions regularly, with or without consent, "forcing aspiring playwrights to arrange for themselves the printing of their plays as a tactic to retain control over the text and to ensure that the play would be publicly associated with its proper author" (Brown 17). The moment of publication, of

transitioning a work from stage to page, was thus a fraught one that writers sought to finesse by presenting themselves and their work within a framework of social civilities and literary conventions.

The authorial presentation of a play is most directly carried out in the paratextual spaces of a printed book. It is in what Gérard Genette calls the *paratextes*, or all that accompanies a text when it becomes a book (1), that the author may comment on his *publication*, or rendering public, of the work. Including features like title pages, dedicatory letters, prefaces, illustrations, and printing privileges, the paratext serves as a ‘threshold’ between the book and the outside world, a zone of “authorial intention”, of “transition”, but also of a “transaction” (1,3).

Essentially, it is

...a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies) (2).

Part of the apparatus of social civility that would give credibility to works in the slow taming of what Adrian Johns has called the “chaotic medium” of print (*The Nature of the Book*), the paratext helps speak for the author and his work, easing the book into the hands of the public to whom it is offered. For many written works, the publication process, as we understand the term today, was synonymous with the act of *publier* or making public a piece, as understood in seventeenth century France.¹ For theater pieces, which have already been offered once to the public, the paratextual space is strategically placed between the Stage and the Study, and negotiates the passage of the play from one space of judgment to another.

¹ For an in-depth study of the terms surrounding *public* and *publication*, see Merlin chapter 1, especially p37.

The two quotes at the head of this introduction are drawn from the paratextual space where the authors frame the reception of their work in the Study with reference to its life on the Stage. Each preface is marked by “authorial intention” that strategically designates the Theater or the Study—in opposition to the other—as the legitimate place of judgment. We have seen briefly that the dual-nature of the genre and the precedent for publishing plays in this period sets the foundation for the opposing views of the two prefaces, but that alone does not account for the fact that the relationship of the Dramatic Poem to its two forms, places of reception, and moments of judgment came to be articulated in this way. The tension between the two views invites further interrogation. *What was it about this moment in 1638 that gave rise to these opposing views? How did this particular friction that surfaced in the Querelle du Cid play out in the paratextual treatments of plays in the decades that followed? What can these materials add to our understanding of the seventeenth century French concept of the Dramatic Poem and its public in the Theater and Study?*

Theater performance and publication in the age of the Querelle du Cid

Previous scholarship has provided some foundations for answering these questions. To begin, we draw from the work of historians and scholars of French theater to set the stage for the drama. Theater would come to be the hallmark entertainment of the seventeenth century in France, with the legendary names of Corneille, Molière, and Racine adorning playbills at the Parisian theaters and court festivities, and books at the *librairies*. In the early part of the century, however, theater was still evolving into the forms and prestige we associate with the great names of the neoclassical style. The seventeenth century sees what Viala calls the rise of the institution of theater (*Le Théâtre en France* 153). At the beginning of the century, theater is less esteemed than poetry or elegant prose, and there is a general reprobation of the dramatic arts and those

who practice them (153). The two most popular genres are mystery plays and farce, whose low humor is under attack from the Church and intellectuals alike (153). The establishment of permanent playhouses in Paris means that itinerant troupes may now settle in the city and draw from a variety of eager authors. In addition to the public theaters and court performances, Jesuit *collèges* perform tragedy and occasionally comedy in Latin, two to three times per year at the schools and for special occasions at court (Boysse 59, Dupont 286). Although they did not appeal to a wider public (Viala, *Le Théâtre en France* 153), the school performances represented an “engagement with the secular” (O’Malley 242) that provided students—from Corneille and Molière to the powerful Colberts, de Richelieus, Montmorencys, de la Tremouilles, etc (Rock 114-5)—a personal experience with the arts (Rock 28) and proficiency as readers and spectators (Viala, *Le Théâtre en France* 156) that undoubtedly influenced the theater public throughout the century.² Theater’s prestige would increase with a shift away from the morally and esthetically less rigorous theater of the Renaissance, to tastes that demanded more refinement. This includes an exigency for *bienséance* that would not tolerate the violence or suggestive content staged in previous decades, as well as an esthetic revolution toward the linguistic purity and classical ideal catalyzed by the poet François de Malherbe in 1630 (Gaquère 13).

The classical ideal would eventually lead theater tastes away from the twisting, romanesque plots and marvelous episodes of the Baroque, as typified by the pastorales, tragi-comédies, and tragedies of the Hôtel de Bourgogne’s Alexandre Hardy (Viala, *Le Théâtre en France* 177-8) to a more ‘regular’ and restrained esthetic. Five years before the appearance of *Le Cid*, Corneille shook the roots of the highly popular genre of tragi-comédie by making his *Clitandre* (1632) a ‘regular’ one, thus depriving the genre of its essential quality of liberty and unbridled imagination

² For more on the rapport between the Jesuit colleges and the theater, see Viala *Le Théâtre en France* 156-162, O’Malley 200-242, Rock, Scott, Dupont 285-302, Boysse, McCabe.

(181). A debate at this time between the Réguliers and Irréguliers centers on the affirmation or negation of the utility of theater, with the ‘regular’ camp affirming that theater ought to *instruire* and *plaire*, and the ‘irregulars’ upholding pleasure as the sole purpose of the dramatic arts (182). Unlike the polemic between the *anciens* and *modernes* at the end of the century, Viala points out, here both camps are on the side of Modernity rather than Antiquity: "seule la conception de l'illusion les sépare" (182). Promoting *vraisemblance* or verisimilitude as necessary to the cathartic experience of theater, Jean Chapelain's *Lettre sur la règle des vingt-quatre heures* (1630) and the 1635 *Discours de la poésie représentative* help to codify the ideal of theater that abides by the unity of time and respects *bienséance* and logical coherence of the dramatic action for the pleasure of the spectator (182). Corneille's *Cid* would come to be debated in these terms, being accused of *invraisemblance* as well as moral degradation exposed to the public by the poet's choice to follow the historical fact of a daughter marrying her father's killer over a more palatable and believable fiction.

The question of theater's influence on its public leads us to examine who the actual public was that was attending performances and buying books. Building on the monumental archival work of Henry Carrington Lancaster, John Lough makes more conservative interpretations of the scant evidence available for ascertaining the social makeup of seventeenth century theater audiences. Lough posits an audience that is mixed but by no means representative of French society as a whole. Arguing against the notion of a truly ‘popular’ element in the theater audience, Lough examines the vague sense of the word *le peuple* across a variety of texts, often contradictory in sense and ranging from the inclusion of even aristocrats in the sense of a general theater public, to the opposition of court and bourgeois spectators, to the *petit peuple* or *menu peuple* (58-73). Lough asserts that in the early part of the century the taste of the court was not

so far removed from the taste of the lower ranks represented in the theater audience, but that the theater became more refined as the tastes of society in general did, due in part to the salons.

Records from later performances, such as the 1653 Ballet du Roi as described by Loret, list categories of attendees from princes and *conseillers* to *banquiers, financiers, marchandes* (66).

Lough draws from this type of evidence, and descriptions such as that of the parterre by Pierre Mélése as including "officiers, poètes, lettrés, bourgeois, artisans, laquais" (qtd in Lough 56) that the lower classes were not represented so much as a mix of the wealthy and less wealthy.

Lough's work also points to divided opinions, echoing those seen in the opening quotations of this introduction, on the ability of the theater crowd to make a good judgment of the work. On the one hand, you have critics like d'Aubignac, who uses *le peuple* to describe "cet amas d'honnêtes gens qui s'en divertissent, et qui ne manquent ni de lumières naturelles, ni d'inclinations à la vertu, pour être touchés des beaux éclairs de la poésie et des bonnes moralités" and who do not need to be trained or educated in theater to be touched by it (*La Pratique du Theatre* qtd in Lough 67). On the other hand, *le peuple* is synonymous with la "populace" in Boileau's *Art Poétique*, "la racaille" in Sorel's *Maison des Jeux* (1642), and "le vulgaire" in Desmarets' *Visionnaires* (68), excluding the capacity for good judgment.

The reading public of plays throughout the century undoubtedly overlaps a great deal with the public present at performances. Larry F. Norman has drawn attention to the fact that readers are portrayed in Corneille's *Galerie du Palais* (1637) in a game of mirrors where spectators see themselves buying books, and readers picture themselves doing so (*Du Spectateur au Lecteur* 11). In this comedy, the young lovers from well-off families meet in the famous Parisian market place where luxury goods of assorted varieties cohabit: linens and laces, gloves, and books. This commonplace scene is captured in Corneille's play, as well as in

Abraham Bosse's engraving from around 1638 [figure A]. The fashionable shoppers frequent the various stalls to consult the merchants on the latest arrivals in gallant accessories and *nouveautés* in print. As the bookseller remarks in *La Galerie du Palais*, "la mode est à présent des pièces de Théâtre" (I:vi:138). As part of that fashion, the seventeenth century saw a variety of reading practices for theater pieces. In the dedications of plays, individuals are singled out for praise as patrons of the poets, who receive the gift of a book to enjoy in the leisure of their *cabinet*. Silent and solitary readers are also evoked in the polemical texts of the *Querelle du Cid*.³ In addition, social gatherings such as *académies* and salons are also associated with the reading and recitation of plays in their respective brands of sociability. In the all-male academies, "on discourait de vers et de prose et où on faisait jugement de tous les ouvrages qui paraissoient au jour" (Furetière, *Le Roman bourgeois* qtd in Viala, *Naissance* 17). And in the female-dominated *ruelles*, "play readings, particularly of recently successful and popular scenes, were a feature of salon life in seventeenth-century Paris" which influenced the market demand for hand-held formats of the plays (Caldicott 521).

The increasing demand for printed plays, as mentioned earlier in this introduction, means that overseeing the transition of a theater piece from performance to printed book is especially important for writers of this period. In the evolution of what Alain Viala has famously called "la naissance de l'écrivain" in his book by that title, writers had to negotiate social as well as legal and economic concerns for their appearance in print. Summarizing the practical hurdles facing playwrights, Viala says:

La situation la plus ingrate était celle des auteurs dramatiques. Les oeuvres théâtrales étaient réservées en exclusivité à la compagnie qui en assurait la création. Puis, si la

³ The most prominent references are in "Le Souhait du Cid" (159-60) and "Discours à Cliton" (244-5), which both contrast the act of reading in the Study with viewing in the Theater.

pièce était publiée, n'importe quelle troupe pouvait la jouer sans avoir à solliciter l'accord de l'auteur ni à le rétribuer. Aussi l'édition ne se faisait-elle d'ordinaire qu'après la fin de la première série de représentations. L'auteur ne pouvait donc, pendant le temps de celle-ci, faire valoir ses droits à la publication. Mais, une fois la pièce publiée, il ne touchait plus aucun droit de représentation. Or une pièce de théâtre est toujours un texte assez court et ne produit qu'un petit livre, vendu bon marché et peu payé à son auteur. De plus, les comédiens payaient les écrivains au forfait, et mal: une pièce à succès leur apportait de belles recettes, mais l'auteur n'en profitait pas (*Naissance* 98).

And if the authorized publication of a play posed these difficulties, the writers also faced the threat of pirated or unauthorized editions at home and abroad, which could not only detract from their meager earnings, but also mar their public self-representation. After all, “signer une oeuvre publiée, c'est engager une image de soi” (Viala, *Naissance* 85), an image that needs careful handling. Gregory Brown has highlighted this aspect of publication in *A Field of Honor*, saying that dedicating works to patrons gained not only monetary support, but as importantly, a public sanctioning of the printing of the work to prevent the author from seeming “dangerously self-promotional and thus jeopardizing his honorable standing among elites” (20).⁴ In his own comical way, Molière underscores the importance of the authorial self-crafting in the paratextual spaces of books when he laments that the chance to present his *Précieuses ridicules* as his *confrères* "Messieurs les Auteurs" have the custom of doing has been usurped by the pressure to print before a pirated edition reaches the market first. Corneille, Molière, and Racine all recognized the value of controlling their publication, especially of the new folio editions of collected works which were associated with the "central authorial figure whose art could be

⁴ Similarly, Adrian Johns has emphasized through the stories of Tycho Brahe and Galileo Galilei the role of networking and social integration of the author himself as a way of lending credibility to printed works (introduction, *The Nature of the Book*, especially pp 6-28).

appraised only through the reading", and at some point in their careers, would all respond to unauthorized anthologies by getting privilege for an edition of all of their plays to date (Brown 19-20).

Richelieu's influence on the theater

In addition to the major developments outlined for the genre of theater, its viewing and reading public, and its publication in the seventeenth century, we must examine the influential involvement of Cardinal Richelieu in the theater, and its particular consequences for shaping the tensions we see in the Quarrel of the *Cid*. In brief, these include his influence on the general direction of theater esthetics towards a neoclassical *vraisemblance*, the creation of the Académie Française, and intervention through that body in the quarrel. Armand Jean du Plessis had been appointed head of the Royal Council in 1624, and would fulfill the role of chief minister under Louis XIII until his death in 1642. The two major outcomes of his 18 year tenure would be to firmly establish the monarchy as to survive the minority of Louis XIV and the uprisings of the Fronde in 1648 and 1650, and to make France the dominant European power in politics and arts (Wedgwood 9). As a part of his larger political program that sought to remedy the decrepit prestige of the Crown and restore France's past greatness (43, 80), Richelieu utilized the written word and the arts. In the strenuous period of the Thirty Years War launched against Spain in May 1635, he promoted positive war stories through Renaudot's *Gazette* (75, 80) and sought to establish France as a leader of European civilization through the creation of the French Academy, French Dictionary, French Press, Jardin des Plantes, theater, opera, and commissioning of many buildings and paintings (114, 108). Personally appreciative of the arts, Richelieu had private musicians play a short concert for him each day, even on the battlefield; insisted on non-political conversation before bed; and tried his hand at writing comedies in

collaboration with Corneille (109, 110). As C.V. Wedgwood comments, his interest in the arts not as tangential, but integrated into his larger political life, greatly shaped the rapport of the arts and the French state:

He saw the arts, not as ancillary and unimportant functions of the body politic, but as essential elements of a balanced existence. Who shall say that this point of view was not a significant one in establishing what is, after all, still the dominant attitude in France? (110).

Richelieu employed the esthetic means of the theater in particular for staging public displays of royal power.

Richelieu's political use of theater would have major impacts for its development and operation as an art form on many levels. His intervention in the physical disposition of the playhouse, for one, served his political ends while promoting the esthetic ideal of *vraisemblance* and regularity that would mark the rest of the century. Richelieu's private playhouse at the Palais Cardinal represented a new "mirroring" of political hierarchy in the theater space (Murray). Inaugurated in December 1641, with a play by Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, the physical (and social) space of the theater was modified by the stage being set off and framed with curtains,⁵ and the royal couple (or Richelieu himself) seated in the center of the room (Ravel 79, 70). Echoing imagery used in the seventeenth century by writers such as La Rouchefoucauld (Burke 7-8), this seating arrangement reflects the "theater of power", as Jeffrey Ravel notes, with Richelieu and royal couple seated in center of floor, enjoying perfect perspective on stage, and others seated facing them and missing out on good view of stage, a design which would be repeated in Louis XIV's theater space with even more dramatic results

⁵ Giovanni Dotoli adds a precision that while there were curtains framing the stage, and sometimes used to conceal *compartiments* for various scenes, no front of stage curtain is confirmed until 1647, and was not used between acts until the 18th century (291, 275).

(80, 83). Moreover, this spatial choice reinforces not only political hierarchies, but also esthetic ones, privileging a conception of fictional unity and *vraisemblance* on stage:

Whereas pre-1630 theatrical space emphasized the unity of spectator and spectacle at the expense of unity of place on stage, post-1630 design rigidly separated the viewer from the theatrical tableau while insisting on the unity of the fictional theatrical space (Ravel 71).

Richelieu's promotion of certain unities was in line with a progressive move away from the profusions of Baroque esthetic and *décor à compartiments* to one place on the stage⁶ and a general favoring of regularity and the classical unities in theater, representative of an esthetic that would be at the heart of the Querelle du *Cid*.

Richelieu's political use of theater was also carried out through patronage of writers and the establishment of the French Academy. On the level of personal patronage, Richelieu worked closely with Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, and a group of 'Cinq auteurs'—Corneille, Rotrou, l'Estoile, Colletet, and Boisrobert—who produced *La comédie des Tuileries* (1638), and *L'Aveugle de Smyrne* (1638) cited at the opening of this introduction. In addition, he personally chose writers for one-time royal gratifications or annual pensions. Brown highlights the often-overlapping criteria for securing royal patronage and commercial success, where writers would try to get the cardinal's attention by gaining the approval of a provincial academy, or by staging a successful play in a public theater (12, 10):

...commercial troupes became conduits through which otherwise unheralded writers might gain direct access to the new royal patronage, if they demonstrated the right combination of commercial appeal (to satisfy the provincial troupe and its audience) and personal comportment and erudition (to satisfy the ministers)...Richelieu's ideal of a

⁶ For an exploration of this shift anchored in the works of Jean Mairet from 1622-35, see Dotoli.

writer emphasized the latter over the former, and his preference informed the creation in 1635 of the Académie Française (10-11).

The French Academy was convened to oversee the *belles lettres* in general and not the theater in particular,⁷ but prominently intervened the Quarrel of the *Cid* in 1637. Intended to rid the French language of farcical and popular elements, the French Academy held “pure classicism as a literary ideal” (Brown 11) over the more mixed forms appreciated by the theatergoers (and the actors getting good box office returns). Seeking to promote writers, and ways of writing, that were in line with a classical ideal, Richelieu’s academy pushed for a narrow definition of success based on the opinion of the few over the many. According to Jouhaud, Richelieu seemed to support

ceux qui faisaient de la reconnaissance de l'autorité des doctes en poésie la clé susceptible d'ouvrir l'accès au succès légitime. C'était le pouvoir d'un groupe qui postulait la stabilité des critères de jugement et la possibilité d'une divulgation, forcément restreinte, des 'règles de l'art' et prétendait contrôler cette divulgation. Ce contrôle rationnel de la valeur passait aussi par une définition du public des spectateurs de théâtre et l'exclusion de la 'populace' de toute capacité de jugement" (*Pouvoirs de la littérature* 295).

Richelieu’s cohort of authors gives voice to this bias in the prefatory remarks we considered, by dismissing the “applaudissement du Theatre” as insufficient proof of *L'Aveugle de Smyrne*’s merit. And in the concurrent Querelle du *Cid*, the Académie further articulates this position, speaking as the official body through which Richelieu operates his personal intervention in the

⁷ Although many other royal academies were formed under Richelieu and Louis XIV, there would never be one dedicated to theater, perhaps because, as Ravel speculates, theater is the medium whose reception is the hardest to control to the desired ends (83).

polemic.⁸ But, as we have seen in the opening quotations of this introduction, the dismissal of the Theater's judgment was not undisputed. Hence, as Jouhaud aptly remarks, "Le débat sur la question de savoir qui ou quoi garantit la valeur d'une oeuvre s'est imposé comme un des enjeux principaux de la querelle du *Cid*" (*Pouvoirs de la littérature* 295).

Stage and Study: the stakes of the Querelle du *Cid*

Others have explored these stakes in terms of the concerns articulated in the quarrel for *vraisemblance* (Viala, *Le Théâtre en France* 25-7, 182), or the tyranny of an individual being confronted by the collective republic of letters (Merlin). But there has not yet been a study dedicated to understanding first of all, why the participants in the debate took up Theater's two forms, spaces, and roles of the public as a way of articulating their differences; and secondly, how that discourse fits into a larger tradition of conventions for playwrights to communicate to their public the rapport of their work to Stage and Study. That, in essence, is the aim of this dissertation. The present study is an attempt to document and trace authorial presentations of the tensions, constraints and flexibilities of the Dramatic Poem's esthetic and critical relationship to the Stage and Study, spectators and readers in 'neoclassical' seventeenth century France. More specifically, it aims to situate key moments of tension in the careers of Corneille, Molière, and Racine in the context of other paratextual treatments of plays by contemporaries. Doing so will allow us to demonstrate a new legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* for the judgment of plays in the Theater and in the Study.

In approaching this question, which draws together considerations from many fields of research, I am building on and filling in gaps left by previous scholarship. As concerns the authors' self-presentation in paratexts, for instance, I take into account that the presentation of

⁸ For a detailed account of Richelieu's involvement in the quarrel through the academy, see Couton, *Richelieu et le théâtre*, especially pp 17-19.

one's work is almost always also presentation of oneself, so that the issue of the status of the writer is always present. However, unlike the work of Viala, Brown, and others, my focus is not so much on the evolution of the writer's place and status in society, but on the writer's perception and presentation of his dual-natured work's esthetic and critical relationship to the Stage and Study, spectators and readers. By making central the specificity of the dramatic genre, my inquiry addresses how the poet's authorial activity—a product for both the *théâtre* and *cabinet*—is portrayed in way he presents himself and his book.

Public and Publication

In addition, examining the moment of transition from stage to page entails an understanding of publication and the public in seventeenth century France. This dissertation will add new angles to previous work done on the process of the theater public being shaped by the literary activity of writers and critics. Hélène Merlin's *Public et littérature* has provided a substantial foundation for working with terms that have come to be filled with different meanings today. In the early seventeenth century, *le public* does not yet have a specifically literary or artistic sense, and the *public littéraire* is not a specified recipient of a work so much as a collective public, official space (35-6). In this context, 'publier' a manuscript means to give it to the sphere of the public and not particular, and does not include the notion of an imagined audience of reception, nor a necessary passage through printing (36, 37).

Le publier, c'est le diffuser solennellement, quel que soit son support (manuscrit, voix, scène de théâtre ou scène publique, livre imprimé...). *Le publier, c'est le rendre public, disponible pour tous. Quand un auteur "donne une oeuvre au public", ou la "fait voir au public", il la met en commun par les voies consacrées, il ne la garde pas dans son particulier. Bref, il la montre (37).*

The rendering public of a theater piece, of course, happens both on the stage and in the printed book. Especially in print, the writer must present his work within certain conventions of civility. In Merlin's analysis of the literary public as an outgrowth of the *res publica*, this means that publishing a work must navigate a tension between the *public* and *particulier*, where the individual serves the public good:

En se finalisant sur le *bien public*, le geste de publication innocente le *particulier* de toute *hybris*, de toute tyrannie, de tout coup de force illégitime sur le public. Le livre, loin de détourner le *public* à des fins particulières, loin de constituer un pur motif d'amour-propre, se révèle conforme, dans son ordre spécifique, à l'exigence générale du sacrifice du *particulier* pour le *public* (118).

But, as many writers of the period note in their dedications and prefaces, publication is inherently not selfless, and the glory received from the public approbation of his work must be framed as making of the author "un exemple dans l'ordre de cette espèce de service public spécifique constitué par le travail des lettres" (118). Merlin reads the Querelle du *Cid* in light of the friction between public and private, where Corneille's promotion of individual success over sacrifice is opposed by the Académie and others speaking on behalf of a "public good".

Using this polemic and others, Merlin demonstrates that the conception of the literary public and public opinion is forged throughout the century by literary quarrels that speak on behalf of an abstract public and judge works based on the expectations of a supposedly pre-existing public opinion, while actually shaping it in a give-and-take process. Examining the Querelle du *Cid*, Merlin approaches the issue of *vraisemblance* from the angle of its relationship to the public. Drawing from the treatment of *vraisemblance* in D'Aubignac's *Pratique du Théâtre* and Rapin's *Réflexions sur la poétique* as "l'opinion représentée" and "tout ce qui est

conforme à l'opinion du public" (278, 279), Merlin shows that the public opinion which is supposedly intact before the performance is in fact a "domestication" or mixing of views from before and after (279). The Academy condemns *Le Cid* for being contrary to public opinion, while at the same time being enjoyed by the public (279). In this contradictory move,

L'opinion condamnée est l'opinion volontariste qui renvoie au plaisir du *peuple*, c'est-à-dire à la libre puissance d'élire, d'*opiner*, que possèdent les personnes particulières dans leur rapport d'usage à l'oeuvre dramatique. Cette opinion succède à la pièce: pendant la représentation, le jugement est suspendu, *sans règles*, sans critères. La représentation pourrait donc amener à réviser une opinion antérieure" (279).

For Merlin, this public opinion of the spectators is supplanted by the abstraction of public opinion forged by the *académistes*. The 'public' evoked by the Académie, and on behalf of whom they speak, is the *peuple* placed under the authority of the *sages*, a fictive entity different from the audience watching and forming individual opinions on the piece, so that the public opinion they speak of is "extérieure au *peuple*, elle les manipule" (280, 282).⁹ One factor in this scenario that Merlin does explicitly address is that the pleasure of the people moved by the *representation* is precisely the basis for judgment which the Académie rejects in favor of its own *reading* of the play in a dispassionate setting. It is not only an abstraction of the public that the *sages* publish to readers; it is an abstraction hierarchized by the forms that the play itself takes in the Theater and Study, a point to be expanded on in chapter 1.

⁹ Furthermore, the public is a product of the process of literary activity when it is essentially created on stage and imported to the audience: "Pour être utile au public la représentation doit donc représenter sur scène l'utilité publique, c'est-à-dire représenter au *public* sa fin, son ordre, rappeler la place de chacun: au roi seul la puissance absolue, au peuple l'obéissance absolue, aux grands la soumission" (281). Mirroring the public to itself shows the collective of *particuliers* what they ought to be, and essentially makes them into a functional public by addressing them in that way.

In a similar vein, Christian Jouhaud speaks of acts of ‘making public’ "comme habités par l'idée d'un universel, le public, ou imaginant plus modestement un groupe qui en tiendrait lieu, investi d'une autorité, d'une légitimité à juger, à apprécier, à consacrer, à condamner, ou simplement à obéir" (*De la publication* 19). Behind these acts, he continues,

...se tiennent ceux qui les ont accomplis et qui ont donc réussi, en dessinant les contours de cet universel ou de ses métonymies, à *faire croire en l'existence de telles abstractions* et ont ainsi conservé à travers le temps le pouvoir, en quelque manière, de les instaurer (voire de les instituer) d'abord comme destinataires de cette publication. Et nous avec eux (19, emphasis added).

Both Merlin and Jouhaud agree that in tracing the contours of the audience they present their work to, writers give belief to the abstractions of the public they create.¹⁰ This conception of the public and public opinion as evolving in the space of literary activity is one that is crucial for explicating the relationship of the dramatic poem to its audience as spectators and readers.

One particularity of the abstraction of this rapport that has yet to be drawn out is the treatment of *le public as* spectators and readers, with different means of reception, criteria for judgment, and qualifications associated with each. Merlin's analysis of the Querelle du *Cid*, for instance, reveals the public being forged in the debates, but does not address the dual functions of the public that are articulated with regards to the dual nature of the *Cid* itself as an object to be received and judged by the public in two distinct moments and two distinct forms. When the Académie rejects the pleasure of the people moved by the representation as the basis for judgment, it opposes this mode of reception not only with an abstraction of public opinion at the

¹⁰ For an insightful case study on a publication by Fontenelle, see Claire Cazanave's chapter "Une Publication invente son public: les 'Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes'". *De la Publication: entre Renaissance Et Lumières*. Ed. Christian Jouhaud. Paris: Fayard, 2002. 267-280. Print.

Theater, but more specifically, with the trumping of spectator's voices by those of *readers*. By maintaining the specificity of the theater genre in consideration of the public, this dissertation attempts to define what has remained unarticulated in previous studies: the seventeenth century conception of the dramatic poem's relationship to its public in terms of the genre's two forms, spaces, and modes of reception. *How do playwrights present their work in relation to the Stage and Study, and help 'faire croire en l'existence de telles abstractions'?* One of the major places we can find answers is in the paratextual and polemical spaces where writers address their public and invest them with an authority articulated in terms of theater's two forms and moments of judgment.

Materials and Methods

From Genette's definition of the paratext as all that accompanies a text when it becomes a book, the paratext alone presents a variety of entry points into the abstractions of the plays and their public in this period. The present study is not by any means comprehensive in its reach, but is selective with regards to the types of paratexts examined. Other scholars have shown the importance of *didascalies*, frontispieces, typeface and punctuation, and *privilèges*, and many more have examined dedicatory letters and prefaces as ways of understanding the relationship of the playwright's craft to various aspects of the stage and page, spectators and readers.¹¹ My analysis will be largely drawn from dedicatory letters and prefatory remarks by the writers. I privilege these spaces above others for several reasons. For one, as most of my analysis covers

¹¹ For studies that work with other types of paratexts, see the following selections:

Didascalies: Biet, "C'est un scélérat qui parle"; Dotoli.

Frontispieces : Forestier, "Du spectacle au texte..."; Hawcroft; Norman, "Tragic Violence in Print..."; Zanger, "On the threshold of print and performance...".

Typeface and punctuation: Caldicott; Chartier, *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe*; Forestier, "Du spectacle au texte"; McKenzie.

Privilèges: Schapira.

Dedications and prefaces: Jouhaud, *Les pouvoirs de la littérature*; Shoemaker.

Récits de publication within paratexts and other documents: *De la Publication*. Jouhaud and Viala, eds.

the second half of the century, *didascalies* are simply not very prevalent. As for *privilèges*, they are most commonly held for all of the works that I examine in any depth, and so do not prove a distinguishing factor between them. Moreover, theater works are appreciated by theatergoers *before* the Chancellerie process, so the approval of the privilege does not carry the same weight as for other types of works. In addition, although illustrations provide fascinating entry points for analyzing the representation of spectacle on paper, they rarely appear in the first editions that I am working with, as is also the case with authorial portraits. Finally, I focus mainly on dedicatory letters and prefaces because they are spaces where the author presents his work directly and articulates his offering of the play to his public(s). It is this type of paratext that is truly 'para'—related to but not a part of the play itself—while the *didascalies* or naming of speakers, for example, are textual indications of what would be seen on stage. A dedication or preface is a separate text, guided by norms and conventions for its own genre. These norms, and the adherence to or straying from convention, speak for themselves in helping us understand the seventeenth century conception of the play as belonging to both the Theater and the Study.

Regarding the scope of materials that I have chosen to look at, I have several goals in mind. The first is to focus on the transition of the play from stage to page and spectator to reader, rather than all manifestations of the relationship between the two (for example, the transition from page to stage made by the actors, or the existence of playbills and librettos at performances). Because of this, I am using mainly paratextual materials from first editions, with the notable exception of including the revised versions of Racine's paratexts for several early plays.¹² Working with first editions generally means that there are no illustrations accompanying the works, so my analysis does not rely on visual paratexts. I should note that by choosing to

¹² Unless otherwise indicated, most paratexts cited will be from first editions, which typically did not paginate prefatory materials. In such cases, I will indicate the name of the play and type of paratext but not write 'non-paginated' for each citation.

work with the earliest editions possible, I am not privileging them as '*the original*' or most sanctioned by the author (to the contrary in some cases), but simply recognizing them as the first book forms of the play to be put in readers' hands. Some of these editions quite literary were made from stage to page (copied at performances, such as *Sganarelle*), but most, of course, went from manuscript to the printing press, with the author's intention of delivering them to the public as readers.

The second goal in selecting the corpus of my analysis is to trace the manifestations of the tension between Stage and Study throughout the century. To this end, I want to provide broad context for select moments of more in-depth analysis by grouping works by chronological period rather than by a single author's *oeuvre*. In addition, rather than analyzing all of the paratextual accompaniments to a handful of plays, I have chosen to go broad by examining the dedicatory letters and other prefatory materials for over 200 plays by more than 70 authors. This approach allows me to draw conclusions about trends and typical treatments from the period against which to set the discussion of more specific issues and strategies in the careers of Corneille, Molière, and Racine. For each chapter, I then draw on a deeper body of materials surrounding the polemics concerned.

As for the genre of theater pieces in this study, I am focusing on those generically categorized as tragedy, comedy, or tragi-comedy and that consist mainly of dialogue and action carried out by actors on stage. I am not including lyrical tragedies or opera because of their musicalization of text, which is another form to consider entirely. Moreover, such pieces are often presented more as music than literature, as is the case with Quinault's *Cadmus et Hermione* : *tragédie représentée par l'Académie royale de musique* (1673), which he refers to in the dedication as his 'concerts' and 'chansons'. I am, however, including paratexts from comedy-

ballets by Molière when they are printed as comedies authored by the poet rather than described in *relations de fêtes*. I do not insist on distinguishing the comedy-ballets of Molière from his other comedies in part because the conclusions of my analysis accommodate both forms. As for sub-genres of theater, I consider paratexts from a mixed corpus for most of my analyses. When it comes to showing Molière's difference from contemporaries, for example, I draw from paratexts to both comedies and tragedies to show in part, how Molière is forging his own way of doing paratexts as well as texts in his new brand of comedy. When it comes to Racine, however, I see that his particular relationship to the Stage and Study is largely shaped by the fact that he is primarily a writer of tragedies. Because of that, I devote a considerable part of the analysis to the difference between the comedy and tragedy when giving context to his paratextual treatments.

Overview of chapters

Working with these materials, I divide the analysis into three chapters, each centering on the stakes of the relationship of the Dramatic Poem to Theater and Study in key moments from the careers of Corneille, Molière, and Racine. In **Chapter 1**, I approach the Querelle du *Cid* from a new angle: that Corneille's management of his play's publication broke with civility toward his public in a way that would come to be articulated not only along the lines of public/particular (as Merlin has aptly shown), but also along the genre-specific lines of the play's judgment on the Stage or in the Study. To ground this observation on the 1637 quarrel in its contemporary context, I begin by laying out the typical paratextual conventions of the period, as drawn from over 70 plays by 30 different authors in the 1630s. Passing to an analysis of the Quarrel itself, I show that by pitting the judgments of the play made in the theater against those made in the study, opponents and supporters of the *Cid* draw out a tension that exists subtly in many paratexts of the period, where plays are subject to a two-step reception in their two forms

as performance and print. I argue that the publication of the polemical pamphlets and divisive paratexts at this time contributes to an abstraction of the public as divided between spectators and readers that will manifest itself throughout the rest of the century.

In **Chapter 2**, we trace the tension between the two forms of the play and two judgments of the public in the work of Molière. Considering the choice of this theater man to send his plays into the *cabinet*, and carefully oversee their representation on paper in various publishing relationships, we see that Molière finesses the two-step reception and the judgment of his theatrical works by readers by blurring the boundaries between stage and page: imbuing the printed page and his authorial persona with theatrical conventions, and bringing the judgments of the Study onto the stage. The difference of Molière's use of paratextual conventions is seen in selective comparisons drawn from a corpus of over 80 plays by 20 authors from 1660 to the year of Molière's death in 1673. In contrast to the majority of writers that follow the conventions of the two-step reception seen in the 1630s, the poet-actor pushes against the legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* by joining the two forms of the dramatic poem under his mastery and playfully distracting from the judgment of his work as a literary object.

Finally, **Chapter 3** considers the paratextual interventions of Racine in light of the legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* and the specificity of the tragic genre. I argue that the constraints and precedents for tragedy, as opposed to comedy, strongly shape the relationship of Racine's work to Stage and Study, and the evolution of his public as spectators and readers. I begin with a comparison of the two genres, followed by an examination of the paratextual corpus (more than 40 tragedies by 25 authors from 1640 to 1660) that would have shaped his public's conception of its role as judge of tragedy in the Theater and in the Study. In light of these factors, I propose that Racine's writing and re-writing of certain prefaces is an attempt to re-educate his public in

their roles as spectators and readers in order for his tragedies to pass from performance to posterity through print.

Taken together, the three chapters of this dissertation allow us to establish the origin and legacy of an under-appreciated theme in the *Querelle du Cid*: the rapport of the Dramatic Poem to its judgment in the Theater and Study. The abstraction of the public as divided between spectators and readers that is promoted through the discourse of the quarrel provides the means for understanding the tension between the two quotes at the head of this introduction, an abstraction that will continue to affect the seventeenth century conception of the rapport between a theater piece and its audience in the rest of France's golden age of theater entertainments. Moreover, we will see that the 'neoclassical' rules so strongly associated with this period and the *Querelle du Cid* will become increasingly influential in the reception of theater pieces as decades of paratextual and polemical discourse elevate a 'readerly' approach to plays, and especially tragedies. In light of this, we will demonstrate that the strategic presentations of theater works by Corneille, Molière, Racine and their contemporaries will shape and be shaped by other articulations, in paratexts and polemical texts throughout the century, of the rapport between a play and its moment and means of evaluation. These analyses will thus situate France's most beloved playwrights on the threshold between Stage and Study, drawing into sharper focus one factor in the unique moment that produced many of France's theater masterpieces.

Chapter 1: Theater and Study in the Querelle du *Cid*

Mon travail sans appuy monte sur le Théâtre,
Chacun en liberté l'y blasme ou l'idolâtre...
Corneille, *Excuse à Ariste*

At the heart of the publication that sparked the Querelle du *Cid*, the significance of these lines for the polemic that ensued has perhaps been under-appreciated for the specific terms that they introduce. What does it mean for Corneille's contemporaries that in a printed text he places his work rhetorically *on the Stage*? And that he places it there to be judged? In a period where the two-step reception of plays in the Theater and in the Study was increasingly anticipated, this poetic image, taken together with other dramatic texts and critiques circulating at the moment, offers fresh insight on the relationship between the location of literary authority in the period of the Querelle du *Cid* and the dual nature of the Dramatic Poem as both spectacle and literature. In light of contemporary paratextual treatments of plays as products for both Stage and Study, we can see that Corneille's publication of *Le Cid* in 1637 breaks with conventions of civility in a way that invites the criticisms that follow to be articulated in terms that pit the judgment of the spectator in the Theater against that of the reader in the Study.

This chapter aims to draw out the tension between Stage and Study in the Querelle du *Cid* that has not yet been sufficiently accounted for, locating its *moment déclencheur* in Corneille's management of the *Cid*'s publication, and setting the background for the future dramas to play out in the careers of Molière and Racine (to be explored in chapters 2 and 3). To explore the discourse in the Querelle du *Cid* in terms of the theater piece as a performance to be appreciated by spectators or a literary object to be evaluated by readers, we develop our analysis in four parts. First, we begin by setting the stage of contemporary treatments of Theater and Study in

paratexts before the outbreak of the polemic. Second, having gained a sense of the typical paratextual presentations of plays in the 1630s, we proceed to show how the texts preparing the entrance of Corneille's *Cid* into the Study failed to follow the conventions of civility that acknowledge the passage from stage to page as a second moment of judgment. Third, we will unpack the ramifications of Corneille's choices on the language used in the quarrel, which pits the judgment of the Theater against that of the Study, and publishes a hierarchy of judgments that prizes literary judgments over spectators' pleasure. Finally, we will briefly demonstrate the continuation of the tension between Stage and Study in the aftermath of the quarrel by examining several paratexts published in 1638 and 1639. In that way, we will establish that the Querelle does indeed articulate a tension between Theater and Study, and lay the groundwork for understanding the ramifications that continue to play out in the rest of the century, where Molière and Racine will have to respond to the expectations of spectators and readers whose ways of judging their work have incorporated the discourse on Stage and Study as articulated in the Querelle du *Cid*.

Contemporary paratexts: two-step reception in the Theater and Study

In the years immediately surrounding the body of polemical texts known as the *Querelle du Cid*, the often-formulaic prefatory materials (dedicatory epistles, prefaces, addresses to the reader, etc) reveal the ways writers carefully finesse the acceptance of their work into the space of the *cabinet*. One recurring trope in these polite discourses is the acknowledgment of the Theater and Study as two spaces associated with the play's two distinct forms and moments of judgment. Through the flattering dedications and courteous solicitations of a favorable reception of the printed play emerges the pattern of what we will call a 'two-step reception' of the dramatic poem: first in the Theater by spectators, and then in the Study by readers. Conventional

treatment of these two moments in the paratextual space involves acknowledgement of both spectators and readers as judges of the work now presented in the book, and often points to the socially fraught nature of the play's second *publication*, or public offering, in printed form. A sampling of paratexts from plays immediately preceding the Querelle du *Cid* will allow us to establish the norms that Corneille deviated from in the management of the *Cid*'s publication.

To begin, we will examine the strategies at work in the paratext of *Le Railleur, ou la Satyre du Temps* (1637) by André Mareschal.¹³ Known to us primarily through the ten plays he authored between 1630 and 1645, Mareschal presents a clear picture of his work's being offered for judgment in two forms, in the Theater and in the Study. He dedicates the play to Richelieu following its performance before him at the Théâtre du Louvre and the Palais Cardinal (Lund 13).¹⁴ At the threshold of the private Study, Mareschal, like many writers, appeals to the play's acceptance in the more public performance setting, in this case by the very individual being addressed.¹⁵ In a rhetorical dismissal of his strategy, the poet points readers (including the cardinal) to the model of judgment they should follow:

¹³ The first name of the poet is documented as Antoine or André. Although André is the more accepted form, it is hard to determine from documents which often print A. Mareschal but give his full name two ways, referring to capacities as playwright and *avocat en parlement* (Lund 1-2).

¹⁴ In the paratextual materials from our period, Richelieu represents literary judgment of an incontrovertible solidity and refinement which others should follow, as Jouhaud has discussed in *Les Pouvoirs de la Littérature*. The preface to Pichou's *La Filis de Scire* (1631) offers a passionate plea for the quality of the murdered poet's play based on the cardinal's approval:

Ce grand Cardinal, au sentiment duquel tous les nostres se doivent assujettir, ne l'a-t'il pas honorée de son assistance, et de son approbation? Et ne luy a-t'il pas de sa propre bouche donné ce glorieux eloge, que c'estoit la Pastoralle la plus juste et la mieux travaillée qu'on est encore veue? Apres un si raisonnable jugement, en peut-on faire des contraires sans violer le sens commun, ou sans se preparer à une honteuse palinodie ?

See other examples of Richelieu as Spectator in the dedications to Chapoton's *Le Véritable Coriolan* (1638), La Calprenède's *La mort des enfans d'Hérodes, ou Suite de Mariane* (1639), Regnault's *Marie Stuard* (1639), Du Ryer's *Alcionée* (1640), and Desmarest's *Roxane* (1641).

¹⁵ Often, the approval of the patron at the theater is framed in such a way as to tie his or her honor to upholding the first opinion in the second round of judgment. See, for instance, the dedications of Mairet's *Le Marc-Antoine, ou la Cléopâtre* (1637), and Du Ryer's *Lucrece* (1638).

Ce n'est pas pour me fortifier de vôtre jugement, qui s'est déclaré en faveur de cette Piece à sa première veuë, ni pour prevenir celuy de toute la France qui doit suivre legitiment le vôtre, que je publie qu'elle n'a point déplû à VOTRE EMINENCE (33).

Publishing the approval of Richelieu at the same time that he publishes the play, Mareschal establishes his success in passing the first round of judgment in the Theater. At the same time, he acknowledges that the printing of the play constitutes a second round of evaluation, which he claims not to *prevenir*, or anticipate, by prefacing his work with the favorable verdict of Richelieu as spectator. He even says that his Eminence is not obligated to give his good graces a second time: "si LE RAILLEUR s'offre pour la seconde fois à V.E. c'est pour vous rendre graces seulement de l'honneur qu'il a receu de vostre approbation, et non pas pour s'en prevaloir" (33). The title character hopes to be well-received by coming humbly to offer thanks rather than boasting in his past successes. There is no indication that the poet fears a reversal of opinion by the Cardinal, but at the same time, he prudently recognizes that the second offering of the play, now in its printed form, entails a second reception whose outcome is not decidedly determined by the first.

The paratext of *Le Railleur* expands on this point in an address "Au Lecteur". Mareschal treats the publication of his play very much as a second trial that is inseparable from the new form that his comedy has taken. Here he recognizes the effects of the passage from stage to page, where paper is insufficient to represent his comedy, and grants the power to judge to the public as readers. He appeals to those among the readers who saw it performed at the Louvre, l'Hôtel de Richelieu, or the Marais, and know "how it was received, and the reason that caused its

representation to cease”.¹⁶ His anxiety is not so much for those who watched it as those who will encounter the play for the first time in print: “Je suis bien plus en peine de sçavoir comme tu la dois recevoir, puis qu’il est vray qu’aux pieces purement Comiques, comme l’est celle-cy, le papier ôte beaucoup de leur grace...” (36). Mareschal’s concern for the reception of the *Railleur* in the Cabinet is centered on the insufficiency of the printed medium to capture the comic timing, interrupted exchanges, and physical play of the performance. Nevertheless, he says “on me surprend rarement en ce deffaut”, as evidenced by the fact that his play *Hylas* overcame the same difficulties (37), showing its worth on paper as well as in performance. He thus leaves the judgment of this piece to his Reader, promising that if its reception is favorable, he will be obliged to reveal his Masterpiece under the name of *Capitan* (37).

This gesture of self-promotion¹⁷ points to a dynamic view of the theater public as spectator-readers. Mareschal presents *Le Railleur* on paper to be judged by readers who may or may not have attended its performances. And at the same time, he promises his Reader (designated by the singular *tu*) that with a favorable reading, “tu m’obligeras à *te* faire voir de suite le Chef-d’oeuvre de mes Comedies, sous le nom du *Capitan* ou du *Fanfaron*, que j’ay tiré de Plaute et accommodé à nostre *Theatre*...” (37, emphasis added). The play adapted to the French *stage* is promised to be shown to the Reader who now judges and who will in the next cycle also watch as spectator. The choice to use one publication to make public the coming of his next play seems to be motivated by a desire to lay claim to seniority in the presentation of his *fanfaron* character. He boasts about this upcoming play as presenting a fully-developed version

¹⁶ As we were not at the performance, we do not figure in the number of those who know what caused its representation to cease. Arthur Lund, in his edition of the play, points to some suggestive lines from a female character, but we have no concrete evidence to make further hypotheses.

¹⁷ Mareschal was not the only poet to do what Bénédicte Louvat calls “publicité organisée par l’auteur lui-même” (note 19, 208); Mairet uses the preface of *Sophonisbe* to promote *Cléopâtre* (which was in the theaters at the time) and the future work *Soliman*. It may be worth noting that none of the plays lauded by the authors in these earlier prefaces turned out to be as successful as hoped.

of the character sketched out in *Le Railleur*, claiming that his captain is the first of his generation, ahead of those in Corneille's *L'illusion comique* (first performed in 1636, the same year as *Le Railleur*) and Desmaret's *Les Visionnaires* (which appeared in 1637) (37). He lays claim to this priority in order to mitigate the judgment of his *Railleur* by readers:

[pour] reparer les fautes que tu pourras reconnaître en cettuy-cy, et te porter à me les pardonner. Excuse les, afin de me donner envie de t'en montrer un meilleur, qui autrement ne paraîtra qu'afin de me vanger de ta rigueur ou de ta médisance (37).

Here Mareschal gives readers a rather colorful sketch of the effect that their response will have on a temperamental poet: either he will be pleased, obliged to continue serving them with a great desire to show a more fully developed *Capitan*, or he will attempt to justify and “avenge” himself with a play that will change their minds. Either way, it is clear that he conceives of his public as passing easily from judgment in the Theater to judgment in the Study, where spectator-readers will form opinions based on what they have seen and what they anticipate seeing on stage. In that way, while he emphasizes the impact of the paper form on the judgment of his play, he does not point to a qualitative difference in his judges in function of their role as spectators or readers. The two-step reception of the play is therefore marked as a convention demanded more by form than by a discontinuity of the public it is presented to.

The perceived continuity of the public as spectator-readers is further confirmed and nuanced by the publishing history of Mareschal's *Capitan*. In the paratext to the play, printed in 1640, spectators are cast as witnesses to verify the place of the piece amongst other written works, by virtue of its past performance. His *fanfaron* character may have preceded others on the stage, but an anonymous author beat him to the press, pre-emptively publishing *Capitan, ou du Miles Gloriosus de Plaute*. Mareschal speculates that one reason for anonymously publishing

this title is that the writer "ait voulu se servir d'un peu de bruit et de reputation, que mon Capitan a acquis *sur le Theatre*; ou essayer de faire passer l'un pour l'autre en supprimant son nom...", which led to the play becoming an "enfant abandonné" baptized in the name of Mareschal without his consent ("Au Lecteur", emphasis added). After disowning any paternity of the first printed *Capitan*, Mareschal distinguishes the fruit of his labor as *Le véritable Capitan Matamore, ou Le fanfaron, comédie représentée sur le théâtre royal du Maraiz, imitée de Plaute par A. Mareschal* (1640). Mareschal uses the fact of the play having been staged to authenticate his version as the *real* one, saying that in the above title he puts to work the "distinction de libraire... pour faire difference des pieces représentées d'avec celles qu'on appelle contrefaites, et qui n'ont jamais connu le Theatre ny l'éclat des flambeaux en plein jour". "Le VERITABLE CAPITAN", he continues, "est celle qui depuis deux ans a esté tant de fois représentée, et j'ose bien dire avec applaudissements, sur le THEATRE ROYALE du Maraiz" where his 'vivant MATAMORE' "ravit également et les Grans et le Peuple, les doctes et les ignorans". Reflecting his contemporaries' disdain for theater publications that had never seen the stage,¹⁸ Mareschal validates his version of the subject by virtue of its public performance. This practice of differentiating versions of similar subjects by reference to their performance is common in the period. We see this in another play, *Le véritable Coriolan: tragédie représentée par la Troupe royale* (1638) by Chapoton. Printed the same year as *Coriolan* by Chevreau, this play claims its status as the "real" version by referencing its representation, brought to the forefront by the subtitle of the play and also a frontispiece which shows the action of the play on the stage, with the curtains, balustrade, and perhaps spectators off to the left [figure B]. It is clear that Chapoton, like Mareschal, is appealing to the staged play, and those who saw it, to authenticate his version

¹⁸ As mentioned in the Introduction, the majority of the seventeenth century sees "une inversion du système: représentation, puis publication" (Biet, "C'est un scélérat qui parle" note 2, 59).

of the tragedy. In the case of Mareschal's *Capitan*, if the spectators are the witnesses, the Reader is the judge between the content of his play and the anonymous one: "je te laisse juger avecque liberté lesquelles de ces eaux sont les meilleures à ton goût". In this way, the public who attended the performances of the play is perceived as having had access to the authentic version of the play, and can attest to it for others, but those who encounter it only in print are not forasmuch precluded from forming their own judgment. By accepting the testimony of the Theater, judgments from the Study gain grounding for their authority.

The issues raised in Mareschal's paratexts are echoed and expanded on in others from this period. The prefatory materials to Jean Mairet's *Sophonisbe* (1635), for example, uphold a two-step reception of the play in the *théâtre* and *cabinet*. The leading dramatist at the time, and the first to have penned a purely classical tragedy with intentional observation of the three unities (Lancaster FDL17c I:1:234-5), Mairet had every confidence to hope that the approval of the *garde des sceaux* Pierre Séguier in the playhouse would be repeated in private reading. He says as much in his dedication: "Les témoignages que vous avez rendus devant quelques-uns de mes amis, que cette pièce vous avait assez contenté sur le Théâtre, me font espérer qu'elle ne vous déplaira pas dans le cabinet" (101). Clearly designating both spaces of judgment, Mairet presents the second encounter with the play as independent of previously rendered opinions:

...quelque bonheur, ou quelque applaudissement qu'ait eu cette Tragédie, qui se peut vanter d'avoir tiré des soupirs des plus grands coeurs, et des larmes des beaux yeux de France; je ne laisse pas de vous demander grâce pour elle et pour moi; ne doutant pas qu'avec les clartés d'esprit et de jugement que vous avez, *vous n'y remarquiez des défauts qui n'ont pas été découverts jusques ici*. C'est pourquoi ne trouvez pas mauvais que j'essaie en ceci de vous corrompre, afin de vous avoir plutôt en qualité de favorable

Protecteur, que de Juge équitable. J'aurais trop à craindre pour moi, si vous me vouliez faire justice, et me juger selon mes oeuvres qui n'ont rien de rare ou de bon... except being associate with your name (102, emphasis added).

Mairet's tragedy was well-received by spectators, including Séguier, but risks being judged more harshly in the light of the Study than it had been in the lime lights of the Theater. The transition from spectacle to printed book fixes the play's flaws on the page to be seen by the penetrating judgment of the Garde des Sceaux, exposing "*des défauts qui n'ont pas été découverts jusques ici*". It is not the quality of the person judging that has changed, but the form of the play and the manner of its reception which entails a different kind of judgment more prone to critique. Mairet therefore attempts to mitigate this second judgment by rhetorically positioning Séguier as Protector rather than Judge, "corrupting" him, and avoiding "equitable" treatment of his play to avoid being found lacking.

While much of the language of these dedicatory letters is formulaic, Mairet's concern with his play being judged by readers more harshly than it had been by spectators does not appear to be merely rhetorical. In the address "Au lecteur", Mairet feels the need to defend his choice to stray from history in the story he wrote, addressing two general camps of readers in his note: "les moins habiles" who will think that he has altered history without reason, and "les plus délicats" who will see, if they would like to take the trouble, the defense of his work in Aristotle (103). His defense is primarily asserted in textual terms, referring his *lecteur* to other written supports, although he makes a passing nod to spectator approval when he says that "l'expérience a montré sur le Théâtre, que je n'ai point mal fait de m'éloigner un peu de l'histoire" (104). From this we see that the judgment of the dramatic poem by the spectators is proof of a certain degree of success, but not sufficient for readers, "les plus délicats" of whom demand the reasons behind

the crafting of that which the spectator experiences and approves. Mairet's treatment of his public's criteria for judgment based on the form in which they encounter the play will be teased out in the Querelle du *Cid* two years later, where the defenses Mairet draws from Aristotle will be at the heart of the polemic at large (Forestier, *Jean Mairet* note 3, 103) and his personally vehement critique of Corneille.

Another important aspect of the two-step reception of theater pieces in the 1630s is the fraught social act of publication. In the discourse of the period, bringing a play out in print is likened to bringing a person into society; in both cases, there are norms of civility and conventions for behavior that must be observed in order to make the introduction successful. This plays out in two primary ways in paratexts. One concern is that playwrights must carefully present *themselves* as authorial figures in order to construct their writing activities as fitting into and serving polite society. A second concern is for presenting their *works* in a framework of civility, often treating their plays in a personified manner that engages the reader's sense of courtesy.

In the first case, writers try to frame their literary activity in a way that is harmonious with the qualities of a man of good social standing. The paratext to *La mort de Mitridate* (1637) by Gautier de Costes de la Calprenède provides an excellent example of this. In the presentation of his first theatrical work, the *gascon* gentleman grapples with the delicacies of presenting himself as an author, a figure who must carefully balance the interest of an individual with public service through his art (Merlin 118). Aiming to construct his public persona on his "personal comportment" (Brown 17) rather than his remunerated writings, the cadet of the Regiment des Gardes expresses his embarrassment at making his name known for verses rather than for the sword he carries. The young poet detaches himself from his work, downplaying its value and his

efforts in creating it. Although he reveals that the performance of his “little play” succeeded in pleasing the Queen to whom it is dedicated, la Calprenède insists in his *récit de publication* that it was never his intention to publish the play. He relates how he imprudently gave his manuscript to some acquaintances and two weeks later saw thirty copies of it in circulation. The present edition thus results from the work of a *valet de chambre* more concerned with his gain than the Readers' satisfaction, and who added his own mistakes to the original. He therefore requests a sort of amateur amnesty:

Cette raison m'y a obligé sans doute, et la creance que j'ay eue que vous ne traiteriez pas avec rigueur le coup d'essay d'un jeune Soldat, et que vous jugeriés avec bonté que des cadets du Regiment des Gardes, comme j'aois l'honneur d'estre pour lors, ont quelque fois d'aussi mauvaises occupations. Ces considerations ont obligé beaucoup de personnes à pardonner les defauts que vous y treuverez, et ont peut estre donné quelque estime à une chose qui n'auroit pas esté supportable, d'un homme sçavant et du mestier.

Not claiming to be “un homme sçavant et du mestier” himself, the soldier-poet says that having never hoped for glory, he won’t be upset if one disapproves publicly of a work that does not even pass for good in the eyes of its author. But even a reluctant author wants his work to be presented in the best possible light. He makes much of the faults added to his play by his absence during its printing, and the bookseller himself intervenes with an apology and list of printing mistakes. He also mentions the approval of friends, whose flatteries induced him to permit this publication, and positions a laudatory poem before his dedication to the Queen. All these paratextual interventions serve to assure the reader of the play’s merit even as they imbue the author with a noble detachment from the work as a marketplace product.¹⁹

¹⁹ It is worth noting that la Calprenède’s first play is framed in these terms, but his later plays *LeClarionte, ou le sacrifice sanglant* (1637), *Jeanne, reyne d'Angleterre* (1638), and *La mort des enfans d'Hérodes, ou Suite de*

The second kind of framework for civility evoked in the paratexts concerns the presentation and reception of the plays themselves. Many paratexts employ a personification of the play that appeals to the courtesy of the Reader by presenting the reception of the fictional work in one's Study as analogous to the hospitality one would give a visitor. For example, Mairet ends the colorful "Epistre Dedicatoire, Comique et Familier" of his *Galanteries du Duc d'Ossonne* (1636): "je finis donc après avoir conjuré de faire bonne chere à mon Duc d'Ossonne" (134). Similarly, in the more formal tone of Desfontaines'²⁰ dedication to *Eurimédon* (1637), he asks Mlle de Vertus to receive the strangers from Greece who have come to pay her homage: "je m'asseure que vous leur ferez un favorable accueil quand vous sçaurez qu'ils sont Princes" (Mary). This type of synecdochic request to welcome characters as a way of entreating favorable reception of the work as a whole is quite common, and usually puts the Reader in the position of a host receiving a guest at the recommendation of a friend, as in the above examples.²¹ Two other common forms of personification treat the play as the poet's child²² or cast the reader as a protector granting asylum to someone in need.²³ The latter is illustrated in the dedication of Charles Regnault's *Marie Stuard* (1639) to Richelieu, which personifies the play as "celle que je jette à vos piez". He speaks of his title character as being revived in the theater only to be persecuted in book form: "Ce luy est un extreme avantage," the

Mariane (1639) are presented either with no preface, or in praise of a patron with little mention of the circumstances of the writing or the author himself. The exaggerated humility seems to have been a choice to gain favorable access to the world of letters as a newcomer.

²⁰ Desfontaines was the pen name of Nicolas Mary (1610? to 1652). He would later join Molière's Illustre Theatre in 1644, as a poet and actor, composing a *turquerie* 'Perside ou la sutie d'Ibrahim' and two religious tragedies *L'illustre Olympie ou le saint Alexis* and *l'illustre Comédien ou le Martyre de saint Genest* (Niderst, *Molière* 36).

²¹ See also Mairet's *Galanteries du Duc d'Ossonne* (1636), Rotrou's *Les Sosies* (1638), Sallebray's *La Troade* (1640).

²² See Mairet's *La Silvanaire* (1631), Claveret's *L'Esprit fort* (1637), Chapoton's *Le véritable Coriolon* (1638), Mareschal's *Le Véritable Capitan* (1640), Chevreau's *L'innocent exilé* (16**), La Caze's *Cammane* (1641).

²³ See also Rotrou's *Agésilan de Colchos* (1637), Calprenède's *La mort de Mitridate* (1637), Chevreau's *La Lucesse romaine* (1637), Chaulmer's *Mort de Pompée* (1638), Desfontaines' *Orphise, ou la Beauté persécutée* (1638), Scudéry's *L'Amant Libéral* (1638), Chevreau's *L'advocé duppé* (1638), Chapoton's *Le Véritable Coriolan* (1638).

poet says, "de ce qu'apres avoir perdu le jour sur l'echafaut, vous luy voyez rendre l'honneur sur le Theatre....Vostre EMINENCE...s'est donné la peyne elle mesme d'oüyr ses adventures, et n'a pas refusé des larmes a la representation d'un sujet si tragique". However, Regnault worries that as she was unfortunate in her life, she may be unhappy here after her death:

Je voy déjà renaistre avec elle un nombre infiny d'ennemis, non pas plus forts, mais plus dangereux que les premiers; car au moins les Conseillers d'Elizabeth quelques severes qu'ils furent, examinerent son procès au paravant de la juger, mais ceux cy les plus injustes et les plus envieus de tous les Juges, la veullent condamner *sans l'avoir jamais oüye* (emphasis added).

The playwright therefore casts his *Marie Stuard* at Richelieu's feet for protection. In both of these examples, the writers inscribe the reception of their work in a larger set of social civilities, attempting to mobilize the patron's practice of politeness, extending it from persons to literary objects. Thus, as they would in the real-life situation of requesting an audience with an illustrious person, the writers are mindful of the comportments demanded of them by polite society. If the act of publishing is akin to bringing someone into society, it has to be done in a certain way in order to secure a favorable reception. Unfortunately, Corneille's presentation of his *Cid* will not make the most genteel impression amongst certain readers.

Publishing the *Cid*: Corneille's break with the civilities of Stage and Study

The contemporary paratexts reveal patterns for civil presentations of the published play that include acknowledging a two-step reception of the work by spectators and readers, and introducing the poet and play into society with the attention to social conventions for respectable comportment. It is against this backdrop of paratextual conventions that Corneille's management of the *Cid*'s publication stands out. I argue that Corneille sets up a target for

specific criticisms that follow in the *Querelle*, when he departs from the norms of civility by failing to acknowledge the passage of his play from Stage to Study as a second moment of reception.

We see this play out in three key passages. The first is in his dedication of the *Cid* to Mme de Combalet, the niece of Richelieu. In contrast to the examples of personification we have just seen, the title hero represents the play metaphorically, not as a pleasurable companion or a victim seeking protection, but as a victor whose dead body carried into battle continues to make conquests and whose name after 600 years “vient encor de triompher en France” (3). The personified *Cid* makes none of the customary gestures of humble service to his patron. As a “dead body”, the play is presented as a glorious object to behold, rather than as a servant seeking reciprocal favor. Thus, Mme de Combalet, as a model for other readers, is not being asked to accept the *Cid* into her study or grant her favorable judgment a second time, so much as to witness the effects of the glorious victor on the stage.

Following this anthropomorphic treatment of the *Cid*, the second passage that marks Corneille’s departure from the norm is his evocation of the theatergoers’ approval. Rather than appealing to the judgment of the Theater as a model for favorable reception to be repeated by *readers* in the Study, as is the norm, the playwright makes much of the applause of spectators as a mark of merit in its own right. He tells Mme de Combalet in the dedication:

Ce succès a passé mes plus ambitieuses esperances, et m'a surpris d'abord, mais il a cessé de m'estonner depuis que j'ay veu la satisfaction que vous avez témoignée, quand il a paru devant vous; alors j'ay osé me promettre de luy tout ce qui en est arrivé, et j'ay creu qu'après les éloges dont vous l'avez honoré, *cet applaudissement universel ne luy pouvoit manquer*. Et veritablement, MADAME, on ne peut douter avec raison de ce que vaut une

chose qui a le bonheur de vous plaire: *le jugement que vous en faites est la marque assurée de son prix*; et comme vous donnez tousjours liberalement aux veritables beautez l'estime qu'elles meritent, les fausses n'ont jamais le pouvoir de vous esblouir (3-4, emphasis added).

In typical fashion, Corneille refers to the superior judgment of Mme de Combalet as a model for others to follow. What is distinctive here is that he speaks of both the illustrious individual and the general public as *spectators*: her *éloges* lead the way to “cet applaudissement universel” in the *Theater*. Her judgment at the performance “est la marque assurée de son prix” and determines the value of the play in a way that does not need a second opinion from the Reader holding the book in his hands. The only mention of the Reader in this prefatory letter is when the author claims that if he hopes for the duration of the work of his pen it is not to make his name known to posterity but to leave some mark and “faire lire à ceux qui naistront dans les autres siècles” the gratitude he has to serve her (5). Although Corneille certainly gestures here to the polite deference of exalting his patron’s glory above his own, he essentially delegitimizes her role as Reader by reducing its scope to witnessing glory, reinforcing the passive relationship he established with the “dead body” of the victorious Cid. In this way, Corneille’s paratext, as a threshold to the written text, transitions the contemporary (and future) Reader from stage to page with a glance turned back to the moment of the performance even as it leads forward to the reception of the book.

On its own, the dedicatory epistle of the *Cid* is perhaps not overtly contentious or inflammatory. However, when coupled with the publication of the self-satisfied *Excuse à Ariste*, the poet invites criticism by tipping the scales out of balance in reliance on the applause of the Theater for determining his worth. In a third key passage, from the *Excuse*, published in

February or March 1637, Corneille positions the theatergoers as the legitimate judges of the play to the disregard of his readers:

Mon travail sans appuy monte sur le *Theâtre*,
 Chacun en liberté l'y blasme ou l'idolatre,
 Là sans que mes amis preschent leurs sentiments,
 J'arrache quelque fois trop d'*applaudissements*,
 Là content du succès que le *merite* donne
 Par d'illustres advis je n'éblouis personne.

The playwright puts his work on the stage to be tried, as it were, before the audience, without lawyers to persuade by their *sentiments*. The applause of the spectators is their favorable verdict echoing throughout the room, affirming the *merit* of the author. For Corneille, the judgment pronounced by the theatergoers is satisfactory proof of the play's worth; it requires no further opinion, however "illustrious". It is of no small consequence that Corneille speaks of his play's reception as occurring in the context of spectacle. The language that Corneille uses makes it clear that he envisions it in a physical space (his work steps up and takes its place on the Stage), with an unmediated relationship to the viewers¹, and their immediate, physical response of applause. And, as in his dedication above, the *prix* or value of his work as determined in the moment on the stage is what he bases the currency of his professional aptitude on, ranking himself higher than his peers. Through this poem, Corneille essentially fixes this moment in time on paper, reifying the applause as if it were an object, or an image to behold rather than an opinion subject to variation. By doing so, he once again reduces the role of readers to that of witnessing the glory of his work on the stage.

From these three examples of printed materials that circulated alongside the textual body of the *Cid*, we see that Corneille's management of the play's transition from Theater to Study broke with several conventions of civility that would have eased the entry of his triumphant warrior into the *cabinets* of patrons and poets alike. He treated his play as a victor to be admired, rather than as a guest to be received, and failed to acknowledge both the second form of his play as print, and the second moment of judgment by the readers with the book in their hands. Margitic has said of the *Excuse à Ariste*, that the cause of the great Quarrel was the triumph of *Cid*, and that the Excuse was only a pretext (174). Nonetheless, as a pretext, the *Excuse*, as well as the prefatory materials of the play, set up specific targets for opponents to attack, one of which is the legitimacy of spectator approval, or the legitimacy of judgments made in the Theater rather than in the Study.

Taken together with the paratextual accompaniments to the *Cid*, the timing of the publication of the play and poem so soon after the initial performances was problematic for its perceived civility. Unlike most plays of this period, which would be performed on stage and then printed six months to several years later, *Le Cid* hit the press precipitously early, while the play was still garnering applause at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Jouhaud calls this printing "étrangement rapide", noting that actors usually had six months at least to benefit from stage rights to the play (*Les Pouvoirs de la Littérature* 293). The first performance of the *Cid* is dated by Georges Forestier as 5 January 1637, and perhaps as early as December 1636 according to the less reliable Frères Parfaict. The play was printed 23 March 1637. Forestier offers tentative explanations for the exceptionally hasty printing²⁴ concerning money disputes with the actors and pre-emptive printing to avoid pirated editions ("Du Spectacle au texte" 91-2). Whatever the

²⁴ Forestier notes that the *Cid* remains an exception, even amongst Corneille's other publications, most of which appeared in print one to four years after their premiere ("Du Spectacle au texte" 92).

underlying reasons, Corneille's peers perceived his publication act as an affront to their expectations for civil comportment:

C'est là Monsieur mon Amy, que vous estes generalement blasmé, non d'avoir fait le Cid avec les irregularitez qu'on y remarque regulierement par tout, puis qu'on suppose que vous le l'avez pas fait par aucune malice qui fust en vous: mais seulement de *vostre indiscretion à le livrer si tost au Libraire* apres la connoissance que vos meilleurs Amis vous donnerent de ses deffauts" (Mairet, "Epistre familière" 289 emphasis added).

His rapid printing may offer insight into another facet of what Merlin views as Corneille's publication act constituting individual "tyranny" within the "republic of letters". Considering the timing of the publication and the customary acknowledgement of a play's judgment in two forms and two moments in the Theater and Study, Corneille broke with conventions of civility by essentially substituting, in print, the judgment of the theater audience for that of the readers receiving the book. His poem and paratext gave printed, textual form to the already-too-good opinion that Corneille had of himself, capturing and echoing on each page the applause of the audience of his work that was still on the boards. His fellow authors had been able to tolerate Corneille's self-importance in previous publications²⁵ because the reality had not yet lined up with it. And perhaps they had been forced to tolerate the applause he received because of its ephemeral quality (*le vent populaire*,²⁶ passing through however forcefully). But with the success of the *Cid* echoing from every theater performance, the paratexts that inscribed the Theater's judgment in the written form proper to the Study, become a too-tangible, too-permanent, self-published *éloge* that defied the conventions of polite publishing and invited a

²⁵ We have reason to believe that this poem, which was published in February or March 1637, was written several years earlier. Corneille had published a very similar poem in Latin, "Excusatio", not waiting until the success of the *Cid* to boast his own dramatic genius and place himself above his peers (Margitic, note 1, 173-4 of *Cid*).

²⁶ As it would come to be articulated in the Quarrel ('Le Jugement du Cid composé par un Bourgeois de Paris...' 239).

response in writing to counter its opinion. The indignant Scudéry would be one of the first to respond from his *cabinet*, reasserting the role of Reader as judge that had been tacitly denied by Corneille, and delegitimizing the spectator applause on which Corneille relied too heavily. The famous quarrel would thus come to be articulated in terms of the Theater versus the Study, aiming polemical texts at the targets set up in the paratexts of the *Cid*.

Stage and Study in La Querelle du *Cid*

Ignited by the publication of the *Cid* and *Excuse à Ariste*, and fueled by a violent pamphlet written by Jean Mairet and distributed by Jean Claveret,²⁷ the Querelle du *Cid* became a raging dispute between supporters and opponents of the play that would last through 1637 and into the beginning of 1638. Most all of the pamphlets and letters that appeared as part of the Querelle du *Cid* were printed and sold by *colporteurs* and *vendeurs de Gazettes* at the Pont Neuf or in front of l'Horloge du Palais (Gasté 54). Of the new pamphlets and letters that were coming out weekly, only a handful contain more precise dates than the year of publication, and so are difficult to classify chronologically with any certitude (Gasté 54). The timeline in figure C organizes the documents according to Armand Gasté's chronology, indicating which side of the polemic each piece supported as well as its known or attributed author.

The escalating debate drew many writers and patrons into the exchange. Fellow playwrights and former friends who had endorsed Corneille's comedy *La Veuve* (1634) with liminary poems, Mairet, Claveret, and Scudéry would become the primary voices against the *Cid* and Corneille himself in the course of the quarrel. After the more inflammatory pieces exchanged by Mairet and Corneille, George de Scudéry's *Observations sur le Cid* (published at author's expense in 1637) articulated the more academic critiques of the play. Scudéry's observations lay out the main objections to the *Cid*: that its subject is worthless, that it is against

²⁷ "L'auteur du vray Cid espagnol à son traducteur francoys" 17.

the “rules” of theater, that it lacks judgment in its conduct, has many “meschants vers”, and that its sole beauties are those stolen from its Spanish source text (110). He concludes from these allegations that the esteem that the author has given to himself, and that others have echoed, is illegitimate. The majority of attacks that follow, when not stooping to low blows of Corneille’s social standing or threats of physical violence, would reiterate these main critiques. Other poets and enthusiasts would throw their voice into the mix, with many anonymous friends coming to Corneille’s defense, and possibly Charles Sorel and Jean de Rotrou offering more neutral stances of reason.²⁸ It is possible that the Comte de Belin—protector of such poets as Mairet, Scarron, and Rotrou—had a hand in the assault against Corneille, but it remains unproven, and unlikely for Gasté, that he actually penned any of the pamphlets in the polemic (26-32). In addition, the young Normand poet Faucon de Ris, Sr de Charleval, was identified by M.H. Chardon as the author of *Lettre à ***sous le nom d’Ariste* based on an incident involving the threat of ‘coups de baton’ at the Jeu de Paume room at Rouen (Gasté 40-2). Finally, in the later stages of the Quarrel, Richelieu would intervene through François le Métel de Boisrobert, one of the ‘Cinq Auteurs’ in his service, and through the Académie Française, which published its opinion on the *Cid* and the *Observations* of Scudéry in 1638. Not long after, the Academician and essayist Guez de Balzac, who had not been on the committee reviewing the *Cid*, would offer his own verdict on the dispute in a letter to Scudéry.

Beginning with Scudéry’s *Observations*, the body of texts in response to Corneille’s publication of the *Cid* and *Excuse à Ariste* announces a friction between the judgments of the play made in the Theater and in the Study. To trace this tension throughout the quarrel, we will proceed thematically and roughly chronologically. First, we see that Scudéry’s initial critique of

²⁸ For more on Sorel’s and Rotrou’s involvement, see Gasté 51-53, 33-35. Other poets possibly implicated include Scarron, who may have authored the *l’Apologie pour Monsieur Mairet* from le Mans (Gasté 45-51).

the play is presented as coming from a spectator after the fact of the play's performance. This stance will incite arguments for and against the legitimacy of spectator approval, with supporters of the *Cid* upholding the judgment made in the Theater. Next, the critiques of the play will be recast as those of a Reader, who is a second and superior judge of the work in the private retreat of the Study. Finally, the official intervention of the Académie Française, and subsequent letter by Balzac, will uphold the place of judgments made from both the Theater and the Study, but marked by a tension not present in pre-quarrel treatments of the two-step reception of the dramatic poem.

Spectator judgment in question

In his *Observations*, Scudéry presents himself as a spectator who questions the judgment of the playwright and the audience in the Theater, basing his criticisms on his memory of the performance and the printed text at hand. He begins by claiming that the audience was taken in by the artifice of the play and blinded to its true worth:

Tout ce qui brille n'est pas tousjours precieux, on voit des beautez d'illusion, comme des beautez effectives, et souvent l'apparence du bien se fait prendre pour le bien mesme. Aussi ne m'estonnay-je pas beaucoup, que le peuple qui porte le jugement dans les yeux, se laisse tromper par celuy de tous les sens, le plus facile à decevoir. Mais que cette vapeur grosssiere, qui se forme dans le Parterre, ait pu s'eslever jusqu'aux Galleries, j'avoüe que ce prodigue m'estonne, et que ce n'est qu'en ce bizzare evenement que je trouve *le Cid* merveilleux (208).

Calling into play the difference between *être* and *paraître*, or being and appearing, Scudéry faults sensory, visual input with obscuring the judgment of the common mind, but also, in this “bizarre” event, that of the more elevated patrons as well. According to this initial publication,

Scudéry himself was not charmed by the spectacle; he remarked flaws in the *Cid* during its representation which he politely refrained from pointing out to his fellow *auditeurs*:

Je n'avois garde de concevoir aucune envie, pour ce qui me faisoit pitié; ny de faire voir à personne, les taches que j'appercevois en cet Ouvrage. Au contraire, comme sans vanité je suis bon et genereux, je donnois des sentiments à tout le monde, que je n'avois pas moy-mesme: je faisois croire aux autres ce que je ne croyois point du tout; et je me contentois de connoistre l'erreur sans la refuter, et la verité sans m'en rendre l'Evangeliste (209).

But provoked to defend the public good against a self-deifying tyrant, he took it upon himself to reveal the falseness of the gold that shimmered before awed audiences and humble the author of the *Cid*. In this publication, Scudéry attempts to undermine Corneille's success on the stage by responding from his Study as a spectator. Although seated in his *fauteuil* at home rather than in the playhouse, Scudéry recounts many moments of the play that were sub-par in terms of their effect on the Spectator: for instance, the boredom inflicted by hearing a character announce what the action has just shown (217), or the improbability of so many actions taking place in the time it takes to recite forty lines (221). Reliving his experience as Spectator, he divulges the opinion which he withheld in the *galleries*, seeking to correct the judgment of the Theater after the fact. The question that arises is, is that permissible? Does the jurisdiction of the audience as Spectator extend beyond the moment of the representation?

Scudéry's attack on the applauded play incites a string of defenses affirming the legitimacy of the opinion of a play rendered by the spectators at the moment of the performance. The author of the *Cid* responds to Scudéry in his *Lettre Apoligitique*, asking his rival,

Quand vous vous estes escrié ‘O raison de l’Auditeur, que faisiez-vous’, Ne vous estes-vous pas souvenu que le Cid *a esté représenté trois fois au Louvre, et deux fois à l’Hostel de Richelieu*: Quand vous avez traicté la pauvre Chimene d’impudique, de prostituée, de parricide, de monstre; Ne vous estes vous pas souvenu, que la Reyne, les Princesses, et les plus vertueuses Dames de la Cour et de Paris, *l’ont receüe et caressée* en fille d’honneur (148, emphasis added).

Here, Corneille refers to specific performances of his piece, and its reception by spectators of high social standing. It is important to observe that the author is arguing for his success based on the approval of spectators at the moment of representation. His references to the performance venues, as well as the use of the *passé composé* to recount that the highborn viewers “l’ont receüe et caressée” mark the audience’s response to the play as an event, contained in a moment, singular and yet repeated at each successful performance. The anonymous mouthpiece of the “La Voix Publique” similarly references the approval of Corneille by the audience as a *passé composé* event:

Il s’est assés rendu considerable pour nous obliger à le traiter favorablement, puis qu’il a eu l’honneur de plaire au Roy et aux grans Esprits du Royaume. Apres les Eloges qu’il a eu d’eux, ce seroit perdre le temps de faire son Apologie (152).

According to this author, Corneille’s pleasing the royal spectators at a performance, as evidenced by their “Eloges”, should suffice as proof of his merit. Scudéry should therefore leave to the author of the *Cid* “la libre jouissance de l’estime dont tout le monde *la jugé digne*” [sic] (153, emphasis added). It is understood that the judgment occurred at the time of the performance of the play, with the implication that condemning the *Cid* post-performance is an attempt to overturn the ruling that ‘tout le monde’ has already given.

Revisiting the two passages above, we must note that the evocation of the event of the performance as a moment of legitimate judgment should not be taken too abstractly, but read as anchored in specific and strategically chosen representations. The references to the Louvre and the Hôtel de Richelieu, as well as the king, queen, and ladies of the court remind us that the weight of judgment in seventeenth century France is largely distributed by social standing. In general, the event of the theater performance (whether in a public playhouse or private home) is a social event, subject to the rules of *politesse* and hierarchical deference to position and authority. The praise of the highest members of the audience counts the most: as the *Voix Publique* put it, the honor of pleasing the King and the greatest minds of the kingdom is reason enough for Corneille to be treated favorably. Furthermore, the fact that “tout le monde” at these prestigious venues has already deemed the *Cid* a success implies that the collective voice of any other audience would not carry the weight to overturn their opinion, and that the particular voice of a critic is directed not only at the play but also at the judgment of some of the highest members of society, a fact which Corneille does not want to Scudéry to forget. That said, having high-born supporters in the Theater will not exempt the *Cid* from scrutiny even on that account.

As detractors of the play’s success are quick to point out, social standing alone is not a guarantee of refined or informed taste. Claveret, for instance, says that boasting about the approval of the *galeries* is not always favorable, as these seats are “le plus souvent remplies de riches sots, et que depuis la faveur ou l’argent ont ouvert le chemin aux dignités pour en exclure le mérite, l’ignorance se couvre de toutes sortes de robes et de toutes sortes de manteaux” (“Lettre du Sieur Claveret à Monsieur de Corneille” 122). This de-legitimization of wealthy theatergoers whose appearance is not reflective of their intellectual means shows that opponents of the *Cid* have an interest in demanding more than social status for the honor of judging a

dramatic poem. I am careful to word the distinction in this way, not wanting to imply from this passage that the opponents of the *Cid* would divorce social standing from good judgment. A conservative reading is favored by other passages in the quarrel to be examined later in the chapter, as well as a similar contemporary passage in Scudéry's *Apologie du Theatre* (1639), where the author rails against ignorant young people of the court:

Lorsqu'ils se contenteront de dire qu'une pièce est belle, sans approfondir les choses, leur bonne mine, leur castor pointu, leur belle tête, leur collet de mille francs, leur manteau et leurs belles bottes feront croire qu'ils s'y connaissent (qtd in Lough 122).

However, he continues, they don't understand anything and should not be surprised if their confused attempts at learned jargon receive blank stares or mockery in return. While there are some that do know what they are talking about, "aussi faut-il qu'ils me confessent que tous ceux de leur cabale ne sont pas d'égale force en cette manière, et qu'il y en a (s'il faut ainsi dire) qui n'ont que l'épée et la cape" (qtd in Lough 122). He exhorts these people to practice "un beau silence, afin que si quelqu'un d'eux ne peut pas être habile homme, il en soit au moins le portrait" (qtd in Lough 122). It is clear that, for Scudéry, the well-positioned young people ought to possess the reason to match their rank, making them insufficient representatives of their station rather than implying that there is no link between the two.

Undergirded by the assumption that a play is judged by those who attend its performances, other arguments are made for the success of a play based on the size of the audience it draws, regardless of the social standing of its members. The author of *Le Jugement du Cid composé par un Bourgeois de Paris, Marguillier de sa Paroisse*, possibly writer Charles Sorel, claims that there is nothing more unjust than to treat a play with the most admirers as the worst play ever (230). He is speaking here of admirers as spectators, those who have seen the

play and had certain reactions to it, and spectators of diverse social rank, including ‘le peuple’ whose large numbers fill the playhouse (231). Even Corneille’s opponent in the polemic, Mairet, cheekily uses the size of the audience as an indicator of a successful work to defend the works of Claveret, who had been treated by Corneille as an emblem of mediocre writing:

Que s'il faut juger de la bonté des pieces de Theatre, par la quantité du peuple qu'elles attirent. Je suis temoin qu'elles ont tousjours autant causé de presse, que toutes celles de vostre Amy (si l'on en excepte le Cid) et par consequent qu'elles sont aussi bonnes ("Epistre familière" 303).

Whether one wishes to defend or condemn a play, it is hard to deny a certain level of success achieved by large crowds and a long run on the stage. For this reason, according to the ‘Bourgeois’, Corneille should have ignored the objections to his play and simply said, "On joue encore aujourd'huy le Cid; peuple, allons l'ouïr presenter" (231). For the ‘Bourgeois’, pleasing *le peuple* in droves is as fine a mark of success as appealing to more exclusive patrons. The fact that the play was still on the stage and drawing a crowd of admirers should have been sufficient for the author, who instead unwisely engaged in the skirmish of pens on paper that gave undue credence to the critiques from the Study.

While affirming the theater audience response as legitimate judgment of a play, the ‘Bourgeois de Paris’ offers cautions as to the nature of such judgments. For this author, the applause of the audience is an indicator of merit, but not as much merit as Corneille gives himself. “Le jugement du Cid” is intended, in part, to bring down Corneille’s vanity even while celebrating his success:

Il faut que nous confessions que cet Auteur qui ne s'attendoit pas à un si grand applaudissement, n'a peu supporter ceste haute fortune; et se sentant eslevé de terre, et

emporté sans aisles par ce *vent populaire*, n'a plus sceu ce qu'il devenoit; et est tombé lourdement quant il s'est voulu fier sur ses *forces*, en se loüant luy-mesme par une miserable lettre à Ariste, où il s'est estendu en des vanitez insupportables (239, emphasis added).

In this analogy, the great applause of the crowds was a real force that lifted the playwright to the heights of success. Corneille, however, mistook the passing “wind” of popular approval as proof of his own strength and took to flapping through the heavens without wings, destined to fall hard back to earth. He therefore exhorts Corneille to regain his proper mind in order to write more works "de pareille force", counseling him to “les faire tousjours de la sorte, pour ce qu'elles seront infailliblement couruës principalement de nous autres qui sommes du peuple, et qui aymons tout ce qui est bizarre et extraordinaire, sans nous soucier des regles d'Aristote" (240) and encouraging other writers to put their energies to earning 'un pareil applaudissement' (240). The ‘Bourgeois’ thus affirms the judgment of the spectators as legitimate for what it is—a powerful, yet passing force, derived from pleasure above all else, that should not be depended on to sustain an author, but sought out again and again. In this way, the judgment in the Theater upon the ephemeral theater event itself (rather than an enduring literary object), should not be construed as any more permanent than the form it applies to.

Casting the judgment of the Spectator in the Theater in a more dubious light, opponents of the *Cid* call into question the legitimacy of the theatergoers’ judgment by virtue of the mode of reception which enables it. The perception of illegitimacy is based in part on the affective nature of the theater event. Long before our period, and outside the corpus of the Querelle du *Cid*, it is agreed that the purpose of drama is to both please and instruct the spectator.²⁹ It is

²⁹ See Castelvetro (179), Boccaccio (162), Scaliger (169).

understood that part of this pleasure comes from engaging the viewer on an emotional level, whether this be to incite fear or pity, or some obliquely pleasurable feelings at the expense of a ridiculous person, or at the recognition of our goodness for disliking injustice (Castelvetro 183). Académicien Jean Chapelain upholds this cathartic experience of theater in his 1630 *Lettre sur la regle des vingt-quatre heures*, associating the pleasure of theater with the illusion of *vraisemblance* that should be as strong as possible in order for the purging of the passions to take place. In this tradition, then, a play that succeeds in pleasing is necessarily one that touches its audience emotionally. This means that the Spectator is in a position of aroused sentiment at the moment of judgment, a condition which may cloud his thinking. The Académie Française, in its *Sentiments...*, explains the success of the *Cid* in these terms, saying that the violent passions on stage

...ostent à tous la liberté de l'esprit, et font que les uns se plaisent à voir représenter les fautes, que les autres se plaisent à commettre. Ce sont ces puissans mouvemens, qui ont tiré des Spectateurs du *Cid* cette grand approbation, et qui doivent aussi la faire excuser l'Auteur s'est facilement rendu maistre se leur ame, apres y avoir excité le trouble et l'esmotion; leur esprit flatté par quelques endroits agreables, est devenu aisément flatteur de tout le reste, et les charmes esclatans de quelques parties leur ont donné de l'amour pour tout le corps (Chapelain 414, emphasis added).

Like a suitor, the *Cid* used its charms to beguile the audience, setting its heart aflutter with a passionate story and drawing out of its lips a flattering response. The favorable “judgment” of the audience is a compromised one, coaxed by the skills of the playwright and the trappings of the performance to ignore imperfections. It is certainly a measure of success—the success of

winning hearts—but not for as much proof of literary merit, which critics would have distinguished from emotional or visual appeal.

A major part of the spectacle, the actors are often blamed or credited for the pleasurable excitement of the theater that influences viewers in their judgment. The contemporary poet Maynard, for instance, refused to write for the stage precisely because a famous actor such as Bellerose could win approval for a poorly-written play, even from those believed to have good judgment, by the force of his delivery. As Shoemaker remarks on this passage, the problem here is spectator appreciation depending on the quality of the acting or the popularity of the actor rather than on literary merit: "Implicit in this critique is the notion of theater as a form of mass entertainment that appeals to the senses, rather than to rational judgment" (155). The mind of the audience bombarded with sensory input is "flatté par des endroits agréables", as the Académie describes it, unable to see past the trappings of the spectacle to the poetry in order to make a "proper" assessment of the play's merit. Mairet similarly evokes the role of the actors in his attack on the *Cid*. In his *Epistre familiere*, he facetiously suggests that Corneille ought to have put his genius to work in finding a way to capture in print the best parts of his play: "les gestes, le ton de voix, la bonne mine, et les beaux habits de ceux et celles qui les ont si bien représentés" (289). Corneille's continues, saying that Balzac was certainly speaking of the *Cid* when he said, "si les vers ont quelque souverain bien c'est dans sa bouche qu'ils en jouissent, qu'ils sont plus obligez à celuy qui les dit qu'à celuy qui les a faits, et bref qu'il en est le second et le meilleur pere" (289). Mairet's jab makes it clear that the successful reception of the poet's brainchild is in the hands (or mouth) of the player; the poet's contribution is overtaken by its "second father" who gives it a new life on stage through flesh and voice and movement. At first glance it may appear that Mairet would rank the contributions of the actor and visual effects

above those of the writer. But given the heated context of the quarrel, it seems wise to infer that Mairet wishes to expose the *Cid*'s little merit by claiming that the worth of the play itself is inverted, owing its beauty to the actors and the stage setting over the writing. In this light, it is by reading the text that one encounters the play with only the beauties that its 'first father', the poet, gave it and is therefore in a better position to assess the author's merit.

In the visually and emotionally stimulating realm of the Theater, the judgment of the Spectator necessarily involves pleasure incited by the performance. Good judgment is therefore distinguished by the ability to rationally identify appropriate reasons for the pleasure one feels. The Académie Française will insist on this distinction when it declares, "Nous pouvons dire tous ensemble qu'une Piece de theatre est bonne quand elle produit un *contentement raisonnable*" (360, emphasis added). As the ability to arrive at a reasoned pleasure is not universal, the author of the "Discours à Cliton" claims that the approbation of the crowd is not a trustworthy measure of success:

Je ne me laisse guere surprendre aux acclamations du peuple; et mesme je ne suy pas la voix commune des honnestes gens....Quand une piece paraist au jour, et qu'elle excite un si merueilleux applaudissement: Il est sans doute que ce grand bruit n'est qu'une seule voix qui se forme de plusieurs reduites à deux. La premiere est une doux murmure, et comme un juste concert des personnes de condition. L'autre qui s'appelle proprement Rumeur populaire, est plustost une impetuositè de langues et de mains, et un consentement indiscret qu'une approbation judicieuse. Comment qu'il arrive que ces deux voix s'accordent, et ne produisent qu'un mesme effect qui est l'estime presente que l'on donne aux bons Autheurs, et à leurs ouvrages (243).

The esteem given to good Authors is to be taken with a grain of salt firstly because it is a mélange of voices of good sense, “un juste concert de personnes de condition”, with the “Rumeur populaire” of indiscretion. He continues, saying that it is certain that the two voices of approval come from different causes, the first from the art of eloquence, and the second from the stirring of the senses: “Les sages et les polis ne donnent jamais leurs suffrages, qu'ils ne soient *persuadez et convaincus du merite de ce qui leur plaist*: les autres se laissent émouvoir indiscrettement” (244, emphasis added). It is important to note that pleasure is involved either way, but that the “sages et polis” possess the cool discretion necessary to evaluate the merit of what moves them, rather than being completely swept away in the moment. The problem lies with those who respond with the senses instead of judging with reason. Scudéry says as much in the opening lines of his *Observations* when he remarks that the people “porte le jugement dans les yeux” and are tricked by the easily-deceived sense of sight. He points to this lack of judgment again when he condemns the third act of the play,

...qui est celuy qui a fait battre des mains à tant de monde; crier miracle, à tous ceux qui ne scavent pas discerner, le bon or d'avec l'alchimie, et qui seul a fait la fausse reputation du Cid (89).

He discredits the reputation of the play on the basis that those who were moved to applause were incapable of discerning its true merit. Both of these passages point to an important consideration about the nature of spectacle itself, which deceives the senses by its artifice and moves the passions by its words and fictive story, but also its visual trappings.

Hierarchies of judgment

We have seen that the emotional impact of the spectacle produces a blinding effect, charming the eyes of the public to not see the flaws of the textual body being staged, and that

these sentiments are deemed hierarchically inferior to reasoned judgments. It is therefore not surprising that in the discourse of the quarrel we find a hierarchy of the constitutive elements of the play that ranks those which appeal to the sentiments and senses beneath those which appeal to the mind. In other words, the ‘spectacular’ effects—or those proper to the temporal and physical representation of the action through bodies, voice, movement in space—are deemed inferior to the more strictly literary elements of plot structure, character development, and poetry. This insistence on ‘readerly’ criteria for evaluating a play by what can be committed to paper rather than what brings it to life on stage follows Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which maintain that the tragic effect of a play’s action may be felt even without its being staged (56-7). Similarly, as Larry F. Norman proposes in his introductory remarks on *Du Spectateur Au Lecteur*, the contemporary critic d’Aubignac perceives the dramatic action as passing through the discourse (18), and as being as effective in imagination of a reader as in that of a spectator, provided it is represented “comme si toutes les choses se faisoient véritablement de la même façon qu’elles sont écrites” (*La Pratique du théâtre* qtd in Norman 19, emphasis added). Such a hierarchy places the abstract elements of the literary fiction above the more concrete means of its interpretation. The flesh-and-blood representation of persons and events on the stage, ‘mimesis of action’ (Viala, *Le Théâtre* 9), is accessed through the ordinary, multi-sensory means that every able-bodied person uses in the quotidian. In contrast, the elements that transfer from the staged fiction to its printed counterpart are abstract, and perceived only through the imagination. In silent reading, the senses serve only an intermediary function, accessing the story through the graphic symbols on the page which are decipherable only to the educated.

The articulation of this formal difference between the play’s literary elements and its means of interpretation is, unsurprisingly, closely associated with the quality of patrons that find them

appealing. Just as the superior elements of the dramatic poem are deemed to be abstract and immaterial, so the superior patrons are deemed to have noble qualities that rise above material concerns. The dichotomy of materiality and immateriality as a way of imagining commonness and nobility is expressed in a passage from the Jesuit François Loryot's *Les fleurs des secretz moraux* (1614):

L'âme noble est légère, immatérielle; elle n'oppose aucun obstacle au plein épanouissement des vertus qui en font leur demeure. L'âme roturière est toute matérielle; elle n'offre pas d'interstices par où les vertus puissent s'y introduire (qtd in Sutcliffe 47).

For Loryot, the very essence of nobility is fertile soul for virtue, whereas the common soul is all-consumed with the practical, leaving no room for cultivation of higher qualities or sensibilities to finer points of esthetic merit. Mairet's dedication of *la Silvanaire* (1631) employs similar language to praise the judgment of the duchess of Montmorency whose mind is "not weighed down by any kind of matter". In contrast, references to the material, and particularly, visual elements of the spectacle as *bourgeois* or attracting the middle classes will continue throughout our period. For instance, machine plays are associated with dazzled bourgeois in a 1677 letter from La Fontaine (Lough 85), and a character in Abbé Bordelon's satire "Les Coudées franches" (1712) remarked of a play about to be performed: "N'a-t-elle pas été sifflée la première fois par quelque bourgeois ou par quelques courtauds de boutique, à cause que *les acteurs n'avaient pas d'assez beaux habits...*?" (Bordelon qtd in Lough 88).

Within the Quarrel of the *Cid*, Corneille's opponents will use such language to argue that the play's beauty resides in the surface level of the spectacle, and therefore appeals only to a lower circuit of judges. The *peuple*, says Scudéry in his letter to Balzac, are incapable of perceiving the finer elements of the play : "[il] n'en peut avoir pour sa part, que les Machines et

les beaux habillemens: *le reste appartient aux esprits de la plus haute Hierarchie*" (462 emphasis added). The spectacular effects of eye-catching costumes and machinery are relegated to the common mind, whose judgment Scudéry has already located 'dans les yeux' (*Observations* 208). The "rest" of the play is appreciated only by "*esprits de la plus haute Hierarchie*", spectators defined by their sharp *minds*, who are apparently quite few in number, and find themselves surrounded by acclamations of approval that are empty of judgment. In illustration of this hierarchy, the author of the "Discours à Cliton" relates his disappointment regarding the inferior minds of his fellow *auditeurs*. Excusable to the degree that they are only at the theater to have fun, the audience members nonetheless lack the critical sense to perceive the same old reproductions of the author and actors under new costuming and are "aussi contents d'ouyr de beaux vers, et de voir faire la Beaupré ou la Devilliers, que d'admirer telle ou telle Heroine qui leur estoit promise et à laquelle il ne pensent plus" (265). Their passionate opinions, therefore, do not necessarily measure the literary force of the play:

O la bonne piece! (disent ils) les beaux vers! Les douces pensees! Les fortes passions!
 Et qu'elles ont esté bien executees par tel Acteur et par telle Actrice! Ô la chetive piece!
 (dis-je en moy mesme) je ny ay veu que deux ou trois personnages, le Poete, un
 Comedien, et une Comedienne (265).

The average theatergoer bases his or her appreciation on the apparent beauties of the language and passions and acting, while the author laments to connoisseurs and other professionals the lack of the more important congruence of the characters and the action. Following Aristotle, these seventeenth century men of letters would say that a play that moves the passions *well* does so by the force of its storytelling and not its delivery or special effects. In that way, only a viewer who is stirred by the 'right' elements of the play may judge it well.

Relocating critiques from the Theater to the Study

That said, the spectacle nature of the play holds such sway over the audience that even those with good judgment can be temporarily confused by its trappings, or at least be persuaded to refrain from critical judgment in the moment. Two authors argue that the place and mode of reception affect the quality of judgment as much as the quality of the person does. The social pressures inherent in the event of attending a performance make it difficult for a spectator to counter the general opinion of a play, and are offered as an excuse for those who would approve the play one day and condemn it the next. Along these lines, the *Souhait du Cid* grants some reason to Scudery's change of heart: " en un mot parmy les fols ont peut avec prudence faire semblant de n'estre pas sage" (159). Maxims of good conduct instruct one to admire an author whose good reputation has made him high-born friends, and to agree with exclamations of the beauty of his work. Differentiating between the play's "beautez d'illusions" and "beautez effectives", the author praises the industry of transforming an ugly monster into a perfect beauty (159) whose illusion succeeded in taking everyone in. Everyone, that is, except Scudery, who out of goodness politely agreed with their good appraisal of the play until the presumptuousness of the author

luy auroit donné la curiosité de regarder de près ce qu'il n'ait veu que de loin, et d'appeller de ses oreilles et de ses yeux à son esprit à qui le ton de la voix et le geste donnant du divertissement ne permirent pas durant le cours de l'action de juger exactement de ce qui s'y passoit, il devoit appeler de *Scuderi au theatre*, à *Scuderi en son cabinet* (159-60, emphasis added).

The "beauties of illusion" veiled the *Cid* in a pleasing appearance that "Scuderi au theatre" was complaisant enough to accept, until provoked to observe beneath the veil and judge the play's

beauty up close in the Study. Here, one critic clearly casts Scudéry's observations as being formulated in the *cabinet* after the theater experience, recalling the sensory input that had been divided from judgment in the pleasures and pressures of the moment and judging the play "up close" in the calm and privacy of his Study.

The opposition of the judgments made in the Theater and the Study call into play the difference between viewing and reading. The judgment of the play that Scudéry made in his *Observations* is presented—both in the *Souhait du Cid* and the original—as a reflection on the performed piece, recalled from memory. But what does it mean that in the Cabinet he chooses to lift the "veil" of the illusions and to "regarder de près ce qu'il n'ait veu que de loin"? Although not stated overtly at first, it is clear that Scudéry may be 'observing' from memory, but he is also working with a printed copy of the *Cid* as he writes. Attending to minute details of language, Scudéry provides his readers with full citations of offending passages "pour ne vous donner pas la peine, d'aller vous en esclaircir dans *son livre*..." (215). The *book* of the *Cid*, in addition to its performance, is treated as a reference for determining the flaws of the play, and the validity of Scudéry's observations. "On ne sait pas", says Margitic in his edition of *Le Cid*, "quel texte du *Cid* Scudéry avait sous les yeux en composant ses *Observations sur 'le Cid'*" (note 61, 214). Nonetheless, it is important for what follows in the quarrel that his critiques were based in part on the printed play.

The dichotomy between Theater and Study, viewing and reading, is reinforced in an account similar to Scudéry's in the "Discours à Cliton". Here the anonymous author explains his reluctance to grant legitimacy to even "la voix commune des honnestes gens" in the moment of the performance. Attending the *Cid* in the *loges* and the *parterre*, he witnessed the responses of the learned and ignorant, courtiers and bourgeois alike. He admits that his occasional dabbling

in poetry gave him a penchant for the playwright and his admirers, and that the “plaisir de [se] tromper [soy] mesme en une occasion qui n’importe qu’au divertissement public” (244) led him to praise the play and its author along with everyone else: “je me rends complaisant aux Joüeurs et aux Parieurs, tant pour ne paroistre de mauvaise humeur en bonne compagnie, que pour aider à faire la fortune d’un bon Comique” (244). The author’s sympathies and concerns of appearance in the social setting of the playhouse prevent him from effectively judging the play, especially one by an author “dont le merite est assés prejugué” (244). It is interesting to note that the author recounts this experience in the present tense (“je me rends complaisant...”), as though reliving a moment suspended in time when his judgment was also suspended due to the pressures on social decorum and the illusions of the spectacle. In contrast to the descriptions of spectator judgment seen earlier in this chapter which employ the *passé composé* to denote the approval of the play as an event, this passage emphasizes that the spectator’s response is not a fixed, one-time pronouncement but an opinion subject to revisitation and revision. The “occasion” of the performance being one devoted to public diversion, it is deemed inappropriate for making well-founded critical judgments of the literary value of a work. As in Scudéry’s experience, the alternative reception of the play that is more conducive to such an evaluation occurs in the *cabinet*. Like Scudéry, the author of the “Discours à Cliton” changes his mind about the *Cid* after a close examination of its written form in his private study:

C'est ainsi que je me suis comporté pour le Cid, avec le public et pour moy avec le Cid, quand je l'ay veu magnifiquement paré sur le Theatre, que je l'ay veu passer en carosse et aller au Cours, avec nos belles Dames; j'ay creu qu'il s'estoit faict des amis à la Cour, je l'ay traicté de respect, et l'ay appelle Monsieur, mais quand nous avons esté Camarades que je l'ay tenu et manié chez moy, je ne luy ay point faict de grands compliments; et ne

me souvenant plus d'aucune de ses perfections, je l'ay raillé familièrement sur tous ses deffauts (244-245) .

Away from setting of the spectacle, with its maxims and rules of polite society and the protection of powerful friends whose opinions must be respected, the printed play is treated as a familiar friend and all pretenses are forgotten. The magnificent display on the stage is replaced by the bare text which the critic holds in his hands and examines. In his *Excuse*, Corneille imagined his verses alone on stage, without the need for cabals or lawyers to speak on their behalf. But his printed play was not destined for the stage, with its ephemeral, fleeting beauties and expectations of *bienséance*; it was made for the *cabinet*. As the author of the “Discours” makes clear, the rules change when the play passes from stage to page and the judgment of the Study.

It is perhaps for this reason that Scudéry changes his rhetoric as the quarrel progresses to place more emphasis on the written form of the play that served his critiques. In his first letter to the Academy, Scudéry claims that the play has no beauty

que celle que ces agreables trompeurs qui la representatoient luy avoient prestées [sic], et...Mondory, la Villiers, et leurs compagnons n'estans pas dans *le livre*, comme sur le Theatre, *le Cid Imprimé, n'estoit plus le cid que l'on a creu voir* (215, emphasis added).

Here, Scudéry exposes the difference between the printed play and the Cid that the audience *believes* to have seen. Implied in this critique is the hierarchy of the written text over the performance of the actors; the printed play is the real thing and the performance was merely a deception, an illusion of spectacle. This privileging of the written text over the performed one stands out from the common practice in paratexts of validating a play whose title or subject had been taken up by multiple authors as the ‘real’ version by virtue of its representation at a given

place.³⁰ Instead of giving spectators the role of witnessing the 'real' version of a play, Scudéry reserves that function for readers. Seizing on the differences of form between the spectacular performance and the written text, Scudéry brings the *Cid* into the Study under new rules, new criteria for determining its merit—not those of the Spectator, but those of the Reader. It seems that Scudéry has learned from the outcry against a Spectator's critiques from the Study that the shift in location from *théâtre* to *cabinet* marks the passage from one moment of judgment to another, and from one mode of reception to another. The only way that Scudéry's critiques can gain legitimacy as judgments is to claim the form proper to the Study over the form proper to the Theater, presenting his censure as a second moment of judgment of the play as book.

Re-framed in this way, Scudéry's response is tantamount to a *revendication* of the two step-reception of the play, repossessing and reaffirming the right of the Reader to render a verdict on the play that may differ from that given by the Spectator at the performance. By reading the text closely in his Study, and printing his observations of it, he performs the judgment as Reader that was not properly accounted for by the author of the *Cid* and *Excuse à Ariste*. By subsequently claiming his legitimacy in terms that validate the printed play over the performance, Scudéry capitalizes on the imbalance left by Corneille in his paratextual treatment of the *Cid*'s transition from stage to page, where the triumphant *Cid* imposes himself to be glorified rather than tried once more. Claiming jurisdiction over the play in the *cabinet*, Scudéry makes it possible to render a legitimate second opinion of the *Cid* after the moment of the representation has passed.

Moreover, his censure no longer has to trump the acclamations of the crowded *salles*; based on a different medium, it can differ from them in criteria as well as time. Although the

³⁰ Earlier in the chapter we saw, for instance, *Le véritable Coriolan : tragédie représentée par la Troupe royale / par le Sr de Chapoton* (1638).

Deffense du Cid contends that Corneille was imitating his predecessors and peers in their desire to “contenter leurs Auditeurs et leurs Lecteurs” (123), Corneille’s mistake was to project a belief that the approval of his genius in one moment of judgment would suffice for all. But, as the honest ‘Bourgeois’ soberly judges, what pleases in a performed piece does not always pass in print: “Ces sortes de pieces qui se recitent dans les lieux publics, ne veulent pas estre considerées de si pres” (232). The setting of the Theater employs artifice that pleases from a distance but whose glittering accoutrements are not meant to be examined up close. Just as it would be crazy to use real gold on a ballet costume when fake gold looks just as good (232), so it would seem that attempting to pass off the fake gold as currency outside the Theater draws opposition. Instead of seeking more glory by printing the *Cid*, the ‘Bourgeois’ says,

[Corneille] devoit se contenter d'avoir esté si applaudy, sans souffrir que l'on l'examinast....Je ne suis point ennemy des Auteurs, au contraire je les honore tous, mais qu'ils se contentent d'estre ouïs s'ils veulent un general applaudissement, ou qu'ils pensent mieux à leurs affaires s'ils veulent estre leus (232).

The authors need to be aware of what it takes to please in both the Theater and the Study. A written work is subject to different expectations than its performed version, and its approval is more broadly and easily won when “heard” in the context of spectacle, rather than being “read”.³¹ These different ways of judging, and the tension between the approval of the Theater and that of the Study would come to a head in the later stages of the Quarrel, when the Académie

³¹ The author of the *Lettre à *** sous le nom d'Ariste* provides an example of one reader who had never seen the performance of the *Cid*, but judged its written form against the applause of the crowds:

J'advoüe que les sentimens de ses amis pour ce Poëme avoient preoccupé mon esprit devant que j'en eusse fait la lecture, je donnois quelque chose à l'approbation du peuple, encor que je le cogneusse mauvais juge: mais je m'apperceus bien-tost apres que c'estoit l'ignorance, et non pas sa beauté qui causoit son admiration (203).

Française was asked to intervene with a judgment between Corneille's *Cid* and Scudéry's *Observations*.

The Verdict of the Expert: interventions by the Académie Française and Guez de Balzac

At the behest of Richelieu, Corneille submitted his play to be evaluated by the French Academy, which was only authorized to render opinions at the request of the authors (Couton 17, Martin 45). The Commission elected to review the *Cid* consisted of two groups: Bourzais, Chapelain, and Desmarets were appointed to examine the play as a whole, while Cérisy, Gombauld, Baro and l'Estoile examined the verses in particular (Couton 18). The analysis was brought together and presented in a handwritten document to the Cardinal, who gave commentary and asked for revisions over a period of five months (18). The version of the *Sentiments* by Chapelain was eventually accepted and printed 20 December 1637, with a publication date of 1638 (18).

In its opinion on the *Cid*, the Académie Française positions itself within the tension between Theater and Study by granting separate but not equal voices to spectators and readers. Acknowledging the various voices vying for legitimacy, the Academie imagines that it has not satisfied the Author, whose faults it has marked, nor the Observateur, whose Censures have not all been approved, nor the People whose 'premiers suffrages' it has combatted (413). The illustrious body of literary professionals renders a second opinion as expert readers that undermines the approbation of the theatergoers by attending to imperfections in the play that had not interfered with spectator enjoyment of its performances. Chapelain writes that, as with music and painting, not all concerts or paintings are good, even if they please the 'vulgaire', if they do not follow the precepts of their art, and if the Experts, "qui en sont les vrais juges" do not confirm by their approval that of the multitude (360). Basing their legitimate judgment on a

'reasonable contentment' (360), the Experts of letters agree with Scudéry that the *Cid* has a bad plot line, unnecessary episodes, and a lot of bad verses (417). Nonetheless, the Academy grants that the charm of the performance is not to be entirely dismissed. After consenting to many of Scudéry's points against the *Cid*, Chapelain adds:

Neantmoins la naïveté et la vehemence de ses passions, la force et la delicatesse de plusieurs de ses pensées, et cet agrément inexplicable qui se mesle dans tous ses defaux luy ont acquis un rang considerable entre les Poëmes François de ce genre *qui ont le plus donné de satisfaction* (417, emphasis added).

The "néantmoins" in this statement marks a concession that maintains a place for judgments made by the *satisfaction* of the public through forces irreducible to scholarly formulas. This pronouncement is divided in its treatment of the printed play and the performed play, employing the present tense to concede points brought out by Scudéry, and the *passé composé* to acknowledge the historical success of the performed *Cid*. In this way, the approbation of the theater crowd is registered as part of the past-tense event of the staged representation, as a 'premier suffrage' in the two-step reception of the play. But the critiques of the play as literary object that follow from reading are imbued with an enduring superiority in the present-tense. The *Sentiments de l'Académie Française...* therefore serve to re-establish the two-step reception of the play that had been collapsed by Corneille's management of its publication, and in the process to establish a hierarchy of judgments that gives the Theater its say in the moment but the Study its voice for posterity.

It is undoubtedly for this reason that Scudéry is satisfied when the *académicien* Guez de Balzac writes to him: "Vous l'emportez dans le Cabinet, et [Corneille] a gagné au Theatre" (455). Balzac's simple statement unambiguously affirms the Academy's treatment of the two-

step reception of the play. First of all, Balzac employs the same distinction in verb tenses used to declare the two conquests. Scudéry enjoys the satisfaction of winning in the present tense: “Vous l’emportez...”. Based on a reading of the printed play and inscribed in written form, Scudéry’s observations enjoy a sort of extemporal existence in the literary present. It was and will always be possible to consult the published play in light of the *Observations* and affirm Scudéry’s critiques. Secondly, Scudéry wins “dans le Cabinet”. It is in the closed space of private reading and intellectual exchange that the “poet et guerrier” wins his battle. In contrast, Corneille “a gagné au Theatre”. His victory was an event, made up of a series of well-received performances, marked in the past tense. The battle was a public one “au Theatre”, and the public was taken captive. The two forms of the play and two places of reception are acknowledged, and the judgments made by both spectators and readers are allowed to preside in their respective spheres. In sum, Scudéry's critiques succeeded in re-imposing the second opinion of the Reader that had been unacknowledged in Corneille's paratexts and *Excuse*.

In the process, the articulation of the debate over the *Cid* in terms of Theater versus Study promoted (and published to readers) a hierarchy of judgment that values the opinion of the Reader of the literary text over the Spectator at the performance of the play. This treatment of the dramatic poem as a product for both stage and study problematizes the seemingly neutral acknowledgement of the two-step reception of the play as evident in paratexts from before the Quarrel. The introduction of the Academy's opinion in this debate gives an official valorization to the expert in the *cabinet* over the spectator in the *salle*, creating new expectations for legitimate ways of judging a play. This legitimacy granted to expert judgments made of the literary elements of a play is reinforced for readers in paratextual materials of plays immediately

following the quarrel, such as *L'Aveugle de Smyrne* (1638) and Scudéry's *Amant libéral* (1638) and *Amour tyrannique* (1639).

Paratexts in tension: the aftermath of the Quarrel

In the aftermath of the quarrel, the treatment of Stage and Study in many dramatic paratexts echoes the tension articulated in the polemic. In the case of *l'Aveugle de Smyrne*, the paratext clearly upholds the superiority of judgments made of the play as a literary object, insisting that it please as well in the *cabinet* as *sur scène*. The dedicatory letter to the Marquis de Covalin is signed by the publisher and Académicien Jean Baudoin.³² In it he states: "J'aurois fort mauvaise grace de vous offrir cette Tragi-comédie, si je ne croyois que vous n'aurez pas moins de divertissement à la *lire*, que vous en avez eu à la *voir représenter*" (emphasis added). Both modes of reception—reading and seeing—are acknowledged in this passage, and the entertainment value of the play is claimed to be equal in both print and performance. As the actors and costumes have not found their way into this printed text any more than in the *Cid*, we must deduce that Baudoin uses this rhetoric to locate the value of the play outside the spectacular elements, in the literary elements that please equally on the stage or the page. By extension, we see that he valorizes his dedicated reader, Covalin, as a man whose mind is attuned to the elements of the play conducive to getting as much pleasure from the abstract book as from the fiction in its spectacle setting.

In the address to the reader, Baudoin (presumably, although it is unsigned), leads the 'good' reader to the elements that carry over from performance to print, inviting an allegorical

³² We know that the play was first performed 22 February 1637 at the Hôtel de Richelieu, and played again 3 May 1637 at the same place, "réformée...avec cependant la même diversité de scènes que la première fois", although it is not clear exactly what was changed (Couton, *Richelieu et le theater* 33). The play's printing was ordered by Baudoin (Couton 34). He already enjoyed an established connection with Richelieu's band of authors, having published *La Comédie des Tuilleries* (1638) by Les Cinq Auteurs, and would write the prefatory materials for Boisrobert's *Les Rivaux amis* (1639).

reading of the action to come through a synopsis of the plot veiled in the guise of the Muses.

The evocation of the allegorical figures prepares the reader to approach the script inter-textually, decoding the play by reference to its participation in a larger body of classical dramatic literature.

This allegorical key to reading the play replaces a prologue that remained manuscript, which warned readers: "Cette pièce, Messieurs, mérite une attention extraordinaire parce que la perte

d'une des conceptions dont elle est remplie est capable d'empêcher l'intelligence des autres" (qtd in Couton 33). This necessity of attention to the parts to make sense of the whole is perhaps

better served by quiet reading, where one may flip back to previous scenes at one's leisure, rather than the ephemeral, action-in-time that passes quickly on the stage and cannot be recuperated. In

that way, it is perhaps not inaccurate for Baudoin to ~~locate~~ insist on the enjoyment of this

particular play in the Study, and in the textual form. Committed to paper, the *Aveugle*'s merit as

literature can be appreciated by the savvy reader. To return to the quotation from the preface

heading the introduction of this dissertation, we see in greater detail the implications of

promoting judgment of a play by reading versus viewing:

Vous le reconnoistrez LECTEUR, si vous avez la patience de le voir entierement; et pourrez juger de ce que vaut cet Ouvrage, soit par l'excellence de sa Matiere, soit par la Forme que luy ont donnée quatre celebres Esprits. Ce qui leur promet (quelque sentiment contraire que leur modestie leur fasse avoir) que cette Tragicomedie aura l'approbation qu'elle merite, et qui se doit attendre en semblables Pieces, *du Jugement qu'on en peut faire sur le papier, plutôt que de l'applaudissement du Theatre* (emphasis added).

The 'form' to be appreciated is the textual form given by its authors, and the judgment that

counts most is of that written form, "sur le papier" by the Reader, rather than the applause of the

Spectator. In this way, the prefatory materials mark out a clear position within the quarrel,

legitimizing an evaluation of the play based on its literary elements rather than its spectacular representation. The continuity of pleasure taken in the play's two forms is evidence of its judgment by those 'readerly' elements that may be preserved on paper.

For his part, Scudéry will go further in promoting the hierarchies of judgment established in the Quarrel by insisting not only on the literary criteria for judgment of a play, but more specifically on the role of literary experts in relation to the poet, stage, and study. He does this by modeling the appropriate relations of authority for literary judgment. In his dedication of *L'Amant libéral* to the Queen, Scudéry emphasizes that a poet should give place to judgments from the Study over those from the Theater. To this end, he expresses his joy that the poem "a eu l'honneur de luy plaire, toutes les fois qu'on l'a representé devant Elle", but is quick to add that his joy is not without some fear "par ce que je n'ignore point aussi, que sa bonté luy faict souvent approuver en apparence, ce que son jugement condamne en effect". Here, Scudéry essentially recasts his own experience of the *Cid* onto new players: the Queen plays the polite but judicious spectator who may voice a more critical opinion upon receiving the printed book; and Scudéry ~~yours truly~~himself models the appropriate attitude of the humble playwright, asking for either her justice or her clemency, which are equally glorious.

In the paratext to his *Amour tyrannique* (1639), Scudéry goes further still in presenting his work in light of the authority of literary experts over spectators as articulated in the quarrel. Dedicating his play to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, he posits her and her uncle Richelieu as both spectators and readers:

Après la gloire qu'il a eu d'estre representé quatre fois devant Monseigneur, et devant vous; après les choses que S.E. en a dittes en presence de toute la cour; après l'honneur qu'elle m'a fait, de vouloir avoir ce Poëme en manuscrit dans son cabinet; et après le rang

que vous luy avez donné tout haut, parmi ceux de cette nature, qu'elle ne trouve rien à désirer (NP).

The approval of these influential spectators is corroborated by the rank they give to the play as readers. Nothing remains to be desired. Yet, Scudéry chooses to go further in representing the relationships of literary authority by including in his paratext a critic who offers his observations to the judgment of the Académie Française. In lengthy discourse on the play's merit, dedicated to the Académie Française by Sillac d'Arbois, the critic begins:

Messieurs, Puis que vous estes les Juges de nos belles Lettres....Il y auroit eu de l'injustice de ne vous pas dedier cettte Critique, et de *la presumption de determiner de son prix sans vous en avoir consultez auparavant*. Nous sommes en un temps où tout le monde croit avoir le droit de juger de la Poësie, de laquelle Aristote a fait son chef-d'oeuvre; Où les ruelles des femmes sont les Tribunaux des plus beaux ouvrages; Où ce qui fut autrefois la vertu de peu de personnes, devient la maladie du peuple, et le vice de la multitude. Mais parmi tant de corruption il y a encore des lieux qui servent d'Asyles aux bonnes Lettres. Il y a des personnes de science et d'integrité; Et des Juges auxquels on peut appeller de la mauvaise opinion du vulgaire, et de la persecution des demi-sçavants (emphasis added).

This opening paragraph of the discourse reveals ~~several~~the key reasons for its existence. First, we see that Scudéry is once again setting up a situation for the judgment of his work that is analogous to that of the *Cid*. He chooses d'Arbois to play his role as censor and acts this time as playwright, modeling through both players the deference to the proper authority which Corneille failed to accept. Secondly, d'Arbois makes it clear that the proper authority is located in an exclusive circle of men of letters. *Men* of letters, as opposed to the women in the salons, who

would try works in their *ruelles* without being vested with the right to do so. And men *of letters*, as opposed to vulgar masses and *demi-sçavants* with the audacity to think that their opinion of a play might count as determining its *prix*. As a fully-savant critic who submits his work to the highest body of literary judgment, d'Arbois is assuring that Scudéry's *Tyrannical Love* will be taken seriously.

Through d'Arbois, Scudéry upholds the criteria for judgment of the play as a literary object whose merit passes through 'readerly' elements. The critique justifies the play's beauties primarily through reference to its textual form, giving a judgment of the poem's parts by criteria laid out in Aristotle: fable, moeurs, sentiments, diction (3). D'Arbois insists on the regularity of the play, calling the license taken by Alexandre Hardy in this regard "heresy" (5). While he insists that the perfection of the unities must be joined by the pity and terror of the language and action on stage to move "those who watch it" (12), d'Arbois does not forasmuch grant spectators any advantage in making judgments of the play's merit. Instead, he goes beyond Aristotle in insisting that a good play will produce the same effect on the Reader:

Il faut donc, que sans l'appareil du Theatre, sans les representations funestes, et sans le secours des Comediens, la Fable soit conduite si adroitement, et d'une constitution si pleine d'artifice, que l'on ne puisse ou l'entendre, ou la lire, qu'elle ne fasse son effet, et qu'elle n'excite la pitié et la terreur....C'est l'opinion d'Aristote, c'est ce que veut la souveraine raison, et c'est ce que les Doctes trouvent dans nostre Poëme digne de leurs applaudissemens (16).

According to this critic, the force of reason, and ancient and modern experts alike, demands that the play perform its effect in the Cabinet as well as in the Theater. Without the trappings of the theater, -all that is left for the Doctes to applaud in the performance are those abstract, 'readerly'

qualities which are preserved in print. Essentially, in this discourse, d'Arbois is reinforcing the criteria of the Study by which a play ought to be judged while distinguishing in which study that judgment is permitted to take place. By including this piece in his play's paratext, Scudéry is locating the authority to judge a literary work in the hands of an expert few, whose opinions the rest should follow.

This hierarchical classification of opinions which places readers over spectators and literary experts over all others is a direct by-product of the Querelle du *Cid* and will continue to surface in paratextual and polemical texts that circulate for consumption by seventeenth century readers and theater-goers. Ignited by Corneille's presentation of the *Cid* in print without proper acknowledgement of his Reader as judge, the resulting tension between the two forms and moments judgment of a play will shape the ways that playwrights in the following decades will present their work to their public in the strategic transitional space between the Stage and Study. Molière and Racine will inherit audiences influenced by the ways of judging promoted in the quarrel, and will each grapple with them in his own use of paratextual conventions.

Chapter 2: Blurring the Boundaries between Stage and Study: Molière's paratexts from 1660-1673

"C'est une chose étrange, qu'on imprime les Gens malgré eux. Je ne vois rien de si injuste, et je pardonnerois toute autre violence, plustost que celle-là ..."

Molière, preface to *Précieuses ridicules*

"On sçait bien que les Comedies ne sont faites que pour estre jouées..."

Molière, preface to *l'Amour médecin*

Molière's famed declarations on the place of his plays in the Theater have influenced the way that contemporaries and subsequent generations have approached his work as a writer. "...Molière conçoit la représentation comme le prolongement nécessaire du texte écrit," writes Serroy, "Homme de théâtre, il sait que l'acte théâtral n'existe que mis en scène" (14). It is clear that Molière prizes the spectacular form of the performance and resents being pressured to print. And yet, the quotations above come from prefaces in printed plays in whose publication Molière had a hand. He conceived of his writing as being destined for the stage, but also participated in the two-step public reception of his dramatic texts by spectators and readers, as seen in the 1630s. But Molière would not simply follow the conventions for offering printed plays that came out of this period. One legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* had been to distinguish the Theater from the Study as a separate, and inferior, moment of judgment based on different criteria: the pleasurable effect of the poet's craft and player's execution in the former, and the literary analysis of it with regards to dramaturgical rules in the latter. In the 1660s, Molière chooses to print. Yet as a skilled poet-actor, it seems that he does not want to present his work to his public in a way that separates the Stage and Study, submitting his plays to the harsh light of the Study to be judged by dispassionate readers using the criteria of dramaturgical rules. Instead, he wants the measure of his success in both spaces to be its ability to please. Therefore, he theatricalizes his

publication gesture and his authorial persona in a way that prioritizes the pleasure of performance over a ‘readerly’ approach weighted down by rules. He does this by blurring the boundaries of conventions associated with the realms of stage and page, appropriating both to present his work in a way that unifies rather than separates his contributions as poet and actor, and casts his public in the role of spectator even to written forms. In this way, Molière participates in the publication of his plays while downplaying the role of the reader as judging by any criteria other than the pleasure of his performance on his chosen stage.

Molière in Print: phases of publication

Molière was a man of theater, yet showed frequent concern for his work’s transition to the printed page. Unlike a Shakespeare, whose indifference to crafting an authorial persona or profiting from his published plays has been established,³³ Molière cared about and intervened often in his works’ presentation in print (Caldicott 519-523; DeJean, *The Reinvention of Obscenity*). His activity was often in response to abuses by publishers, a problem that writers increasingly faced, especially with dramatic editions, where they were forced “to arrange for themselves the printing of their plays as a tactic to retain control over the text and to ensure that the play would be publicly associated with its proper author” (Brown 17). Because of this, understanding Molière’s working relationships with his publishers should influence how much authorial control we read into his paratexts and their treatment of Stage and Study.

³³ For instance, David Kastan explains in the second chapter of *Shakespeare and the Book*, “From Quarto to Folio” (50-78), the process behind Shakespeare’s commemoration as an authorial figure in the first ‘folio’ edition of his work, not by any express wish on his part, but by the desire of his friends to see his work presented in that way:

[Shakespeare] had lived long enough to have overseen his plays and had not done anything to bring a collected volume into being. If Ben Jonson’s plan for a folio was, as seems likely, known to Shakespeare, it did not stimulate in him any ambition to become an ‘author’ like his friend. Everything suggests that Shakespeare could have said with Heywood--and more convincingly than that playwright who was regularly tempted by the promises of print--“it was never any great ambition in me, to bee in this kind Voluminously read” (53-54).

For the majority of his publications, Molière worked in a standing relationship with certain publishers who were given the privileges for whatever he produced at the time. Scholars have identified three publication phases in Molière's career. The first ran from 1660 to 1666, when he collaborated with what C.E.J. Caldicott calls a "cartel" of publishers controlling the market for new titles or *nouveautés*—Guillaume de Luyne, Claude Barbin, Charles de Sercy, Louis Billaine, Gabriel Quinet, Etienne Loyson, Thomas Jolly, and Jean Guignard—who shared printing loads to increase the volume and profitability of their work (Caldicott 524, Chartier *Publishing* 40). The nine plays published during this first phase of Molière's publications³⁴ carried privileges that were renewed in such a way as to prevent the author from regaining ownership of them before his death in 1673 (Caldicott 524). This behavior, in addition to omitting the author's name on various publications, profiting from both sides of the *guerre comique*, and making paratextual choices without Molière's consent, gives reason to conclude that the cartel had interest in markets over authors, and production over consumption (Caldicott 527-9).³⁵ This phase ended after the fraudulent publication of his complete works in 1666, when Molière repaired his relationship with Jean Ribou and gave him ten plays before his disbarment from the Communauté des Libraires at the hand of the retaliatory cartel (Caldicott 524, 525).³⁶ Then in 1670 and 1671, Molière turned to two independent booksellers, Pierre Promé and Pierre le Monnier, for the four remaining plays published during his lifetime (Chartier, *Publishing* 40),

³⁴ *L'Etourdi*, *Le Dépit amoureux*, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, *Sganarelle*, *L'Ecole des maris*, *les Facheux*, *l'Ecole des Femmes*, *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, *La Princesse d'Elide* (Caldicott note 23, 532).

³⁵ To support this claim, Caldicott details several observations about the cartel's mistreatment of Molière in what we would now call a 'breach of the publisher's code of service' to the writer: 1) the author's name does not appear on the title page for *Les Précieuses ridicules*, *Sganarelle*, *La Princesse d'Elide*. 2) there is evidence to suggest that 'guerre comique' was fuelled by publishers who freely published works from both sides: de Luyne benefitted from *Les Précieuses ridicules*, *les Facheux*, *L'ecole des maris*, *l'Ecole des femmes* as well as Poisson's *Baron de la Crasse* (1662), Donneau de Visé's *Zélinde* (1663); Charles de Sercy published *La critique de l'Ecole des femmes* as well as Boursault's *Le Portrait du peintre* (1664), and in 1670 *Elomire hypocondre* (528). Caldicott concludes that individually, these seem like lapses in judgment, but collectively they appear as indifference to the concerns of the writer (529).

³⁶ As a point of precision, Chartier credits Ribou with receiving only nine *privileges* (*Publishing* 40), perhaps not including *Tartuffe* because it was printed at the author's expense and only sold for him by Ribou.

with the cautionary wording in his privileges: "Et se vend pour l'auteur à Paris chez [name of printer]" (Caldicott 525). Each of these phases entailed varying levels of involvement, control, and frustration by Molière over the process of publishing his plays.

For this reason, Caldicott cautions against taking Molière's expressed desire for his works to remain on the stage as an indication of apathy for the publication process. On the contrary, Caldicott asserts, there is reason to believe that even Molière, who wrote in the preface to *l'Amour médecin* that "les comédies ne sont faites que pour être jouées," had frequent concerns for accurate printing (522) that occupied his time away from the stage, and surfaced in complaints in *les Précieuses ridicules*, *l'Ecole des maris*, *Le Sicilien*, and *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (523). Joan DeJean would ascribe even more intentionality to Molière's interventions, reading his publication activities—endorsed or merely uncontested—as creating for himself a name as an *author* rather than solely an *homme de théâtre* (*Reinvention of Obscenity* chapter 3, especially 109-110). What is clear is that in the case of Molière, the fact that this man of theater chooses to print while also pronouncing theories that emphasize the theatricality of his work warrants a deeper exploration of his treatment of the publication gesture and of his authorial persona, particularly through his use of paratextual conventions in cases where he exercised more authorial control. To do so, we will proceed chronologically through various moments in his career, and counter-examples from contemporaries, that give shape to Molière's publication practice as an *homme de théâtre* in an age that expected a conventional two-step reception of theater pieces as performance and literary object. Through this analysis, we will see that Molière re-writes the boundaries between performance and print in the way that he appropriates conventions of both theater and paratext to theatricalize his authorial persona and emphasize the proper approach to his work in the spirit of the Theater.

***Précieuses* and Pirates: stealing the *écrivain* out of the Theater**

The curtain goes up: it is 1660 and Molière is enjoying rising recognition and success as the writer and actor of *L'Etourdi* and *Le Dépit Amoureux*, first performed in Paris at the Petit-Bourbon in November 1658 and June 1659 respectively. His latest play, *Les Précieuses ridicules* has been warmly welcomed since its opening in November 1659, and the enthusiasm for its performances has made it a desired commodity for the *nouveautés* publication market. Molière finds himself in the position of pre-empting an unauthorized publication of his play, hastily sending his *Précieuses* into print before someone else does. The story goes that writer Antoine Somaize obtained a privilege to cover his never-staged *Les Véritables Précieuses* along with Molière's play. He was ready to print it through Jean Ribou when publisher Guillaume de Luynes warned Molière and urged him to print the play first (Niderst 96-98). It is a necessity which Molière deems a great injustice: "C'est une chose étrange, qu'on imprime les Gens malgré eux. Je ne vois rien de si injuste, et je pardonnerois toute autre violence, plustost que celle-là" (*Œuvres I* 11), he complains in the preface to his play. Polite protestation of the demand to send works from stage to page is a common trope,³⁷ but Molière's discontentment seems to be more pointedly against the transition from performance to print. To this end, he assures us:

Ce n'est pas que je veuille faire icy l'auteur modeste, et mépriser par honneur ma Comedie. J'offenserois mal à propos tout Paris, si je l'accusois d'avoir pû applaudir à une sottise; comme le public est le Juge absolu de ces sortes d'ouvrages, il y auroit de l'impertinence à moy de le démentir, et quand j'aurois eu la plus mauvaise opinion du monde de mes *Précieuses Rigidules*, avant leur representation, je dois croire maintenant,

³⁷ Although not as common in the 1660s as in previous decades, Molière and his readers would have been familiar with such claims, as seen in the following paratexts: Le Vert's *Le docteur amoureux* (1638), Guérin de Bouscal's *La mort de Brute et de Porcie* (1637), La Calprenède's *La mort de Mitridate* (1637), and Scudéry's *L'Amour tyrannique* (1639).

qu'elles valent quelque chose, puisque tant de gens ensemble en ont dit du bien: mais comme une grande partie des graces, qu'on y a trouvées, dépendent de l'action, et du ton de voix, il m'importoit, qu'on ne les dépoüillast pas de ces ornemens, et je trouvois que le succès, qu'elles avoient eu dans la representation, estoit assez beau, pour en demeurer là. J'avois résolu, dis-je, de ne les faire voir qu'à la chandelle, pour ne point donner lieu à quelqu'un de dire le Proverbe; et je ne voulois pas qu'elle sautassent du Theatre de Bourbon, dans la Galerie du Palais. Cependant je n'ay pû l'éviter, et je suis tombé dans la disgrâce de voir une copie dérobée de ma piece entre les mains des Libraires, accompagnée d'un Privilege obtenu par surprise. J'ay eu beau crier, ô temps! Ô moeurs! On m'a fait voir une nécessité pour moy d'estre imprimé, ou d'avoir un procès; et le dernier mal est encore pire... (*Oeuvres I* 11-12).

If we are to take Molière at (pre)face value, he has fundamental concerns with the passage of his work from performance to print, which would lead him to keep his work in the realm of the Stage and the candle-lit moment of representation, rather than bringing it into the Study as a literary object, a commodity sold at the Galérie du Palais. Molière does not wish to follow the expected two-step presentation of his work to spectators in the *salle* and then readers in the *cabinet*. He suggests instead that the glory of success from pleasing the theater public is enough and can stay in the realm of the Theater: “le succès, qu'elles avoient eu dans la representation, estoit assez beau, pour en demeurer là”. Indeed, Molière wishes for his dramatic poems to stay in the jurisdiction of the spectators, “comme le public est le Juge absolu de ces sortes d'ouvrages”.

Molière’s discontentment with the necessity to send his play into the Study stems from the fact that entering the *cabinet* conventionally means leaving the realm of the *théâtre*. The passage from Stage to Study as it is typically practiced limits his means of representation of the

play itself, and his means of self-representation in the paratext that accompanies it as a book.

The first concern centers on the reduced form that the play is forced to take on paper. As

Molière says, “une grande partie des graces, qu'on y a trouvées, dépendent de l'action, et du ton de voix, [et] il m'importoit, qu'on ne les dépouïllast pas de ces ornemens”. It matters to the playwright that his work not be stripped of half the beauties he intended for its representation.

More abstractly, Molière’s uneasiness may stem, as Abby Zanger proposes, from the fixed nature of the printed word in comparison to the lively, in-the-moment event of the performance. Zanger contends in her article “Paralyzing Performance: sacrificing theater on the altar of publication”, that the written word in early modern France was associated with a precision, “a precise field of data” (170), of which Molière was wary:

Moliere did not want his work to make the transition from stage to press, from muted light to precision, because it had been well received by his public in the flickering arena of the stage, and the violent precision of the published page would be too harsh an exposure (177).

This trope of fearing harsher critique by readers than by spectators is a common one in our period, due large in part, undoubtedly, to the formal limits imposed by transition of plays from spectacle to book.³⁸ The precision of the printed medium comes at the expense of the beauties that set the dramatic arts apart from pure literature. Not only does the precision of the written word invite judgment of the verses as literary objects apart from their means of theatrical interpretation, it also preserves the textual elements of the play in a way that valorizes the

³⁸ The judgment of readers is often portrayed in seventeenth century paratexts as being more exacting than that of spectators, a trope that supports Zanger's notion of the written word being associated with precision. On the general harshness of readers over spectators, see for example, Jean Mairet's *Sophonisbe* (1635) and *Sidonie* (1643), Du Ryer's *Alcionée* (1640), and Chevalier's *Les barbons amoureux et rivaux de leurs fils* (1663) and *Le pédagogue amoureux* (1665). On the formal difference that contributes to this harshness, see Mareschal's *Le Railleur ou la Satyre du Temps* (1637), and Donneau de Visé's *Le gentilhomme guespin* (1670).

abstract fiction above the physical, in-the-moment representation of it. Rather than exposing his bare verses to judgment for the possibility of success in the Study, the poet-actor would content himself, at least he claims, with its reception in its fleshed-out, dramatized form.

Entering the Study also imposes limits on Molière's self-representation. The conventional forms given to authorial paratexts accompanying books into the Study provide a strategic place for establishing a certain kind of rapport with one's public. If he had been consulted, he says, he would have taken more care to present his work the way his *confrères* "Messieurs les Auteurs" have custom of doing. In addition to finding some great lord whose generosity to tempt with a flowery dedication, he mocks,

J'aurois tasché de faire une belle et docte Preface, et je ne manque point de Livres, qui m'auroient fourny tout ce qu'on peut dire de sçavant sur la Tragedie, et la Comedie;

Etymologie de toutes deux, leur origine, leur definition, et le reste.

Furthermore, he would have spoken to friends, who would not have refused him some verses to recommend his play in French or Latin or even in Greek, which is "d'une merveilleuse efficace à la teste d'un Livre". But, without the luxury of authorly preparations, Molière sighs: "on me met au jour, sans me donner le loisir de me reconnoître". Zanger is right to say that after reading Molière's satirical treatment of publishing conventions:

... we will never read another preface again without laughing, [yet] ... Molière is also saying that the acquisition of such labels as verse and notable names and the addition of such clarifications or precisions as etymologies, definitions, and Greek epitaphs would have been precautions (178).

Precautions that give authors the time to consider themselves and present themselves properly, without which, according to Zanger, Molière feels out of his element and exposed (179). Zanger

concludes from this passage that Molière cannot become "part of the *confrérie* of authors because his work is marked by neither authorial preparation nor control" (179).

I suggest that Molière rejects the conventional usage of the paratextual space not so much for lack of time, but lack of desire to imitate his *confrères* by entering the Study in a way that is incompatible with the rapport of the play to the public in the Theater. In his mocking preface about the precautions that authors take in presenting their work in 'authorial' ways, Molière is revealing his dissatisfaction with that mode of self-presentation. He sees that such paratexts are precautions for one type of relation between author, work, and public. The public anticipated by such *doctes* paratexts resembles the dispassionate and rule-bound experts elevated in the Querelle du *Cid*, who would value references to ancient authorities and the opinions of other *littérateurs*. Without them he may, as Zanger suggests, feel unprepared and exposed. Yet he does not choose to present himself in that way; perhaps he is more wary of establishing that sort of relationship than of printing his play without it. He does not want his work or himself to be constructed in literary terms, viewed through the framework of Latin epigraphs and learned discourses.

Yet, the printed medium demands some kind of authorial self-presentation that he is not at his leisure to craft. Indeed, in light of Caldicott's work on the cartel, it is likely that Molière's line about being hurried by M. de Luynes to send his preface to the press was not merely a rhetorical claim to avoid harsh critique by readers. He was caught in the necessity "d'estre imprimé, ou d'avoir un procès", by a publishing pirate who had obtained a privilège "par surprise" and forced him to hastily collaborate with publishers who would not treat him any better as a client. In any case, Molière's hurried publishing experience does not afford him the preparations necessary to re-present his work to the public in the way that he desires. He says

that wants his work to stay in the realm of theater—“en demeurer là”. That is not to say that he was decidedly against publication. We know to the contrary that he subsequently oversaw the publication of the majority of his plays. Instead, we can infer that he wished for his play to maintain a similar rapport with his audience that it had in the Theater, one whose lively theatrics would seem silly and stiff dressed up in scholarly introductions and Latin epigraphs. So when Zanger points to the fact that Molière is refusing to present his authorial persona via the customary paratextual accoutrements, I do not see evidence of a rejection of an authorial persona altogether, but an initial refusal of the conventional forms that buys him time to craft his alternative self-presentation. If he and his work are to be fixed upon paper, they will not forasmuch imitate his “confrères, Messieurs les Auteurs” as objects for the Study. In the meantime, he uses the power of laughter to *distraindre* his audience, entertaining while distracting from the matter he avoids.

In subsequent performances and publications, Molière will provide a new model for himself as *écrivain*; not one who is ushered out of the Theater by print, but one who uses his pen to write the Study onto the Stage and the Stage into the Study. We will see that his approach marks a refusal to follow the model of a two-step offering of his work in the respective forms, spaces, and conventional trappings of the Theater and the Study. Instead, he will appropriate all the literary and dramatic conventions at his disposal to create hybrid forms and spaces where his work may become more unified under his mastery. In doing so, he will craft his authorial persona as an *écrivain* in the Theater, moving his work literally from stage to page, but theatricalizing his publication gesture and himself as a writer in a way that downplays the judgment of his work by readers and in printed form. The difference of Molière’s treatment of Stage and Study is best perceived in contrast to that of his contemporaries. Proceeding

chronologically through the first of Molière's publication phases as defined by Caldicott (1660-1666), we will examine the uses of paratextual conventions in plays by Molière as presented by others, in plays by other writers, and in the writings of Molière himself.

In the preface to *Les Précieuses* we saw that Molière was against the play and playwright being forced out of the Theater in order to be presented in less fitting forms in the Study. In the case of *Sganarelle* (1660), the comedy is literally stolen from the theater and put to press in a form beyond Molière's control. Although it has been suggested by Roger Duchêne that this publication was in fact a publicity stunt in which Molière was complicit and which he calls "pirateries concertées" (*Molière* 248-255), the following analysis of its paratexts argues against such claims. My basic contention is that the paratextual treatment of *Sganarelle* is inconsistent with Molière's practices in later authentic works in the way that establishes and draws attention to a tension between the two forms of the play and two roles of Molière (actor and poet) rather than diffusing the tension as Molière's own uses of paratextual conventions will tend to do.

As we know, Molière's precipitous printing of *Les Précieuses* allowed his version of the play to become the predominant one in circulation. He was not as fortunate, however, in preventing the dissemination of the unauthorized *Sganarelle*. In 1660, the enterprising independent publisher Jean Ribou obtained a manuscript from an enthusiastic spectator, le sieur de Neuf-Villennaine, quite plausibly "copied only by the ear", a practice common in England at the time according to Chartier (*Publishing* 31-2). In a letter addressed to "Monsieur Molière, chef de la Troupe des Comédiens de Monsieur Frere unique du Roy", Neuf-Villennaine justifies his unauthorized version of the play as a faithful transcription committed to memory from repeat attendance at performances and inscribed on paper for the sake of a friend who had not seen the play performed. This privately exchanged text was reportedly made public despite strict orders to

the contrary, and its publication with Ribou was overseen by Neuf-Villenaïne to prevent less faithful versions from being disseminated (*Oeuvres I* 84³⁹). Molière was not pleased with this version, as evidenced by the fact that he took the matter to court, where he succeeded in condemning Ribou on 16 November 1660 and seizing the remainders of the fraudulent edition of the play (Niderst 110).

What is fascinating about this edition is the care given by Neuf-Villenaïne to transitioning the play from the Theater to the Study. Oddly, this play-pirating enthusiast shows more concern for using the printed space to acknowledge the full nature of the dramatic piece than the cartel responsible for Molière's publications, or the many writers who turn script to book without any prefatory remarks.⁴⁰ His curious, and abundant, paratext is worth unpacking in detail, firstly since it accompanied the farcical *Sganarelle* into the Study in all versions of the play during Molière's lifetime⁴¹ and secondly for the rich contrast it provides to Molière's paratextual treatment of his own work in the years of his involvement with the cartel.

Neuf-Villenaïne presents a performance-turned-print, going far beyond transcribing the dialogue to unfold the story with his own commentary as though he were retelling the plot to a friend. In fact, this is exactly what he claims to do: since his friend had not seen the play performed,

³⁹ Although as a general rule I cite from the first publications of works, in this case I give the reference for *Sganarelle* as it appears in the 1666 *Oeuvres I*, since it provides pagination for locating Neuf-Villenaïne's interspersed commentaries.

⁴⁰ For instance, Dorimond's *La Rosélie* (1661); Scarron's *La Fausse apparence* (1663), *Le Jodelet duelliste* (1664) and *L'heritier ridicule* (1664); Boursault's *Les deux frères gémeaux* (1665), or Donneau de Visé's *Zélinde* (1665).

⁴¹ This assertion is confirmed by Duchêne (250). Following the pirated edition of 1660, the paratext re-appeared in the 1666 collection of complete works published by the cartel where, Caldicott tells us, "a squalid deal between Ribou and de Luyne allowed the latter to use the former's condemned piratical stock, thereby saving money but also extending the humiliation for Molière of seeing the arguments of a perfect stranger, a sieur de Neuf-Villenaïne, used as introductions to each of the scenes of the play" (528). As far as posthumous editions are concerned, I was not able to verify the treatment in the collection by cartel-member Claude Barbin immediately following Molière's death in 1673, but do know that the 1682 collected works of Molière overseen by actor LaGrange do not include Neuf-Villenaïne's commentaries.

je crûs à propos de luy envoyer les Argumens de chaque Scene, pour luy montrer que quoy que cette Piece soit admirable, l'Authour en la representant luy-mesme, y sçavoit encore faire découvrir de nouvelles beautez (*Œuvres I* 83).

The purpose of Neuf-Villenaire's gift of text and paratext is thus to give his friend the means of appreciating the play from his *cabinet*. He views his paratext as preserving in writing something of the author's contribution to the play as both writer and actor that cannot be perceived in the script alone. Thus, throughout Neuf-Villenaire's presentation of the play, the paratext that he adds to the script reveals a tension between the sufficiency of the verses to stand on their own as proof of the author's merit, and the necessity of the rest of the *jeu de théâtre* for guaranteeing comprehension and delivering the experience of the play to the reader.

The function that Neuf-Villenaire's *arguments* serve can be best understood in light other contemporary uses of this type of paratext. Comparison reveals a striking difference in the sheer quantity of his commentary, as well as the tension embodied by the two functions of his paratext. To demonstrate the first point, we begin by noting that while it was not typical, it was not unheard of for plays to include *arguments* as part of their paratext, usually at the beginning of the dialogue, or perhaps for each act. It seems that this practice was more widely spread in the 1630s than in the 1660s,⁴² where it was more typically seen in introducing comedy-ballets such as Molière's *Le Mariage Forcé* (1664) printed by R. Ballard.⁴³ The one example from the same decade as Neuf-Villenaire's commentaries that my research has revealed prefaces François d'Aure's *Genevieve* (1669), a religious tragedy on a previously-undramatized subject. D'Aure curiously gives details in the preface before the *argument* about the number of actors and the

⁴² For example, such succinct summaries appear at the beginning of Chevreau's *L'Advocat duppé* (1638), Guérin de Bouscal's *l'Amant Libéral* (1638), Chapoton's *Le véritable Coriolan* (1638), and Chaulmer's *Mort de Pompée* (1638).

⁴³ As we will expand on later, the 'argument' was not used in later comedy-ballets over which Molière had more oversight in publishing.

setting of each act. To present the subject of a lesser-known play,⁴⁴ d'Aure fills a modest three-quarters of a page, with an additional page devoted to preparing the reader to imagine the setting of the five acts. In contrast, for the well-attended and coveted *Sganarelle*, Neuf-Villennaine adds to Molière's verses an *argument* for each of the twenty-four scenes. The ratio of *argument* to play script for each scene varies, but is still striking: scene 6, for instance, has 2.5 pages commentary to 3.5 pages script; scene 7 has 1.5 pages commentary to 1.75 pages of dialogue; scene 9 has 1.75 pages commentary to 2.25 pages script. Thus, in terms of visual space in the book offered to readers, Neuf-Villennaine's authorial presence rivals Molière's own. Indeed, Duchêne labels Neuf-Villennaine's behavior as erecting himself as "co-author" of Molière's play (251). Moreover, the very textual form of the comedy calls attention to the difference between the play as delivered on Stage and delivered to the Study.

It is clear that for Neuf-Villennaine, Molière's genius as *écrivain* is preserved for the Study in the verses that he wrote. Because of this, he was careful to steal the poet out the theater in order to faithfully present his fine mind to his reader in the book. To this end, the gentleman claims to have transcribed the entire play completely and accurately from memory after seeing it performed six or seven times. One day while speaking with company about Molière's genius for theater pieces, he found himself reciting the play instead of giving the subject, and returned once more to the theater to retain what he didn't already know (*Œuvres I* 82), assuring accuracy from the author's mouth. Neuf-Villennaine assures his friend that he will discover more about the "Esprit" of the author in the verses that he will read (*Oeuvres I* 89); Molière the author reveals his genius in the dialogue he crafted. It is the specific wording of the lines, and not just the subject itself that carries the playwright into the Study. Carrying over from his drawing room

⁴⁴ Based on a lengthy discourse prefacing his *Dipné, infante d'Irlande*, published in 1668 in Montargis, France, wherein d'Aure theorizes on Christian tragedy and its proper audience, it is safe to assume that the public for *Genevieve* a year later was far more restricted than for the popular *Sganarelle*.

recitation of the verses, Neuf-Villennaine's appreciation for the ability of the verses themselves to communicate the subject of the play better than a summary is a theme in his commentaries.

Although he gives an *argument* or plot summary for each scene of the play he transcribes, he repeatedly transitions from paratext to text with a declaration like the following: "Voicy les Vers de cette Scene qui vous feront voir ce que je viens de dire, mieux que je n'ay fait dans cette Prose" (*Œuvres I 3*). The scenes cannot be reduced to the summary of their action; the script's representational power "makes you see" both the poet and the dramatic action better than a commentary can. So, why all the *arguments*?

If Neuf-Villennaine is trying to bring Molière the poet off the Stage and into the Study, he recognizes the need to bring Molière the actor into the book as well. While Neuf-Villennaine is validating the contribution of the verses to the theater piece as a whole, it seems that he is also grappling with their insufficiency to represent the entire theater experience to a reader: "Voicy les Vers de cette Scene qui vous feront voir ce que je viens de dire, mieux que je n'ay fait dans cette Prose" (*Œuvres I 3*, emphasis added). Returning to this quote, we see that the verses of the scene make visible the action of the play better than the commentary, but they do not stand in for the scene as a whole, as it was performed. This precision becomes clearer when compared to the summary this transition precedes. From the beginning of Neuf-Villennaine's presentation, the reader is reminded of the original form that the play was received in: "Cette première scène... fait voir à l'auditeur" that avarice is common to the old and love to the young (*Œuvres I 1*). "Scene" here refers to the performance of the fictional action, which shows a daughter being pressured to marry against her will, who prefers to set aside her books in order to replay in her mind the beautiful qualities of her lover (*Œuvres I 2*). In both the evocation of the "auditeur" and the story that is told, spectacle is privileged over text. Even as the readers encounter the

story in the book, they are invited to favor the replaying of the scene in their imagination over the consumption of abstract words on a page. But as Neuf-Villennaine's friend has not seen the performance for himself, it seems that the imagination must be aided by the paratextual supports.

As the verses did not take the stage alone, but were accompanied by other means of interpretation, so it seems that, for Neuf-Villennaine, the script—however artfully-crafted it may be—cannot stand alone: “Quelques beautez que cette Piece vous fasse voir sur le papier, elle n'a pas encore tous les agrémens que le Theatre donne d'ordinaire à ces sortes d'Ouvrages” (*Œuvres I 88*). Speaking of such *agrémens du théâtre*, Alain Niderst describes the performance of *Sganarelle* in terms that relate the actor's *interprétation* to the script of the play: “Il roulait les yeux, il se contorsionnait, il faisait par tout son corps *un commentaire du texte*” (*Molière 110*, emphasis added). Perhaps in the absence of this visual interpretation, Neuf-Villennaine feels compelled to add his own “commentaire du texte”. He therefore tries to compensate with explanations necessary for the “intelligence” of the play; though it is hard, as he admits, to express on paper what the Poets call “Jeux de Theatre, qui sont de certains endroits où il faut que le corps et le visage joüent beaucoup, et qui dépendent plus du Comedien que du Poëte” (*Œuvres I 88*). The *arguments* would thus serve to compensate for what the stage action would usually add to the verses. For instance, he speaks of the agreeable diversion given to viewers by the dispute between husband and wife, to which Sganarelle contributes much by “des gestes qui sont inimitibles et qui ne se peuvent exprimer sur le papier” (*Œuvres I 14*). Describing a moment when Sganarelle comes back on stage and looks over his wife's shoulder, he says,

Devant que de parler des discours qu'ils tiennent ensemble sur le sujet de leur jalousie, il est à propos de vous dire, qu'il ne s'est jamais rien vu de si agreable que les postures de Sganarelle, quand il est derriere sa femme, son visage et ses gestes expriment si bien sa

jalousie, qu'il ne seroit pas necessaire qu'il parlast pour paroistre le plus jaloux de tous les hommes (*Œuvres I* 14).

Neuf-Villenaire proceeds to give an account on paper of that which is best expressed in the non-verbal, lively action of the stage.

In the end it is clear that the verses speak better than a summary and the actor interprets better than commentary ever can. Thus Neuf-Villenaire's text added to text seeks to make up for but ultimately compounds its lack. The additions testify to, but do not re-create on paper, the physical comedy, grimaces, and rhythm of the stage. He uses words to praise theatricality but does not theatricalize his own text. In short, he describes the theater experience to the reader, but does not bring the theater's effects to the *cabinet*. In light of the book's failure to fully represent the play, Neuf-Villenaire advises his friend to come to Paris to see it for himself, represented by its Author (*Œuvres I* 88), assuring that in his representation he will see more admirable things than had been granted to "la lecture de cette Piece" (*Œuvres I* 89). In sum, by stressing the importance of both the textual contributions of the author and the *jeux du théâtre* of the staged spectacle, Neuf-Villenaire's paratext accentuates the tension between the two forms that seventeenth century plays inhabited. On the one hand, it promotes the printed text as precise knowledge, capable of revealing the author's fine mind. And at the same time, it reveals the text preserved in the book as unable to contain the super-textual elements of theater that the same poet embodies as actor on the stage.

The fundamental difference between Neuf-Villenaire's use of paratextual conventions and Molière's is that the former is marked by a tension between the forms and spaces proper to the Stage and those proper to the Study, while the latter diffuses the tension by blurring the boundaries between dramatic and print conventions, ultimately bringing everything into the

realm of Theater. In other words, Neuf-Villennaine abides by the formal separation between stage and page in a two-step reception, transcribing dialogue into written word, and adding text to text to compensate for the rest of the representation that cannot be contained in a book. Molière, on the other hand, transgresses the boundaries by extending performance into the written medium, performing print conventions on stage, and turning the judgments of the Study into material for his comedy.

Molière's difference: blurring the boundaries of Stage and Study

When he is finally give the time to “se reconnoitre” after the publishing dramas of the *Précieuses* and *Sganarelle*, Molière presents himself and his plays in a way that reconciles his publication activity with his desire to keep his work in the realm of Theater by blurring the boundaries between Stage and Study and imbuing all his work with a signature theatricality. He appropriates the conventions of the paratextual space and the judgments of readers into the dramatic action of his comedies in a way that departs from the practices of his contemporaries. We see this play out in the way he turns the Study into his Stage, and brings the Study to the Stage, so to speak. To explore this blurring of boundaries, we will proceed chronologically, unpacking three examples of Molière's difference from typical paratextual treatments by using contemporary plays as counterpoints: contrasting Raymond Poisson's *L'après-souper des auberges* (1665) with *Les Facheux* (1662), Catherine Desjardins' *Manlius* (1662) with *Le Remerciement au Roy* (1663), and using Claude Boyer's *La Mort de Démétrius* (1661) as a jumping point for a deeper discussion of the quarrel of *l'Ecole des Femmes*.

In the first set of plays, we see that Molière goes beyond his fellow comedic actor and poet at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Raymond Poisson, in making a theatrical entrance into the *cabinet*. In both Poisson's dedication of *L'après-souper des auberges* (1665) to the Prince de

Rohan, and Molière's dedication of *Les Facheux* (1662) to the king, the tradition of treating the reception of the printed play as analogous to the reception of a guest is forcefully employed.

Poisson, for his part, confidently states that the success of his "campagnards" on the royal stage guarantees their welcome in the study of their choice:

...après avoir receu un accueil si favorable dans le Palais Royal, il n'y a point de Cabinet, quelque precieux qu'il puisse estre, qui se puisse defendre de leur servir d'azile. Ils ont choisy le vostre, MONSEIGNEUR.

The conventions of polite reception and protection of guests are invoked, and the honor given to the country kids by the court make their visit an honor to the prince. The passage from the Palais Royal to the *cabinet* is unproblematic: the fictional characters have the force of powerful opinion on their side, and seem unembarrassed in making their way from one space to the next. At the same time, Poisson's play does not come only to be beheld as a glorious object, as was the case with Corneille's *Cid*; its entry into the Study is qualified as a return to the source of the generosity that made its acceptance possible, akin to children rendering grace to their father's benefactor. In this way, Poisson uses the paratextual space to justify his publication by the favorable reception of the play on the stage, and by the social exchange of mutual service, showing no malaise with moving from his role as actor to the traditional conventions of his role as author.

Molière's dedication of *Les Facheux* (1662) to the King also renders thanks to the sovereign as the source of inspiration which made the comedy a success.⁴⁵ But instead of merely evoking the fiction as an analogy for accepting the printed book, as Poisson did, Molière continues the comedy on paper by making the very act of writing the dedication into another scene: "J'adjoute une Scene à la Comedie, et c'est une espece de Facheux assez insupportable,

⁴⁵ He acknowledges that the king suggested a character that became one of the best parts of the play (*Oeuvres II* 8).

qu'un homme qui dédie un Livre" (*Œuvres II* 7). Rather than presenting his play as an honored guest who has earned a welcome into any Study, the playwright presents *himself* as yet another nuisance come to call, irked by the conventions of his own passage from stage to page. But this passage is simultaneously an extension of the performance into the Study, done in such a way that the conventions of the printed play are subsumed into the comedy that he continues. Molière is very aware that his person as author is being translated into a comedic character, saying, "je me mette moy-mesme au rang de ceux que j'ay joüez". He uses his pen to write himself back onto the stage. By ridiculing his authorial activities, Molière is in a sense able to bring them back into his control as *comédien*, downplaying the fact that the play now exists as "un Livre" that may be scrutinized by readers (*Œuvres II* 8).

This treatment of paratext-as-comedy is echoed by Molière's double-identification of himself as actor and author in the description of the performance itself. In an address prefacing the play, Molière gives a description of the opening of the comedy-ballet: "D'abord que la toile fut levée, un des Acteurs, comme vous pourriez dire moy, parut sur le Theatre en habit de Ville..." (*Œuvres II* 13). The identification of Molière, the authorial *je*, with Molière the actor is compounded by the fact that he appears on stage "en habit de Ville" and "avec le visage d'un homme surpris", literally acting himself. The author-actor appears on stage to give an apology to the king about the lack of time and actors to put on the entertainment he wanted (*Œuvres II* 14). This acted "preface" is echoed in the printed preface, where Molière warns that the whole play was conceived, learned and performed in 15 days (*Œuvres II* 10), adding,

Je ne dis pas ce-là pour me piquer de l'*impromptu*, et en prétendre de la gloire: mais seulement pour prévenir certaines gens, qui pourroient trouver à redire, que je n'aye pas mis icy toutes les especes de Fascheux, qui se trouvent. Je scay que le nombre en est grand, et

à la Cour, et dans la Ville....Je me reduisis donc à ne toucher qu'un petit nombre d'Importuns; et je pris ceux qui s'offrirent d'abord à mon esprit, et que je creus les plus propres à réjouir les Augustes personnes devant qui j'avois à paroistre" (*Œuvres II* 10-11).

We see that Molière uses the print convention of the preface on the stage to justify his lack of preparations as a *chef de troupe*—not enough actors--, and on paper to justify his lack of preparations as the writer of the fiction—not enough characters. In both the Theater and the Study, then, Molière employs the preface as a way of staving off judgment about his work. Furthermore, he uses the printed space to justify his authorial choices by their effect on spectators, “les Augustes personnes” before whom he appeared as actor. He thus blurs the lines between the conventions of stage and page in the paratext to *Les Facheux*, re-appropriating the printed preface to serve as an apology for the theater entertainment, and continuing the performance on paper through the identification of the dedicatory letter as an extension of the comedy. In that way, he theatricalizes the publication gesture and his own authorial persona, entering the Study without forasmuch abandoning his place on the Stage.

Another instance of Molière’s turning the Study into his stage is seen in the contrast of his *Remerciement au Roy* with *Manlius* by Marie-Catherine-Hortense de Villedieu, whose works appeared under her maiden name of Mlle Desjardins. Both pieces aim to wittily fulfill duties of rendering thanks to benefactors by revealing their behind-the-scenes instructions to that end. The poetess Catherine Desjardins is mindful of the conventions of civility involved in presenting the title character of her play as a devoted admirer seeking the protection of Mademoiselle.

Desjardins advises her bold hero that in such encounters,

...Il faut pour le moins estre conduit par ces grands Auteurs que leur merit à [sic] rendus les Roys du Theatre; Que dans une haute entreprise les applaudissemens vulgaires sont

un faible appuy, et que les lumieres de vôtre ALTESSE ROYALE ne trouvent rien qu'elles ne penetrent (Villedieu).

In this passage, the play seeking a favorable reception is advised firstly to follow the conduct of illustrious poets who have been crowned for their successful navigation of the conventions of Theater both on and off the stage; it is understood that honor comes from the right presentation and reception of one's work. Secondly, it is advised not to assume the merit of one's work, leaning on the 'faible appuy' of the masses, but on the superior judgment of the illustrious spectator whom nothing escapes.

C'est, MADEMOISELLE, dans cette pensée qu'il a eu l'audace d'abuser de vostre bonté en déroband à vostre ALTESSE ROYALE quelques heures de son loisir, et c'est par ce mesme mouvement qu'il ose aujourd'huy vous demander l'honneur de vostre protection. S'il est si heureux que de l'obtenir, elle luy donnera une vie dans les Siecles à venir, beaucoup plus illustre que la vie que je luy ay donnée dans ce Poëme.

Manlius came to Mademoiselle a first time out of the boldness of pleasing her, and now comes again seeking protection. The reception of the written work is a second opportunity for the princess to grant her favor, and Desjardins uses the prefatory space of her book to reveal her mastery of these social and print conventions of civility while performing them.

Desjardin's instructions to her Manlius, as reported to Mademoiselle, conjure up a very different image from Molière's *Remerciement au Roy* (1663), written to thank the king for a royal pension granted during the *Querelle de l'École des femmes*. In the former, the poetess relates the sensible lessons by which she prepared her play to be well-received by its protector. The text serves its expected function of flattering, conveying wit, and preparing the patron to receive the offering. In the latter, the poet addresses his Muse directly, instructing him in how to

perform his thanks by playing a marquis, properly costumed in a “chapeau de trente plumes” (5), and elbowing his way through the crowds to the King’s chambers. In a poem that was perhaps not intended for print, but ended up as a liminary piece to the cartel’s unauthorized *Oeuvres I* three years after its writing, Molière uses the written medium in a less conventional way, as a space to perform his thanks as courtier through his role as poet-director. Through his verses, he gives instruction to his muse as one would coach an actor, detailing the costuming and mannerisms, and sketching out the *canevas* of the impromptu to play out in the corridors of the Court. Molière seems to wink as he circumvents the ‘*facheux*’ conventions of court life by acquitting himself of his duties through pleasing the King once more with a performance carried out on paper. The muse will know his work is done upon seeing the effect of his *jeu* on his audience: when a smile flutters across the royal benefactor’s face, “Voilà votre compliment fait” (8). In this way, Molière treats the printed space as his stage, and judges the moment of reading reception successful by the immediate, visible response of its recipient. The theatrical nature of the *Remerciement* was identified by adversaries at the time such as Charles Robinet, who in the “Panégyrique de l’Ecole des femmes” called it a “salmigondis de toutes les pièces” (qtd in Niderst 148). Indeed, Molière seemed to freely cut and paste theatrical bits into the conventions of the textual space, writing himself into the comedic characters of a bothersome author in *Les Facheux* and a ridiculous marquis in the *Remerciement*.

In addition to blurring the conventions of print with theater by treating the paratext as a performance space, Molière also transgresses the boundaries by bringing the Study onto the stage. His performances and publications during the quarrel of *L’Ecole des femmes* invert the hierarchy of judgment promoted by Scudéry’s comrades in the Querelle du *Cid* by bringing the discussion of dramatic theory and the judgments of literary experts before the theater audience to

be tried by the rule of pleasure. Molière's choice to uphold the judgment of spectators over literary experts is clearly marked in the comparison of his preface to *Les Facheux* (1662) with Claude Boyer's dedication to *La Mort de Démétrius* (1661). This comparison serves as backdrop for seeing how Molière takes his position further into practice in the quarrel of *L'Ecole des femmes* that arises a year later.

In order to explore Molière's difference, we must first establish that the boundaries he blurs were indeed clearly upheld by others. We see such evidence of the enduring place given to literary 'experts' in the *cabinet* in Claude Boyer's offering of *La Mort de Démétrius* to the chancellor Séguier. Boyer echoes the praise of his peers twenty years prior,⁴⁶ hailing the head of the Académie Française as a defender of justice: "Que l'envie et l'injustice se meslent de juger temerairement de toutes choses, il suffit de vivre dans le Siecle du GRAND SEGUIER" to be sheltered from the persecution of these two powerful enemies of reason and merit. At the head of the 'souverain empire des belles Lettres', Séguier is placed as a protector from unfair and biased judgments; order in professional critique is maintained through his oversight. Writers are lucky, amidst all the "disgraces" that accompany them, to have such a great and powerful Protector. The playwright eschews other's perceptions of his motives and esteems any means of getting Séguier's approbation to be glorious, "estimant peu celle des autres si elle n'est pas consacrée par la vôtre", reinforcing the final word of the expert who judges the merit not only of works, but of other's opinions of them. In Boyer's paratext, then, as in the writings of Scudéry

⁴⁶ Scudéry's preface to *l'Amour Tyrannique* (1639) stands out as a comprehensive example of the points of praise of the Academy and its illustrious members: "Messieurs, Puis que vous estes les Juges de nos belles Lettres....Il y auroit eu de l'injustice de ne vous pas dedier cette Critique, et de la presumption de determiner de son prix sans vous en avoir consultez auparavant. Nous sommes en un temps où tout le monde croit avoir le droit de juger de la Poësie, de laquelle Aristote a fait son chef-d'oeuvre; Où les ruelles des femmes sont les Tribunaux des plus beaux ouvrages; Où ce qui fut autrefois la vertu de peu de personnes, devient la maladie du peuple, et le vice de la multitude. Mais parmy tant de corruption il y a encore des lieux qui servent d'Asyles aux bonnes Lettres. Il y a des personnes de science et d'integrité; Et des Juges auxquels on peut appeller de la mauvaise opinion du vulgaire, et de la persecution des demi-sçavants."

and the Académie Française in the Querelle du *Cid*, the legitimate judgment of theater pieces as part of the “empire des belles Lettres” takes place by an expert at the head of an institution of *littérateurs*, whose approval of the written offering validates or condemns other appraisals of it. The merit of the play and its admirers is judged apart from the realm of Theater, in the realm of the academic *cabinet*.

Molière, on the other hand, chooses to promote the judgment of the theater audience over literary experts in his publication gesture. We know already that Molière does not wish for his work to be judged by the rules of literary experts and evaluated in the harsh light of the study (*Les Précieuses*, Zanger). He makes it clear in the preface to *Les Facheux* that he squarely opposes the kind of learned evaluations made by the Académie Française.⁴⁷ Mocking the “belle et docte Preface” evoked in the address of *Les Précieuses*, he says:

Ce n'est pas mon dessein d'examiner maintenant si tout cela pouvoit estre mieux, et si tous ceux qui s'y sont divertis ont ry selon les regles: Le temps viendra de faire imprimer mes remarques sur les Pieces que j'auray faites; et je ne desespere pas de faire voir un jour, en grand Autheur, que je puis citer Aristote, et Horace. En attendant cét examen, qui peut-estre ne viendra point, je m'en remets assez aux decisions de la multitude; et je tiens aussi difficile de combattre un Ouvrage que le public approuve, que d'en deffendre un qu'il condamne (*Facheux* in *Œuvres II* 11-12).

For Molière, the pleasure and laughter of the audience does not need to be seconded by footnotes from ancient poets or approved by those who would demand such demonstrations. Zanger suggests that by telling readers to wait for a scholarly *examen*, but in the mean time to rely on the opinion of the crowd, Molière is essentially choosing not to enter the realm of authorship, which, in my terms, would place his work under scrutiny as a literary object in the Study:

⁴⁷ I agree with Zanger (179) on this point.

To enter the realm of such precision by writing down his theories is not necessary for Molière because it is ultimately the crowd that must approve his work. And the crowd's approval will not be predicated on adherence to rules (Zanger 180).

The rule above all rules is to please the audience. All other rules are essentially in the service of this end, and their effects are judged by the spectators in the moment of the performance. What Molière is saying is that if he so chose, he could remove himself from the Theater to the Study in order to evaluate his work in academic terms. But by choosing to keep his judgment in the hands of “la multitude” in the meantime, he leaves the entire decision of his merit to the response of the crowd in the Theater.

In the polemic incited by the *l'École des femmes*, as we will see, Molière will press his point by providing the authorial commentary and examination of his works that he promised in the preface to *Les Facheux*, but in a form that does not forasmuch remove his work from the jurisdiction of pleasure in the theater. In making public, *publiant*, his remarks on his plays from the stage, Molière will turn his rhetoric into reality, giving the upper hand “aux décisions de la multitude” while engaging in the discourse conventionally reserved for those presenting themselves “en grand Auteurs” in paratextual spaces.

Turning rhetoric to reality: The Quarrel of *L'École des femmes*

L'École des femmes was Molière's greatest success to date, pleasing audiences at the Palais Royal and in private performances before the king, queen, and courtiers beginning 26 December 1662 (Duchêne 311). But it was also “une pièce qu'en plusieurs lieux on fronde”, as Loret described it in the *Gazette* of 12 January (qtd in Duchêne 312). Donneau de Visé was the first to publish on the affair, with his *Nouvelles nouvelles* appearing on 9 February 1663, accusing Molière of plagiarism amongst other things. Other opponents included the actors of the

Hôtel de Bourgogne, whom Molière had slighted in his *Précieuses ridicules*, Pierre Corneille and his younger brother Thomas, various *gens de qualité* including enemies of theater with their high-profile recruitment of Molière's former patron the Prince de Conti, those who accused Molière of impiety for his treatment of morality and marriage in the play, and those who more generally resented the playwright's lack of propriety in marrying a much younger actress and pushing his critiques of Christian marriage too far (Duchêne 313-319). The public statements from both sides took place on the stage and in print, with Molière's *Critique de l'École des femmes* debuting 1 June 1663. Donneau wrote *Zélinde, ou la véritable critique de l'escole des femmes* et *La Critique de la Critique* in August, but Edmé Boursaut's *Le Portrait du Peintre* was chosen to take the stage at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in September or October. Also around this time, a poem by the newcomer Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux entitled "Stances à M. Molière sur la comédie de *L'École des femmes* que plusieurs gens frondaient" appeared to defend and render homage to Molière (Duchêne 312-3). Molière responded to his critics through the performance of *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, which debuted 20 October at the Château de Versailles (Forestier, "Impromptu"). As a final retaliation, Donneau's latest creation *La Vengeance des marquis*, was once again passed over and *L'Impromptu de l'Hôtel de Condé* was staged in mid-November (Duchêne 346).

In the debate following *L'École des femmes* Molière engages his critics from the stage, blurring the boundaries between the conventional domains of Theater and Study. If the Querelle du *Cid* established a separation and hierarchy of judgments made by spectators in the Theater and experts reading in their studies, the Querelle de l' *École des femmes* inverts the hierarchy by offering up literary discourse in the form of comedy to be judged by the rule of pleasure. In this quarrel, Molière first rejects the separation of the theater event from the play's judgment in the

cabinet by refusing to defend his work in the conventional printed space of the paratext.

Secondly, he transforms rhetoric into reality in *La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes* by offering the opinions of his play up to the judgment of spectators in the theater rather than experts in their studies. Finally, the poet-actor proves the sufficiency of theater as theater rather than a literary object in *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. We will unpack examples of this progression following the chronology of the quarrel.

Firstly, when debate broke out against *L'Ecole des femmes*, it was expected that Molière would respond to his critics in the conventional forms and spaces designated for that purpose: in a discourse at the head of his published play. He says as much in the preface to *L'Ecole des femmes*: "Je sais qu'on attend de moi *dans cette impression* quelque *préface* qui réponde aux censeurs et rende raison de mon ouvrage" (*Œuvres II* 150, emphasis added). But, instead of using the preface to defend his work, Molière uses it to advertise his upcoming defense in the form of a "dialogue" or "petite comédie" on the stage. Echoing his preface to *Les Facheux*, Molière shifts the critical focus away from the printed space of authorly discourse and back to the theater; even in the defense of his play, he would rather let the audience be the judge than put his spectator's response to the test of academic rules. In this way he downplays the judgment of his work by readers even as he gives it to them by emphasizing its original place of *publication* on the stage.

After announcing his upcoming *Critique*, Molière waited to put it on the stage, perhaps due to the friend who reportedly wanted to take up his defense, but also undoubtedly, as Serroy suspects, because until Donneau de Visé's attack in February the opposition had remained verbal: "avec *les Nouvelles nouvelles*, elle prend une autre dimension, *proprement littéraire*" (Serroy 301, emphasis added). To respond to *literary* criticism, which would normally pass

through the printed medium and thereby remove the judgment of the play from the Theater to the Study, Molière chooses instead to emphasize the theatrical nature of his work. This choice offers two key advantages:

C'est Molière qui choisit son terrain: en répliquant par une comédie, il veut d'abord montrer que le fond du débat touche au théâtre lui-même; mais aussi, défiant ses adversaires de se mesurer avec lui sur la scène, il les amène en quelque sorte à devoir accepter le terrain qu'il leur désigne (Serroy 301).

Molière's formal departure from the written debate forcefully illustrates his own theories of the genre he works in as being primarily spectacle over literary object, and moves the critique of theater from the separate realm of the *cabinet* or salon-- *talking about* drama in a *fauteuil*—to *talking through* drama in a *fauteuil* on the stage. In contrast to the previous quarrel over *Les Précieuses*, where Somaize designated the battle field in the Study with his succession of précieuse-themed publications that were never staged,⁴⁸ it is Molière who chooses the Theater as the proper venue for debating *L'Ecole des femmes*, and his opponents follow his lead. Beginning with the choice to stage his defense instead of print it, the progression of the quarrel reveals that Molière refuses to parcel out parts of the Dramatic Poem between the Stage and Study, separating the theory and critique of theater from its practice. Instead, he succeeds in demonstrating that all aspects of his genre—theory, artistic creation, rehearsal, performance, print conventions, and critique—fall under his mastery in the realm of the Theater.

La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes accomplishes this unification of dramatic theory and dramatic practice by bringing the critiques of Molière's play, and the judges themselves, onto the

⁴⁸ *Les Véritables Précieuses* enjoyed commercial success at the bookseller that encouraged Somaize to produce *Les Précieuses mises en vers* (1660), and *Le Grand dictionnaire des Précieuses* (1661) (Niderst 98). Joined with the fact that the whole quarrel was sparked by his fraudulent privilege to print Molière's play, this publishing record related to the *Précieuses* makes it clear that the targeted destination for Somaize's work was the Study.

Stage. In this play about a play, Molière is indeed dealing with concerns of the Study in articulating theories of the dramatic genre and their application to theater pieces. But he does so in a form that annexes the space of literary discussion into the realm of Theater rather than separating it out as in the *Querelle du Cid*. And he does so in a way that promotes the Spectator as the “Juge absolu de ces sortes d’ouvrages” (preface, *Précieuses*) who makes the ultimate pronouncement on the play’s success. Taking both the theory and practice in turn, we will demonstrate first of all that Molière is indeed grappling with dramatic theory and that which is traditionally relegated to the Study. Secondly, we will explore what is gained for Molière’s position by locating this theoretical discussion on the Stage.

It is important to begin by establishing that Molière is not simply rejecting metatextual discourse or learned critique of the theater. He is an expert of his craft and will establish his prowess, but in his own theatrical way. His treatment of the poet Lysidas is instructional on this point. Molière puts Lysidas on the stage as an emblem of the academic tendency to codify artistic creation. For instance, when pressed to answer if the play is bad, the pedant responds with reference to the ‘neoclassical rules’: “Ceux qui possèdent Aristote et Horace voient d’abord, Madame, que cette comédie pèche contre toutes les règles de l’art” (*Critique* vi). That said, Molière does not dismiss him as readily as the other opponents. W.D. Howarth’s commentary on this point is enlightening:

It is true that in Lysidas is satirized the pedantic man of letters, but he is far from being as extravagant as Climène or the Marquis, and Molière clearly regards the criticism which he puts into the mouth of this character, unimaginative and prejudiced though it may be, as being of quite a different order from that expressed by Dorante's other opponents, and deserving of a serious, well-argued reply. In the course of scene vi, it will be seen,

Molière points the way to a comprehensive definition of his own, highly original kind of comedy, which he defends against narrow academic criticism (xxvii).

Molière makes room on his stage for the *savant*, and uses his presence to provide a competent and compelling argument of his position. Speaking of the function of such characters in comedy, Jocelyn Royé says: "les personnages du pédant et du bel esprit permettent à la comédie d'accéder à la réflexion esthétique sur le langage, notamment comme art poétique " (112). Bringing a representative of the 'rules' onto the stage allows the playwright to engage in literary discourse on his work without removing himself from the theater context his play was intended for. Furthermore, as evidence of his desire to engage literary critiques, Molière does not simply trump scholarly rules with the rule of pleasing the audience:

Lysidas: Enfin, Monsieur, toute votre raison, c'est que *L'Ecole des femmes* a plu; et vous ne vous souciez point qu'elle ne soit pas dans les règles, pourvu...

Dorante: Tout beau, Monsieur Lysidas, je ne vous accorde pas cela. Je dis bien que le grand art est de plaire, et que cette comédie ayant plu à ceux pour qui elle est faite, je trouve que c'est assez pour elle et qu'elle doit peu se soucier du reste. Mais, avec cela, je soutiens qu'elle ne pèche contre aucune des règles dont vous parlez. Je les ai lues, Dieu merci, autant qu'un autre; et je ferai voir aisément que peut-être n'avons-nous point de pièce au théâtre plus régulière que celle-là (229).

Molière defends the regularity of his play while not locating the entertainment value of his comedy in its adherence to rules. It is not that Molière refuses to theorize or engage in meta-textual discourse, but that he does not want his work to be constrained by the boundaries of prescribed generic conventions imposed by "narrow academic criticism". He proves the

limitations of judgments made from this conservative position by articulating and *performing* their alternative in the same breath. This brings us to our second point.

Locating the discussion of the *Critique* on the stage allows Molière to practice his theory even as he articulates it. Molière brings the concerns of the Study to the Stage, but with the key difference that the theory must be “humanized”. This is the term that Molière’s spokesman Dorante uses to exhort Lysidas to employ plain, clear speech:

Lysidas: Quoi? Monsieur, la protase, l'építase, et la péripétie?...

Dorante: Ah! Monsieur Lysidas, vous nous assommez avec vos grands mots. Ne paraissez point si savant, de grâce. *Humanisez votre discours*, et parlez pour être entendu... (230, emphasis added).

Academic discussions are allowed, provided that they be presented in a way that is fitting to the setting: they must be intelligible to the audience, and abide by Molière’s conception of good comedy (as elaborated later in *L’Impromptu de Versailles*) that prizes “natural” speech over pedantic jargon. This is one way that Molière ‘humanizes’ the discourse of the study by bringing on the stage. Of course, he also ‘humanizes’ his discourse quite literally by personifying various opinions of his *Ecole des femmes* in characters on the stage (Broome 15), only one of which is Lysidas. And most importantly, he ‘humanizes’ the theory of the dramatic poem by presenting it to his audience for judgment by human response rather than a checklist of book knowledge. In this way, Molière turns his rhetoric into reality. He pulls the play away from intertextual judgments by rules in the Study, and puts it back in human hands in the Theater.

By making a second play where spectators can judge the opinions of those who judge *L’Ecole des femmes*, Molière effectively annexes the Study into the Theater. This allows him to reclaim a measure of control. As Serroy says, the dramatic irony of making the first play the

subject of the second permits the author to "devenir le lecteur/spectateur de sa propre création" (302). The voice of judgment given to theatergoers and readers alike is brought back to the poet-actor, in what Serroy comments more generally is a "virtuosité technique qui donne le vertige et qui fait comprendre à quel point Molière est totalement le maître du jeu" (303). Molière writes the critique of himself as *écrivain* and performs his authorial prowess for the satisfaction of his spectators, "ceux pour qui elle est faite", rather than writing it for literary experts. The content of his defense is solid and well-articulated, but I agree with Serroy that

Ce qui intéresse surtout Molière, dans *La Critique*, c'est moins de justifier une conception idéologique que sa pièce développe par ailleurs de façon suffisamment détaillée que d'affirmer, de manière explicite, la conception proprement théâtrale qui la sous-tend (303, emphasis added).

Molière's primary contention is that his work belongs in the theater, to be judged above all by the pleasure of *les rieurs* who are willing to respond to the effects of the moment rather than analyze the play through bookish norms, or in the separate space of the Study. Bringing the Study onto the Stage inverts the hierarchy of literary experts, and more broadly gives Molière control over the post-performance judgment of his play that usually escapes him, effectively reinforcing that *la multitude* is his ultimate arbiter, and ensuring that "the power of laughter would continue to be exercised on Molière's side" (Broome 15).

Molière's choice to stage the debate indeed served to ensure that the various opinions of his play would continue to be brought before the spectators to judge. Most all of the responses made by Molière's critics followed his lead of putting the debate in the realm of the Theater, in dramatic or at least dialogue form. The more one critiques 'Élomire', the more he will succeed, warns the poet Aristide in Donneau de Visé's *Zélinde ou la véritable Critique de l'École des*

femmes. His is an apt prediction for the quarrel, given that the majority of the critiques affirm through practice the foundation of the poet-actor's aesthetic convictions. Furthermore, the plays that end up on the boards turn the quarrel the way Molière intended, centering on the theater aspect of the debate, and drawing attention away from the morally questionable content of *L'École des femmes*.

Donneau's *Zélinde ou la véritable Critique de l'École des femmes* et *La Critique de la critique* appeared in August 1663. Set in a salon like Molière's *Critique*, Donneau's play stages ridiculous spokespeople for criticisms of the play, delivering backhanded compliments to the author of *L'École des femmes*. The *mondaine* conversation takes up themes dear to Molière, validating judgments made by the *parterre* and echoing the incompetence of *doctes*: "on apprend mieux à juger de la comédie en prenant souvent ce divertissement qu'on ne fait par les règles" (qtd in Duchêne 335). Furthermore, Duchêne sees in Donneau's play an apology for the *invraisemblance* of comedic *jeux de theatre* which "s'inscrivent dans une logique théâtrale, différente de celle de vie et efficace en son domaine" (335). This treatment supports, on various levels, Molière's conviction that the Dramatic Poem's value comes from the human response it triggers, and not from a list of rules, *vraisemblance* being a favorite buzzword of critics. Whether complicit with Molière in some kind of pre-arranged play-fighting,⁴⁹ or simply seeking to take full advantage of the publicity of a quarrel, albeit with a friend, Donneau's play nonetheless upholds Molière's desire to see his work judged as a theater piece on the Stage, and not a literary object in the Study. *Zélinde*, however, would not make it to the stage.

It was the *Portrait du peintre* by Edmé Boursault which would end up on the boards at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.⁵⁰ A more pointed attack against Molière, and preferred to *Zélinde*'s

⁴⁹ As Duchêne's interpretation suggests, see pp 321-323, 333-335.

⁵⁰ Boursault's play was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in September 1663 and was published in November.

softened blows for that reason, as well as the fact that Boursault had been put up to the task by Pierre Corneille and the Grands Comédiens, the *Portrait* is the first play to stage a parody of actors from a rival troupe (Duchêne 336) and represents "la mise en cause, sur le théâtre et en action, du jeu des comédiens du Palais-Royal" (Duchêne 337). As Duchêne observes, the satire of the *Portrait* hits the manner of Molière's performance more than the content of his play (337). Of course, the content of the critique is hardly favorable to Molière as an actor, yet it does serve to uphold the *Critique's* underlying conception of the specificity of the theater and its means of representation. The character of the Count, for instance, "regrette dès la deuxième scène qu'à la lecture d'une pièce, on ne voie pas "les grimaces qu'on fait". He had read *L'École des femmes* twice without being able to

Trouver ces plaisantes postures:

Eh, parlez, dépêchez, vite, promptement, tôt.

On appelle cela réciter comme il faut.

Verra-t-on en lisant, fût-on grand philosophe,

Ce que veut dire un *Ouf*, qui fait la catastrophe?

Baron, *Ouf!* Que dis-tu de ce *Ouf* placé là?

(qtd in Duchêne 337).

While mocking Molière's devliery, the satire upholds Molière's conviction that the essential of the theater entertainment cannot be reduced to print; the faces and tics of speech are part of the 'live' version. Upholding the importance of the theater event over the printed play, Molière attended a performance of Boursault's portrait of him, where he was reportedly amused by the satire and inspired to respond with his *Impromptu de Versailles*. Chevalier's *Les Amours de*

Calotin (1664) gives an account of Moliere seeing himself portrayed on stage in *Le Portrait du peintre*:

Tu sauras que lui-même en cette conjoncture
 Etait présent alors que l'on fit sa peinture,
 De sorte que ce fut un charme sans égal
 De voir et la copie et son original [...]
 Ayant de votre peintre attrapé la nature,
 Quelqu'un lui demanda, Molière, que dis-tu?
 Lui répondit d'abord de son ton agréable,
 Admirable, morbleu! du dernier admirable;
 Et je me trouve là tellement bien tiré,
 Qu'avant qu'il soit huit jours, certes je répondrai (21).

The anecdote finds credibility in the fact that Molière staged his *Impromptu* 20 October 1663, and the printed version of the *Portrait du Peintre* would not come out until November.

In his final riposte of the quarrel, Molière goes even further in distancing his theater pieces from treatment as literary objects in the Study. If in the *Critique*, Molière brought the post-performance judgment of his work back into the space and moment of theater performance by staging a salon discussion, in *l'Impromptu de Versailles*, Molière brings the entire theater process to the stage in a way that proves the sufficiency of theater without literary interventions or ancient generic distinctions. What unfolds in the one-act play is essentially theater about theater. In the simple plot, Molière the director-actor leads his troupe in deciding on and rehearsing their next play to fill the king's command, fulfilling the sovereign's request in the process before being summoned to appear before him. In this entertainment, what Molière gives

us is indeed a comedy, as Serroy says, but a comedy made of all the others: those past, those in progress, those in practice, and those being performed in the moment (310). I suggest that this choice can be read as Molière's strategic refusal to send Theater into the jurisdiction of the Study, instead pulling his work further away from it by going back to the *coulisses* and to the genesis of his creative work and control in the *théâtre*. In the crafted and rehearsed "impromptu" rehearsal of his craft, Molière proves that his work is the domain of theater alone, and not dependent on academic approval, literary conventions, or even fiction as it would normally be conceived. Instead he chooses to perform the creative process of his work as its product, a product which cannot be reduced to print or judged apart from the space, moment, and means of its representation. This interpretation is supported by the fact that he chose not to print *l'Impromptu de Versailles* during his lifetime and the script that now exists in print for later generations attests to the theatricality, temporality, and physicality of a comedy that passes more through the means proper to theater than through discourse. To poke fun at the rival troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, for instance, Molière was not content to simply *raconter*, "mais endoss[er] tous les personnages et les interprét[er] devant ses comédiens, en allant même jusqu'à imiter chacun des acteurs de la troupe concurrente" (Serroy 309). Furthermore, the near-perfect identification of fiction and reality in the setting, players, action, and audience of the performance (Serroy 308) collapses the abstract story with the moment of its representation before the king who commanded it, proving that what is essential to theater does not belong to a more permanent form or future generation, but to the passing moment of its appearance and exchange with the audience. In short, the *Impromptu* shows that the Dramatic Poem is proper to the Stage rather than the Study.

While Molière hoped that the force of his performance before the King would silence his adversaries, he was mistaken.⁵¹ However, the staged debate would only reinforce what Molière had proven about the theatrical nature of his public persona and his work. The next play chosen for the boards of the Hôtel de Bourgogne remained "sur le terrain où Molière a transféré le débat" (Duchêne 347), favoring an imitation of *l'Impromptu de Versailles* over the virulent attacks in the *Réponse à l'Impromptu de Versailles, ou la vengeance des marquis*, attributed to Donneau (Duchêne 345). Antoine Montfleury's *Impromptu de l'Hôtel de Condé* keeps the critique on the dramatic delivery of a rival troupe, which essentially keeps the debate in and about the Theater. As Duchêne notes, "L'intérêt de cette parodie disparaît à la lecture" (347). If Molière's critics got the last word from the stage, they did so in a way that did not contradict the underlying thrust of Molière's conception of the Dramatic Poem as an event over a literary object and of his persona as a fusion of poet-director-actor rather than a conventional authorial figure.

Following the boundary-blurring products of the quarrel of *l'Ecole des femmes*, Molière's treatment of *L'Amour médecin* (1665) reinforces his theories and practices in the polemic, and provides a good transition for understanding his treatment of later works. As a hybrid form of entertainments meant for the moment, this "former comedy-ballet" (Caldicott 533), carries on the theories that Molière defended through Dorante and *L'Impromptu* by emphasizing the event of the representation and refusing to be constrained by prescribed genres. In the prologue to the entertainment, the muses of *Comédie*, *Musique* and *Ballet* work in unison for the pleasure of the king:

Quittons, quittons notre vaine querelle,

⁵¹ After a public performance of the *Impromptu* in October, Molière declared "Je ne prétends faire aucune réponse à leur critique et contre-critique" (Duchêne 344).

Ne nous disputons point nos talents tour à tour;
 Et d'une gloire plus belle
 Piquons-nous en ce jour.
 Unissons-nous tous trois d'une ardeur sans seconde,
 Pour donner du plaisir au plus grand roi du monde (468).

In this scene, the performing arts join together at the Court for the pleasure of the monarch. But the text that is printed under the title of *comédie* contains only the contributions of the poet, leaving the rest of the spectacle to the imagination. In the famous preface to the play, Molière emphasizes the importance of the theater experience which cannot be captured in print:

Il n'est pas nécessaire de vous advertir qu'il y a beaucoup de choses qui dependent de l'action; On sçait bien que les Comedies ne sont faites que pour estre joiüées, et je ne conseille de lire celle-cy qu'aux personnes qui ont des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture tout le jeu du Theatre. Ce que je vous diray, c'est qu'il serait à souhaiter que ces sortes d'ouvrages pussent tousjours se monstres à vous avec les ornemens qui les accompagnent chez le Roy. Vous les verriez dans un estat beaucoup plus supportable, et les Airs, et les Symphonies de l'incomparable M. Lully, meslez à la beauté des Voix, et à l'adresse des Danseurs, leur donnent, sans doute des graces, dont ils ont toutes les peines du monde à se passer.

The “jeu du Theatre”, along with the music and dance that accompanied the dialogue “chez le Roy” are all markers of the event of the spectacle that has passed. On the one hand, readers may wonder why Molière chose to print his comedy at all, given the declared unity of the arts at the performance. On the other hand, Molière’s offering of the text--the only authentic contribution to the festivity that can pass into print—validates the rest of the performance by not reducing it

to textual summary. This treatment differs from that of royal printer Robert Ballard in the presentation of Molière's *Le Mariage forcé* (1664) which recorded summaries of each scene instead of the actual dialogue and listed Molière as a performer but not author of the play. Rather than summarizing the entire entertainment, or filling in the *jeu-du-théâtre* with prose summaries such as Neuf-Villenaîne's for *Sganarelle*, Molière leaves it to the imagination of capable readers to "discover" the super-textual elements in the scenes evoked by the play script. "Il n'est pas nécessaire"... "on sait bien"... Molière has already established that Theater is meant to be approached with a playful disposition capable of being pleased, rather than a critical stance or narrow rules. He chooses to send his play into print for those who would receive the book in the spirit of spectators ready to see "tout le jeu du Theatre". As we will see, Molière will continue, down to his death in 1673, to present his works to readers with the understanding that the *jeu-du-théâtre* must be supplied.

"On sçait bien que les Comedies ne sont faites que pour estre jouïées": paratexts from 1666 to 1673

The year 1666 marks a major transition for Molière's working relationships with his publishers due to a number of abuses. Robert Ballard, "seul imprimeur pour la musique du Roy", printed *la Princesse d'Elide* with no known payment for the privilege made to the author (Caldicott 533), although several cartel members enjoyed the profits of selling the booklets.⁵² The cartel also undertook a profitable complete works collection in two volumes without Molière's consent.⁵³ These abuses led Molière to break with the powerful publishers and collaborate with the independent Ribou, who had pirated his works only a few years prior.

⁵² The title page for *Les Plaisirs de l'Isle enchantée*, in which the play appears, bears the names of Jolly, de Luynes, and Billaine as vendors.

⁵³ Caldicott explains the fraudulent 1666 edition in part as Molière's making a "compulsory, non-refundable contribution to the capital investment of a large publishing syndicate" (527) whose cash supply for buying privileges had run low.

Ribou, ironically, would prove a more reliable partner for Molière. According to Caldicott, there is textual evidence to suggest that Ribou's publications gave Molière more control over his works and produced texts with fewer inconsistencies (524, 533). It is interesting to note that after his fallout with the cartel led Molière to a more cooperative working relationship with his publishers Ribou (and later Pierre Le Monnier and Pierre Promée),⁵⁴ he chose to present the majority of his plays with only minimal paratext. To wit, of the 14 plays published between 1666 and Molière's death in 1673, only one bears a paratextual contribution by another, and two carry letters or prefaces written by the author himself.⁵⁵ It is possible that being left to exercise more autonomy over the presentation of his printed materials, Molière was less inclined to draw attention to the plays as books or himself as a conventional authorial figure by adding paratextual supports such as *examens*, prefaces, and dedications. Furthermore, the paratexts that do come out of this period either support Molière's previously declared aesthetic theories, as is the case with *Lettre sur la comédie du Misanthrope* (1667), or defend him against moral attack in the case of *Amphitryon* (1668) and *Tartuffe* (1669). We will examine these paratexts in light of Molière's previous treatment of his work in relation to Stage and Study.

The first is *Lettre sur la comédie du Misanthrope* (1667), attributed to Donneau de Visé. Two interpretations of this letter posit it as either unsolicited and offensive to Molière, or the product of a collaboration which summed up the author's own thoughts on the play (Bouton 92). René Robert, for one, finds the latter explanation more probable: "Pour qui connaît Visé...la

⁵⁴ Ribou published ten of Molière's plays: *Le Misanthrope*, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, *Le Sicilien*, *Amphitryon*, *Le Mariage forcé*, *L'Amour médecin*, *George Dandin*, *L'Avare*, *Tartuffe*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* [and *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce*]. Pierre Le Monnier published *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, *Psyché*, and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*; and Pierre Promée's sole publication was *Les femmes savantes*.

⁵⁵ Two notes: First, in addition to the written paratexts, there is at least one engraving accompanying a solo publication, that of *Le Médecin malgré lui* (1666). Second, it is interesting to note that the only two plays bearing paratexts by Molière in this period—*Amphitryon* (1668) and *Tartuffe* (1669)—are also the only two to have seen second editions within the time he worked with Ribou (Caldicott 532), perhaps indicative of the market interest attached to works whose 'author' (in Foucault's sense of the word) is subject to moral censorship.

lettre... n'eût jamais été publiée, surtout avec la pièce, si Molière n'en avait antérieurement approuvé la teneur" (qtd in Lop 9). One powerful argument in favor of accepting a collaboration between Molière and Donneau is Caldicott's evaluation of the author's close working relationship with Ribou as giving him more control and producing texts with fewer inconsistencies (524, 533). Furthermore, the letter treats aesthetic concerns in ways consistent with Molière's own pronouncements and practices as seen in earlier examples. I suggest that both the *Misanthrope* and the letter that precedes it may be taken as extensions of the theory that Molière elaborated in the Querelle de *l'École des femmes*, with Donneau's letter speaking about the authorial choices and theatrical effects of the theory dramatized in the play.

Beginning with the play itself, I build off Patrick Dandrey's reading of *Le Misanthrope* in light of the quarrel of *L'École des femmes*. For Dandrey, the *Misanthrope* can be read as a more mature embodiment of Molière's aesthetic theories as demonstrated in *La Critique*, a representation manifested in and made possible by the salon setting of the play:

Il semble bien que, de manière indirecte et métaphorique, sinon allégorique, le commerce mondain mis en scène dans son salon réverbère les thèses sur le genre comique ou, pour mieux dire, sur la *représentation* comique telle que Molière la concevait et en avait traité sans *La Critique de l'École des femmes* ("Célimène portraitiste" 11).

As an extension of his aesthetic articulations in the quarrel, Molière's play continues to unify theory and practice by mirroring his theory in the salon-Study he represents on the Stage: "Le salon mondain est, autant et plus peut-être que les coulisses de *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, une allégorie de l'atelier du poète qu'on surnommait le Peintre" (Dandrey, "Célimène portraitiste" 21). In that way, we can see *Le Misanthrope* as once again unifying Stage and Study for judgment by the pleasure of a viewing public. Molière is taking his theory once step further by

dramatizing it allegorically rather than satirically. The indirect nature of his aesthetic articulation through the dramatic action is complemented by the direct commentary of Donneau's letter.

Lettre sur la comédie du Misanthrope upholds Molière's conception of comedy in relation to its theater audience even in the discussion of his contributions as poet. The bulk of the letter addresses the fitness of Molière's authorial choices as they relate to his audience. Donneau states clearly at the outset that the aim of the author was to please, and that he succeeded in doing so. Although this letter precedes the written script, Donneau clearly has in mind the performed play and its success in the theater. He speaks of the misanthrope as one of the most brilliant characters "qu'on puisse produire sur la Scene", identifiable as such by his action before he even opens his mouth. Molière's success by the rule of pleasure in the theater is proven act by act through examples of the places in which he pleased. In justifying his good opinion of the *Misanthrope*, Donneau relates the treatment of the fictional subject to Molière's audience in two ways consistent with Molière's theories—first as a mirror or portrait, and also as an event in which they participate.

First, he frames the play as a mirror or portrait of the society viewing it. The selection of protagonists gives Molière the chance to speak out against the *moeurs du siècle*, reflecting them through the *médisante* and the *misanthrope* to perfect a "portrait du siècle". Echoing Uranie's conception of comedy as a mirror in the *Critique*, Donneau claims that the stage action reflects the experiences and concerns of the public and allows them to identify with the characters. For instance, he says that Molière draws on the public's common experience by placing Alceste in the situation of going through a trial, as everyone can relate to a *procès* bringing out the worst in a person. Donneau sees this authorial choice as an example of Molière success in touching his audience, and ultimately in "pleasing" through his play.

The specificity of the theater setting for Molière's mirror of society is drawn out by Donneau in the second way he relates the authorial choices of the fiction on stage to the public interacting with it. The most agreeable scene of the play, he argues, is the reading of the sonnet. To Donneau's delight, some of the audience members were played by this scene, voicing their approval of the sonnet out loud and saying it was good before Alceste declared it to be rubbish, a turn which left them confused. He says this scene was a great choice in a time when people of quality try their hand at verses, and want to be given undue credit for their position rather than thinking they should do better than others. In this way, Donneau shows that Molière's purpose as author—to show the ridicule of the *moeurs* of his age—is effectively carried out in the performance event itself, where the fiction not only mirrors, but also dialogues with reality from the stage.

Donneau's treatment of the play seems to reinforce a sense of unity between Molière's roles as author and actor by locating the genesis and execution of the play's purpose in the theater event rather than in literary norms or intertextuality. At the head of the printed book, the letter seems to reverse convention even as it fulfills it, affirming that Molière's identity as *écrivain* does not follow from the printing of the play, but precedes its performance, giving shape to the fictional world represented on stage, and whose success is known not by scrutinizing his written script, but by observing the reactions of spectators in the theater. In this way, the letter provides a complementary paratext to Molière's text, allowing the poet-actor to make a strong statement of his theoretical position that is anchored in the Theater even as the play goes to the printed page.

With the exception of *Lettre sur la comédie du Misanthrope*, none of Molière's paratextual treatments of plays between 1666 and 1673 focuses squarely on an aesthetic defense

of his conception of comedy. The vast majority see the press with no bookish accompaniments beyond *privilèges* and lists of characters. And the two plays that do receive more authorial attention in this way are subject to moral criticism more than aesthetic squabbles. The first, *Amphitryon* (1668), is presented with a dedicatory letter to Monseigneur. Complaining that he sees "rien de plus ennuyeux que les Epistres Dédicatoires", Molière reveals his need to resort to conventional accessories for his text to fend off opponents. The great name of Condé would be better applied to the head of an army than a book, he says, "et je conçois bien mieux ce qu'il est capable de faire, en l'opposant aux forces des Ennemis de cet Etat, qu'en l'opposant à la Critique des Ennemis d'une Comédie", yet the great household is called on to defend the poet. Given the moral indifference in the play towards Jupiter's infidelities, and by analogy to the king's own questionable dalliances with Madame de Montespan,⁵⁶ the enemies of *Amphitryon* were undoubtedly levying moral criticisms against the play more than concerns over Aristotle and Horace. In this context, leveraging the name of Condé through the dedicatory letter would help protect the name of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin in the court circle.

In the case of the much-disputed *Tartuffe* (1669), Molière was also seeking to clear his name from public attack. After its initial success before the king during the *Plaisirs de l'Île enchantée* at Versailles on 12 May 1664, the play had come under scrutiny from *dévots* who labeled it an impiety. Molière revised and attempted a second performance in 1667 that resulted in the play's being banned⁵⁷ until permission from the king allowed it to be printed and resume representation in 1669. When the play is finally printed, at the author's expense, Molière chooses

⁵⁶ Niderst goes so far as to say that *Amphitryon* was created *for the purpose* of defending the King's liaison with Mme de Montespan against critics (232).

⁵⁷ On 11 August 1667, the archbishop of Paris, Hardouin de Péréfixe, called *Tartuffe* "une comédie très dangereuse", associated it with libertines, forbade "à toutes personnes du [...] diocèse de représenter, sous quelque nom que ce soit, la susdite comédie" (qtd in Niderst 227).

to address his public in a preface. I suggest that the reason for his choosing a printed preface rather than a dedicatory letter or staged retort stems from the nature of his perceived offense. For one, a dedicatory letter bearing a great name would not suffice to defend Molière and his *Tartuffe* against their tenacious adversaries:

les corrections que j'y ay pû faire, le jugement du Roy et de la Reyne, qui l'ont veuë, l'aprobation des grands Princes, et de Messieurs les Ministres qui l'ont honorée publiquement de leur presence, le temoignage des Gens de bien qui l'ont trouvée profitable, *tout cela n'a de rien servy* (emphasis added).

More importantly, in this case it was impossible for Molière to take the quarrel to the Stage. This limitation is clear in the way he identifies the underlying issue of his opposition:

Voicy une Comedie dont on a fait beaucoup de bruit, qui a esté longtems persecutée; et les Gens qu'elle jouë, ont bien fait voir qu'ils estoient plus puissans en France que tous ceux que j'ay jouëz jusques icy. Les Marquis, les Précieuses, les Cocus, et les Medecins, on souffert doucement qu'on les ait representez; et ils on fait semblant de se divertir, avec tout le monde, des peinture que l'on a faites d'eux: Mais les Hipocrites n'ont point entendu raillerie; ils se sont effarouchez d'abord, et ont trouvé étrange que j'eusse la hardiesse de *joüer leurs grimaces* et de vouloir décrier un métier dont tant d'honnestes Gens se meslent. C'est un crime qu'ils ne sçauoient me pardonner, et ils se sont tous armez contre ma Comedie avec une fureur épouvantable (emphasis added).

According to Molière, the crime which inspired the fury of the 'hypocrites' was representing them on stage, "jouer leurs grimaces" before the public. But his critics chose not levy this accusation against the poet; "ils sont trop politiques pour cela, et sçavent trop bien vivre pour

découvrir le fond de leur ame". Instead, they turned his play into an offense to God and piety, calling it an abomination from beginning to end:

Toutes les sillables en sont impies; les gestes mesme y sont criminels; et le moindre coup d'oeil, le moindre branlement de teste, le moindre pas à droite ou à gauche, y cache des mysteres, qu'ils trouvent moyen d'expliquer à mon desavantage.

It is Molière's very means of theatrical representation—the gestures, nods, winks, and steps of the *jeu du Théâtre*—that are called into suspicion. With the offense of his ‘play’ (*jeu* and *pièce*) being spun by opponents into an offense to God himself, Molière can have no recourse to theatrical interventions in the debate without further proving their point. Bringing a line-up of hypocritical religious critics onto the stage *à la Critique* would hardly help his case. Instead, he must defend himself in the printed space of the preface against those who would, as he says, ‘damn him by charity’.

In the preface, he is most concerned with justifying himself to the “vrais dévots”, maintaining that he never puts the spectator in a position of confusion about *Tartuffe*, but uses all the means of the dramatic action—physical traits, word, and action—to paint him as a bad man. He says that in response “ces Messieurs tâchent d'insinüer que ce n'est point au Theatre à parler de ces matieres”. Molière must remove himself by necessity from the Theater in order to debate this point, using the paratextual space to justify the intersections of theater and religion from ancient to modern times. In this way, Molière's success in finally publishing *Tartuffe* is mitigated by the force of the religious critics who succeed for their part in limiting the representational powers of the poet that so offended them, forcing him to engage in the Study rather than from the Stage. It is clear in this context why Molière chose to present his play with a personal paratextual intervention during a period marked by little such activity.

In the three preceding examples, Molière's choice to intervene in the paratextual space of his printed plays had a clear purpose beyond convention. Even when he was not blurring the lines between Stage and Study, Molière was not forasmuch contradicting his desire to associate himself and his work primarily with the rule of pleasure in the Theater. For example, the theatrical nature of Molière's comedic theories in the fiction of the *Misanthrope* was complemented by a direct explanation of it in the prefatory letter, associating his authorial activities with success vis-à-vis the theater audience. In the case of *Amphitryon*, recourse to the strong name of a protector in court helped bolster the acceptability of the playwright's own name and that of his work. And in the publication of *Tartuffe*, the theatrical nature of the Molière's perceived offenses prevented him from defending himself from the Stage and forced him into discourse in the printed space. With the exceptions of the *Misanthrope*, *Amphitryon*, and *Tartuffe*, then, Molière chose to deliver the rest of his plays to readers without direct authorial communications in the paratext. From the relative silence of the majority of Molière's paratexts in this period, we may be able to conclude that having established his theater-centric aesthetic vision in the quarrel of *L'Ecole des femmes* and woven it into the fiction of *Le Misanthrope*, Molière preferred to send out his subsequent texts without drawing attention to their second life as print. In other words, he preferred to leave the spotlight on their stage life, assuming that "on sçait bien que les Comedies ne sont faites que pour estre jouées" (*L'Amour médecin*) and that the *jeu-du-théâtre* must be supplied by the imagination.

It is perhaps a fitting conclusion to our chronology that Molière's last 'preface' was a performed one, preceding *Le Malade imaginaire* (1673). In the last of his plays, a comedy-ballet, the poet had perhaps fulfilled his desire to paint himself on stage, debuting his work on 10 February 1673 at the Palais-Royal (Niderst 309). In this story about a hypochondriac, which

Niderst describes as a slippage of the real into illusion and a composition *en abyme* that makes it hard to tell reality and from dream (313), Molière played a man obsessed by his untimely death before collapsing during the fourth performance of the play on 17 February 1673, and dying shortly thereafter, most likely from cancer (de Lérès 274, Niderst 315). To introduce the comedy that would mark his last role as both writer and actor, Molière declared the following from the stage:

Après les glorieuses fatigues et les exploits victorieux de notre auguste monarque, il est bien juste que tous ceux qui se mêlent d'écrire travaillent ou à ses louanges ou à son divertissement. C'est ce que l'on a voulu faire, et ce prologue est un essai des louanges de ce grand prince qui donne entrée à la comédie du *Malade Imaginaire* dont le projet a été fait pour le délasser de ses nobles travaux.

Consulting Furetière's definitions of prologue, preface, and dedication, we see that the address Molière gives before his performance of *Le Malade Imaginaire* is itself a sort of hybrid genre. Separated in both the performance and the printed space from the modern prologue which follows-- a fictional song and dance meant to sing the king's praises, similar to the prologue to *Amphitryon* that Furetière cites—the announcement of the fictional scene passes by way of a threshold that more closely resembles a preface. Most commonly associated with the printed book, Furetière says that the preface is also associated with the reading of poems by their authors: "Il n'y a point de Poëte qui lise un Sonnet sans quelque espece de *preface*, sans dire qu'il l'a fait fort promptement, ou l'occasion qui l'a porté à le faire" (*Dictionnaire*). Molière's precursor to the prologue in song and dance follows this model, with the author himself alone on stage before his poem is voiced, explaining the creation of the play in terms of its adding glory and pleasurable repose to the Monarch. Not a dedication directly addressing the king, the spoken

preface nonetheless situates the play as an offering to the monarch. He advises that all those who write should work to the benefit of the King, "ou à ses louanges ou à son divertissement", and identifies the prologue as performing the first service, and the comedy designed to perform the latter.

We know of course that Louis would not attend the entertainment, and that this preface would be uttered before the multitude but not the monarch himself. Following the monopoly over all musical entertainments accorded to Lulli on 13 March 1672 (Niderst 304), Molière had no doubt at the time of writing this play that the king's favor had passed (Touchard 625, Duchêne 648). In light of his change of status at court and his conception of *la comédie*, so dependent on the ephemeral forms of the spectacle, and the moment of representation before the audience, I read these words as a fleeting monument to a reality past. In October 1658, at the beginning of his ascent into royal favor, Molière had delivered a similar spoken preface to his *Docteur amoureux*.⁵⁸ Later, establishing his mastery over court entertainments with his first comedy-ballet, Molière had expanded the reach of his Theater by creating a stage for himself on the printed page. There in the written space, he performed his *facheux* role as an author, and there his muse gave *Remerciements au Roi*, reading success on the monarch's face. Now in his last comedy-ballet, deposed by Lulli and the *opéra*, the poet-actor moves from memorializing theatricality in the enduring printed word, to rendering ephemeral that which should have endured—the service of his pen to the praise and pleasure of the king. The words of dedication spoken in the moment do not reach their recipient; there is no smile of satisfaction by which to

⁵⁸ After presenting *Nicomède* at the Vieux-Louvre to 20 year old Louis and the queen mother, "Moliere paraît seul sur la scène et s'adresse au roi. Il le remercie et affecte une touchante modestie, remarquant que 'Sa Majesté [a] à son service d'excellents originaux, dont [sa troupe et lui-même] [ne sont] que de très faibles copies'. Ce qui signifie qu'il se sent incapable d'égaliser les comédiens de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne. Il propose ensuite un 'petit divertissement'. Ce sera *Le Docteur amoureux*" (Niderst 80).

judge the offering. For a man who measured his success by the pleasure of the Spectator in the moment of performance, this spoken preface rings sadly of the emptiness of the crowded theater.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Molière challenges the two-step reception of his work as codified in the Querelle du *Cid* as a performance for the pleasure of spectators whose judgment is superseded by literary experts in the Study. The poet-actor does not reject publication or even critical engagement with the dramatic rules. Instead, he mitigates his work's passage into print by appropriating the written medium and its conventions into his realm of Theater. By obscuring the lines between established genres of drama, between conventions of print and stage, and between moments and spaces of representation and judgment of his plays, Molière challenges the sufficiency of traditional ways of defining *la comédie* and judging it in the Theater and the Study. For Molière, theater need not be treated as a subgenre of the literary arts subject to definition and evaluation by experts away from the setting of the spectacle. Theater is sufficient for theater. *L'Impromptu de Versailles* proves that all he needs to make a comedy is in the theater at the moment of its representation—the director and his troupe, the audience, a *noeud* to unravel, and the physical *jeu de théâtre* to bring it to life. And the conception of comedy as a mirror, espoused by Uranie in the *Critique* and demonstrated by Donneau in his letter on the *Misanthrope*, serves to show that Molière will always have what he needs to make a comedy in the very public he presents it to. The source and destination of the fictional representation are unified in the public, whether it be comprised of “Augustes personnes” or “la multitude” (*Facheux* in *Oeuvres II* 11-12). The way that Molière finesses his print publication gesture downplays the fact that he is placing his plays in the hands of readers, and emphasizes instead through a theatrical mixing of conventions that his work is to be appreciated in the spirit of the

Theater if not in the playhouse itself. Indeed, his theatrical imprint has endured for future generations who read the winks and sly smiles in his witty creations, ensuring that “the power of laughter would continue to be exercised on Molière's side" (Broome 15), even in the Study.

Chapter 3: Genre and paratext: transitioning Racine's tragedies from Stage to Page

The legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* in codifying 'readerly' expectations for theater pieces is felt more clearly with respect to tragedy than comedy in the latter seventeenth century, due to the constraints on the genre itself as well as the precedents for its treatment in the time since the quarrel. The hierarchy of literary elements over spectacular ones as articulated to the public in the Querelle and subsequent paratexts has created *spectators* with a different approach to the theater event. This evolution impacts the function that Racine's paratexts serve in navigating the passage of his works from stage to page and posterity. In contrast to Molière, whose work in the comedic genre was able to finesse the tension between Stage and Study by downplaying the role of reader as judge (chapter 2), Racine's tragedies cannot escape their association with the Study, and must find new strategies for making their reception successful in both the *théâtre* and *cabinet*. In light of the changes in the practices of judgment that his tragedies are submitted to, we can better understand the revisions that Racine made to a handful of prefaces for some of his most famous plays. As we will see, Racine attempts to correct the disruption of the two-step reception of his work by intervening first to re-educate his readers as spectators, and then in the revised prefaces to present his plays in a literary framework fit for readers and posterity.

An essential piece to the analysis in this chapter is the difference that genre plays in the possible rapports of Racine to his public through his theatrical texts and authorial paratexts. Speaking broadly of comedy and tragedy as the major generic divisions, we will examine straight theater pieces, to the exclusion of newer forms with different expectations for reception, such as the machine play, lyrical tragedy, and comedy ballet. Taking a narrow view of the dramatic poem for the sake of drawing out the differences between its two primary modes of

representation, we see the impact of these distinctions in each genre's relationship to its judgment by spectators and readers.

This chapter is developed in two halves with two parts each. In the first half, we examine the constraints and precedents that shape the expectations for tragedy's rapport to Theater and Study in the time of Racine. First, we contrast the genres of comedy and tragedy through the definitions circulating at the time by ancient and contemporary authorities and as articulated by Molière and Racine regarding the function of their respective genres as 'mirrors'. Secondly, we examine the paratextual materials that would have conditioned the reading public of tragedies from the time of the Querelle du *Cid* to Racine's prominence on the stage, roughly the 1640s to early 1660s. Taking together these considerations of the specificity of the tragic genre in relation to Stage and Study, we see that while the Dramatic Poem at large is navigating the passage from stage to page in print publication, Racine and other writers of tragedy must acknowledge the prerequisite step of *page* to stage to page, where their fiction finds its source in a book and aspires to end up in a book for posterity after having passed through the judgment of spectators and readers. This understanding of the path that tragedy is conceived as following provides us a framework for the second half of the chapter, where we interpret Racine's authorial interventions in the writing and re-writing of paratextual materials, analyzing in turn his original and revised prefaces to *Alexandre le Grand*, *Andromaque*, *Britannicus*, and *Bérénice*.

Part One: Tragedy's constraints and precedents

Examining first the constraints on the genre of tragedy in the mid to late seventeenth century in France, it is important to imitate the authors we study and refer to Aristotle's *Poetics*, which provides the basic definition of tragedy and the elements considered in its evaluation. For

Aristotle, tragedy at its most foundational is the dramatic imitation of an action that inspires pity or fear:

A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions (55).

Tragedy consists of six parts: the fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle, and (in Aristotle's time as well as in the later seventeenth century form of lyrical tragedy) melody. The so-called unities of time and action are drawn from Aristotle's principles: tragedy's length is limited to that which can be taken in as a whole in one viewing, as opposed to Epic poetry, which can become quite lengthy (54), and it should imitate a complete action with a beginning, middle, and end which flow from each other with necessity and probability (57). The best kind of plot involves a decent man (better than average) who is ruined (going from happiness to misery) not by depravity but by an error in judgment (58). The incidents arousing pity and fear leading to his unhappy end occur most effectively when unexpected and at the same time direct consequences of one another (57). The effectiveness of the plot is the highest measure of the play's worth, while spectacle is the least artistic element. Therefore, the pity and fear should arise from the necessity and probability of the incidents and not from the theatrical presentation (59). Because of this, Aristotle says, "the tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance" (56), a claim which particularly shaped the view of theater held by theater critic François Hédelin d'Aubignac, as well as the judgments of interested readers in the *Querelle du Cid*.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Regarding d'Aubignac's views of spectacle and reading, see L. Norman, *Du Spectateur Au Lecteur* 18-20. On the Quarrel of the *Cid*, see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

In the few remarks on comedy that we find in Aristotle, we see that it is the imitation of actions of Characters who are worse than average. Rather than producing admiration, fear and pity, comedy may draw on the power of laughter. This comes from the ridiculous, which Aristotle defines as a species of the Ugly, of the sort not causing pain or harm, but a mistake or deformity that incites laughter (54).

The definitions of tragedy and comedy from Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* (1690) are more descriptive than prescriptive, but uphold Aristotle's injunction that they imitate human action, and follow the basic division of the genres along the lines of the social rank of characters treated, and the kind of endings they meet. Moreover, these seventeenth century definitions refer to the theater of Ancient Greece as much as to contemporary pieces. Furetière gives the general definition of *la comédie* as a synonym for theater piece:

Piece de theatre composée avec art, en prose, ou en vers, pour *représenter quelque action humaine*; et se dit en ce sens des pieces serieuses, ou burlesques. Il est allé à la *Comédie* voir le Cinna, l'Horace, le Misanthrope, le Tartuffe. Il y eut bal, ballet et *Comedie* chez le Roy. Ce n'est pas aujourd'huy jour de *Comedie* (emphasis added).

Breaking down the genres more specifically, Furetière calls *Tragedie* a

Poëme Dramatique, qui represente sur le theatre quelque action signalée de *personnages illustres*, laquelle souvent a une *issue funeste*. Les *Tragedies* de Sophocle, d'Euripide, de Seneque, de Corneille. Horace attribué l'invention de la *Tragedie* à Tespis, et Quintilien à Eschyle. Pasquier dit que la *Tragedie* en France fut premierement introduite par Estienne Jodelle, qui fit la Cleopatre et la Didon; et que depuis Robert Garnier en emporta le prix: mais leurs ouvrages sont pitoyables à comparaison de ceux d'un tres-grand nombre de Poëtes qui ont depuis réussi en ce genre, et particulièrement de

Corneille et de Racine, qui ont beaucoup encheri sur les Grecs et les Latins (emphasis added).

Here, Furetière upholds that tragedy deals with illustrious characters and sad endings. But more interestingly, he calls attention to the origins of tragedy, and the superiority of writers such as Corneille and Racine, who have drawn their inspiration and subject matter from the Ancient models. His entry for *Comedie* is similar: in addition to its being a general term, *comédie*

Se prend plus particulièrement pour les pieces qui representent des choses *agreables* et non sanglantes, et des *personnes de mediocre condition*: comme les *comedies* d'Aristophane, de Terence, le *Menteur* de Corneille, les *Fascheux* de Moliere, les *Plaideurs* de Racine (emphasis added).

Comedy's characters and actions are not grand and heroic, but closer to the average man. The examples from the seventeenth century that Furetière gives are all plays that represent actions and types found in contemporary society (dishonest suitors, annoying courtiers, lawsuit-happy neighbors) even though comedy as well tragedy is anchored in the lineage of Ancient masters.

Defining the relationship of each genre to its public, Jules de la Mesnardière, theater critic and member of the Académie Française from 1655 to 1663, associates the difference in high and low content to the type of audience it suits. In the *Discours* preceding *La Poétique* (1640), he says that comedy is useful to the "people" because it corrects "les moeurs lors mesme qu'elle les expose" (K). On the other hand, tragedy is not destined for the improvement of the many but the refinement of the few:

Si on desiroit que le Peuple fut touché du Poème tragique, il falloit lui faire traiter des Aventures populaires. Mais puisque celles de ce genre ne lui sont pas convenables, & qu'il ne fait profession que d'instruire les Puissants par les malheurs de leurs semblables,

il est fort aisé de juger que si la vile populace a quelques accès auprès de lui, c'est de la mesme maniere qu'elle en a auprès des Monarques, que se laissent voir aux Peuples afin d'en estre admirez (O).

“Le peuple” may feel respect for the tragic heroes, but not see themselves in the lessons to be learned. As la Mesnardière concludes: "Ainsi le profit des Spectacles exposez dans la Tragédie, est reservé aux grandes Ames; soit que l'illustre naissance, les éminentes dignitez, ou la bonne nourriture leur donnent cette condition" (P). Later on, speaking heatedly against Castelvetro's moralistic notion of *catharsis* that would ‘purge and expel’ fear and pity from the hearts of men (179), La Mesnardière maintains that not all men are equally capable of being touched by the action of tragedy, which is not within the reach of the “ignorant multitude” unless it is unregulated and full of absurdities (*Discours V*). For la Mesnardière, the correlation of tragedy's accessibility with a restricted portion of the public is closely bound up with the judgment of the plays. "Il nous est aisé de conclure", he pursues with classist and racist gusto, "que [les Muses] ne parlent point de tout à la vile multitude dans la grave Tragédie; & que de l'en rendre arbitre, c'est commettre le jugement des gentillesses de l'Amynte à un Arabe, ou à un Scythe" (X). While la Mesnardière's is not the sole view on this matter,⁶⁰ his commentary reveals that the possible rapport of tragedy to its public is indeed shaped by the constraints of its representing that which is powerful and serious.

The mirror function of comedy and tragedy

Moving from the defining parameters of the tragic genre to deeper explore their consequences for the rapport of tragedy to stage and page, one key difference between comedy and tragedy is the mirror function that relates each genre to its contemporary public, and to the

⁶⁰ For example, Bensarade's preface to *Méléagre* prizes accessibility to all and Du Ryer's *Saül* is dedicated to ‘tout le monde’.

moment of its representation. These differences become clear when comparing reflections by Racine and his opponents on the genre of tragedy to Molière's defense of his comedy in the polemical *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* and *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. First, the two authors rightly assign a different 'mirror' function to their respective genres. For Molière, the ridiculous portraits of comedy are, as Uranie famously declares in the *Critique*, "miroirs publics, où il ne faut jamais témoigner qu'on se voie" (VI). The characters on the stage reflect those sitting in the playhouse because they are drawn from society at large. Dorante, Molière's main spokesman of theory in the play, explains that in comedy: "il faut peindre d'après nature. On veut que ces portraits ressemblent ; et vous n'avez rien fait, si vous n'y faites reconnaître les gens de votre siècle" (VI). The imperative to mirror the contemporary is anchored in the moral function of comedy as articulated by La Mesnardière. In scene IV of Molière's *Impromptu*, Brecourt reprises Uranie's and Dorante's remarks from the *Critique*, saying: "...l'affaire de la comédie est de représenter en général tous les defaults des hommes, et principalement des hommes de notre siècle...". The distance between satirical imitation and comedic representation lies in the exaggeration that Aristotle ascribes to the comic. Racine justifies his treatment of comic characters in his sole comedy, *Les Plaideurs* (1669), in this way: "Il estoit à propos d'outrer un peu les Personnages pour les empêcher de se reconnoître" but in a way that "le public ne laissoit pas de discerner le vray au travers du ridicule". The mirror of comedy, while exaggerating, should reflect the truth of the public character, with all its flaws and foibles, back to itself for the purpose of moral improvement. Patrick Dandrey has called this brand of ridicule "le rire de vraisemblance" which allowed comedy to "châtier les mœurs par le rire et délecter par une représentation fidèle et souriante de la réalité moyenne" (*Molière ou l'esthétique de ridicule* 19, 20).

For tragedy, in contrast, the mirror function is not one that seeks to show the general public to itself. Whereas Molière and his critics speak of his ‘painting’ the world around him into his comedies,⁶¹ Racine speaks of painting his characters after “le plus grand Peintre de l'Antiquité”, Tacite (revised preface, *Britannicus* in *Oeuvres* 443). The nature that he imitates is mediated by another representation, distanced from the moment and place that he writes in. Indeed, failing to maintain a certain distance from the world of the average spectator or reader is detrimental to the tragedy’s effect. La Mesnardière, as noted earlier, believed it impossible for tragedy to represent the world of “le Peuple”. Saint-Évremond, a former pupil of Gassendi and exile after the fallout of Fouquet, reflected on this matter in a more aesthetic and historical vein. Expanding on correspondence with his friend Mme Bourneau in his *Dissertation sur le Grand Alexandre* regarding this matter, Saint-Évremond’s primary critique of Racine’s *Alexandre le Grand* centers on the representation of historical characters that conforms them too much to the manners and customs of contemporary France, to the detriment of their specifically ancient and foreign attributes:

Porus...que Quinte-Curce dépeint tout étranger aux Grecs et aux Perses, est ici purement Français; au lieu de nous transporter aux Indes, on l'amène en France, où il s'accoutume si bien à notre humeur, qu'il semble être né parmi nous, ou du moins y avoir vécu toute sa vie (184).

Rather than expecting to see a reflection of contemporary France on the stage, the spectator should expect to see ancient and foreign ways that should be judged by their own measures:

Le spectateur qui voit représenter ces Anciens sur nos Théâtres, suit les mêmes règles pour en bien juger, que le Poète pour les bien dépeindre; et pour y réussir mieux, il

⁶¹ See for instance Molière’s *La Critique de l’Ecole des Femmes* VI, *L’Impromptu de Versailles* V, Boursault’s *Le Portrait du Peintre*, and Chevalier’s *Les Amours de Calotin*.

éloigne son esprit de tout ce qu'il voit en usage, tâche à *se défaire du goût de son temps*, renonce à son propre naturel, s'il est opposé à celui des personnes qu'on représente: car les morts ne sauraient entrer en ce que nous sommes, mais la *raison*, qui est de tous les temps, nous peut faire entrer en ce qu'ils ont été (184, emphasis added).

According to Saint-Évremond, it is by shedding the taste of one's own time and using *reason* (which he sees as universal and timeless) to access another way of being, that the poet and spectator should identify with the tragic hero.⁶² The fictive world, and the taste that it aims to please, should be detached from the present moment, tastes, and preferences. In this way, if it serves as a mirror, it is one that is held at an angle, allowing the holder to glance backwards but not see his own face.

The *regard* of the spectator is further evoked by Racine in his revised preface to *Bajazet* (1672), where he addresses the issue of distance necessary for the tragic effect to take full force. Speaking of his tragedy, whose subject was taken from an account told to the Chevalier de Nantouillet by the French ambassador to Constantinople, le Comte de Cézy, Racine tells us that its hero, Bajazet, was one of four brothers to the Sultan Amurat, who conquered Babylon in 1638 (*Oeuvres* 623, 625). "Quelques Lecteurs pourront s'étonner qu'on ait osé mettre sur la Scène une Histoire si récente" (625). To this, Racine responds that nowhere in the Rules does it say you cannot treat modern stories (625). At the same time, he cautions that a certain measure of distance—by place if not time—must be maintained. He would not advise others to put such a modern story on the stage if it had passed in the same country it is represented to, nor to put

⁶² Racine will take issue with Saint-Évremond's accusation, but not necessarily its underlying assumptions. In his revised preface to *Alexandre le grand*, to be examined at length later in this chapter, Racine quotes Seneca in Latin and French, using a timeless ancient authority to apply universal truth to his treatment of Porus. As Muratore notes regarding the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns that would come to a head later, partisans of the ancients such as Racine reflected the majority view that aesthetic principles are universal and please as well for all peoples, times, and places (Muratore 15).

Heroes on the Stage that might have been known by the Spectators (625). Undergirding this advice is the understanding that

les Personnages Tragiques doivent être regardés *d'un autre oeil* que nous ne regardons d'ordinaire les Personnes que nous avons vues de si près. On peut dire que le respect que l'on a pour les Héros augmente à mesure qu'ils s'éloignent de nous (625, emphasis added).

Distance from the tragic hero is an essential part of the formula for evoking the pity that results from the demise of a respected man. The type of distance employed is less important: distance of place can help make up for distance of time; it serves the same effect in people's minds, and the foreign nature of *moeurs* and customs makes it seem like it is from a different century (625). In any case, in tragedy, the “eye” of the spectator should be drawn up and away toward a character greater than he, and not trained to look at the faults of the self or neighbor “que nous avons vues de si près”.

Genre and the limits of reflexive representation

Resulting from this necessary distance of the fictive world from the world of the viewing and reading public is the impossibility of tragedy's dialoguing with its public, or representing its own critique and defense. Racine shows above that distance by either place or time (if not both) must be observed in tragedy. In contrast, in the proximity of comedy, Molière is able to collapse the moment of the fiction represented with the moment of the representation itself, as in *L'Impromptu de Versailles* where "la scène est à Versailles dans la salle de la Comédie" and, as Roger Duchêne puts it, between theater and reality, the distance is reduced to nothing (339). As discussed above, and more in-depth in chapter 2, Molière is able to blur the boundaries of the conventions of Stage and Study by performing his polemical response instead of producing pamphlets or written prefaces alone. This is made possible by the ability of comedy to engage in

the contemporary and close. Tragedy, on the other hand, must maintain a distance from its public that precludes its ability to portray the characters or critiques found in the *salle de theater*. The content of tragedy's fiction must be distanced from the moment of its performance, and direct forms of polemical or theoretical discourse must be separated from the fiction. This is illustrated both in the limited type of self-reflexivity permitted in tragedy, and in the use of drama in debates surrounding tragedy.

Regarding the potential for tragedy's fiction itself to carry reflexive content, Mary Jo Muratore offers an interesting approach. Her main contention is that in light of the restrictions and complications of the French Neo-Classical view of mimesis and many writers' nearly obsessive self-reflexive theorizing, texts from this period can be read on a metatextual level to reveal the difficulties of the literary process of capturing reality in discourse. Proposing to read texts as "metatextual ciphers for the dilemmas and difficulties encountered in text production" (16), she views Racine's *Andromaque*, for instance, as a dramatized conflict between the self as derivative or generative, reflecting questions of literary imitation (18). In a similar vein, Patrick Dandrey's chapter "Célimène portraitiste. Du salon mondain à l'atelier du Peintre" reads *Le Misanthrope* as a more mature embodiment of Molière's aesthetic theories as demonstrated in *La Critique* but "de manière indirecte et métaphorique, sinon allégorique" (11). While reading *Andromaque* or the *Misanthrope* in this way may indeed correspond to the reflections of the authors on the labor of writing, there remain limitations to what such *metatextual* usages can convey. I do not disagree with Muratore that the texts themselves may be an extension of the writer's reflections in *paratextual* spaces:

a commentary on the very process of literary production, that is to say, as an internal dialectic of theoretical issues. In this sense, the work continues and occasionally

contradicts the polemical diatribes found in the prefaces, *examens*, *discours*, and letters of the writers of the period (16-17).

At the same time, I believe it is important to articulate what the paratext does for the author that the text itself cannot do. The paratextual spaces, as we know, serve as a place where it is possible to voice direct and non-metaphorical reflections on the theory and criticism of the poet's work. The *Misanthrope*'s metatextuality differs from that of *la Critique* or *l'Impromptu* in its "indirect" and "metaphorical" nature that is complemented by the direct aesthetic discourse of the paratextual letter that Donneau de Visé supplies (see chapter 2). In the case of comedy, it is possible for a writer to choose between directly addressing theory and critics in his paratext or in fiction, and indirectly representing his theories through allegory. In the case of tragedy, however, the author has only two choices: to be direct in the paratext, or indirect in the text. Because of this, reflections on theory are possible within the fiction of the tragedy itself, but critiquing and responding to critics are not.

This limitation is seen when polemics surrounding tragedy are taken up in the form of drama, such as the anonymous *Tite et Titus, ou Critique sur les Bérénices: comédie* in the dispute between Corneille's and Racine's competing *Bérénices*. In this case, the subject matter is the tragedies, but the quarrel is necessarily moved to the realm of *comédie*. In this play, Thalie and Melpomène, the muses of comedy and tragedy respectively, lead the title couples to be judged by Apollo in the Temple of Memory. Curious about why Thalie is accompanying Corneille's tragic hero Tite, he asks, "est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose de comique dans mon Caractère?" The response? It is better not to ask (543). The critique of the distant tragic hero by means of the close regard of comedy's muse draws attention to the incongruities and ridicule of the man who should be seen, as Racine put it, "d'un autre oeil", removed enough to permit respect instead of

scrutiny. Since within the fiction of tragedy, in the *text* itself, there is no room for the eye of the critic, the critique and defense of tragedy are often found in the *paratext*, the separate space accompanying the script in a book. Because of this, examination of paratextual presentations of tragedies and surrounding polemical publications is especially important.

Tragedy's precedents in paratexts from the 1640s to early 1660s

We have just seen through comparison with comedy the primary constraints on the rapport of tragedy with its contemporary public and the forms its critique and defense are permitted to take. We will now explore the precedents for tragedy's relationship to stage and page that Racine's public would most likely have been exposed to, in the paratexts accompanying a wide range of tragedies from the time of the Querelle du *Cid* to the time of Racine's success on stage, roughly the 1640s to early 1660s. As Alain Viala writes, "Plus qu'à toute autre époque peut-être, les écrivains de l'âge classique ont contribué à former, à éduquer et sélectionner leurs lecteurs" (*Naissance* 124).⁶³ The paratexts and polemical texts that circulated alongside theater pieces helped shape the spectator-readers' expectations for tragedy as it relates to the realms of Stage and Study, expectations that Racine will grapple with his own paratextual interventions. In the typical discourse of this body of paratexts we see, first, a continuation of the two-step reception of the play as observed in the 1630s, which includes judgment by spectators and anticipated judgment by readers as a passage to posterity. Furthermore, there is a conception of the public as divided between those learned and unlearned in the 'rules' of theater. And finally, authors offer justification of works through book knowledge, appealing to their historicity and the authority of the ancients. To unravel these ways of presenting tragedies to their reading publics, we will first examine in detail two particularly rich paratexts from each end

⁶³ Hélène Merlin develops the role of *littérateurs* in the formation of literary publics for theater at greater length in chapter 8 of *Public et littérature*.

of period in question: Guérin de Bouscal's preface to *Cléomène* (1640) and Corneille's dedication and preface to *Oedipe* (1659). We will then take each point in turn to be supported by various paratexts from the period.

In his address 'Au Lecteur', Guérin de Bouscal,⁶⁴ begins by clearly identifying his Reader as the judge of his play, subsequent to the performance and private readings of it:

C'est à toy, favorable Lecteur, que je dedie cet ouvrage. Sy tu las desja veu paroistre sur le Theatre, je ne doute point que tu ne sois bien aise de le voir encore sur le papier, et si tu as esté privé de ce divertissement, je ne te demande que deux heures de ton loysir pour *juger* du merite de mon present. Je sçay bien qu'apres les sentimens avantageux que ce Poeme à receus *au cabinet et en public*; apres ce qu'en ont dit les Maistres de l'art et tous ceux qui ont assisté à sa representation, je pourrois m'engager à te l'offrir sans aucune precaution, et en esperer de toy un accueil favorable (emphasis added).

Several points are worth drawing out here. First, Guérin gives significant weight to the new printed form of his "ouvrage" by dedicating it to the "favorable Lecteur", the reading public who encounters the play in book form regardless of prior exposure to it. Expanding on this point, we see that before its printing, the play had already undergone judgment "au cabinet et en public" by two distinct parts of the public: the "Maistres de l'art et tous ceux qui ont assisté à sa representation". The parallel structure of the two places of judgment with the two groups expressing their appreciation of the play associates the literary experts with readers in their studies and the wider public with spectators, as seen in the *Querelle du Cid* (see chapter 1). The Reader—the abstract recipient that the author engages within the paratext and to whom the book

⁶⁴ A lawyer from Languedoc, Daniel Guérin de Bouscal is known only by his eleven tragedies, which appeared between 1634 and the mid-1640s (Lancaster 2: 421-422; Mouhy 6). Regarding some ambiguity around his first name, C.E.J. Caldicott has provided evidence that the formerly-used appellation of Guyon was erroneous (Forestier, "Guérin de Bouscal").

is dedicated—is therefore inscribed more in the realm of the expert than in the realm of the average person. As we will see, this has an effect on the criteria for judgment anticipated from the Reader. Third, the book’s publication is associated with a second round of judgment by the public, who is authorized to pronounce an opinion. The role of the Reader of the book as judge, through the act of reading itself, is made more explicit in the following lines, where the writer asks for nothing more than the

...curiosité de lire cette piece *d'un bout à l'autre* avec un peu plus d'attention qu'on n'en donne aux choses indifferentes. Cependant suspens ton jugement et ne me donne ny blasme ny loüange qu'avec cognoissance; Mais lorsque ta lecture sera achevée, *prononce hardiment* en ma faveur ou contre moy, tout ce que tu jugeras raisonnable, je me soumets absolument à ta censure (emphasis added).

Familiarity with the play through open-minded reading, from one end of the book to the other, is the pre-requisite for pronouncing a verdict which will carry weight, and which the author says he will apply to correcting any errors in the future.

The authorial choices that he feels compelled to preemptively defend center on the historical accuracy of the plot. He tells the Reader not to accuse him of ignorance of history, explaining that for the embellishment of the play he made a character appear in Alexandria that had died in Greece at an earlier point in history, and asserting that this kind of modification is commonly practiced by the masters:

J'ay fait un peu de violence à la verité pour donner plus d'éclat à mon ouvrage, et comme je me suis proposé la satisfaction de ceux qui ayment le Theatre plustot que l'instruction de ceux qui ignorent l'Histoire, j'ay esté bien aise d'estre moins exact en celle-cy, afin de l'estre davantage en celle-la: Ne trouve donc pas mauvais mon dessein, où si tu le condannes

prepare-toy à combattre les sentimens de toute l'Antiquité et de tous les plus grands hommes du siecle.

The association of the tragic genre with the history and myths of Antiquity is so strong that the poet must remind his judges that the primary function of the dramatic poem is the pleasure of his public rather than the instruction of those ignorant of historical facts. Tragedy, and its critics, must always answer to the life of its subject *avant la lettre* of its printed book. Because of this, the precedent for modifying history in stage fiction, set by the ancient writers themselves, becomes an invaluable support. If the tragic play is to be evaluated by the 'readerly' comparison of one text to another, scrutinized against the tomes of history that it draws from, it may be justified by the poetic voices that saw that history on the stage the first time.

The precedent of tragedy's relationship to history is further exemplified in Corneille's dedication of *Oedipe* (1659) to Nicolas Fouquet, the Surintendant des finances for the young Louis XIV. In a poem praising Fouquet for reviving his old, wrinkled muse, Corneille credits himself with the power to raise the shadows of history to new life on the stage:

Choisy-moy seuement quelque nom dans l'Histoire
 Pour qui tu veüilles place au Temple de la Gloire
 Quelque nom favory qu'il te plaise d'arracher
 A la nuit de la tombe, aux cendres du bûcher.
 Soit qu'il faille ternir ceux d'Aenée et d'Achille,
 Par un noble attentat sur Homere et Virgile,
 Soit qu'il faille obscurir par un dernier effort
 Ceux que j'ay sur la Scene affranchis de la mort.

In his preface, Corneille explains the choice to place the poem at the head of his play, saying that the ‘Sur-Intendant des belles Lettres’ had given him the choice of three subjects for the Theater. Although preserved in the annals of history and the tragedies of predecessors, the ancient heroes that Corneille references are at risk of perishing from view unless plucked from the tomb to be brought into the ‘Temple de la Gloire’. For Corneille, this seems to happen “sur la Scene”, but is confirmed in the book: the artful revival of long-dead subjects to the liking of contemporary audiences is a glory that affirms the quality of the new book that will live on for posterity.

Corneille frames his authorial choices for bringing history to the stage in light of the expectations of his public, whom he identifies in two parts: the “Sçavans” who would approve of his choice of subject as the masterpiece of antiquity, and “nos Dames” whose sensibility he fears the gouged eyes of the hero would disturb, incurring the censure of those accompanying them. In attempting to please both parties, he traded fidelity to the source-text for the success of the new creation; as he puts it, he lost the advantage he had promised himself of being a translator of the great men that preceded him, but in going a different route was rewarded with having the most “Auditeurs” agree that it was his most artful play yet. The proper relationship of the playwright’s craft to history is thus not one of servile copying to retain all the facts, but of seizing the essence and adapting the details to the satisfaction of one’s audience. And this ‘re-writing’ of history is worthy of shelf-space in the great libraries alongside ancient works: “c'est dans les Bibliothèques qu'on attend ces précieux momens qu'il [Fouquet] dérobe aux occupations qui l'accablent, pour en gratifier ceux qui ont quelque talent d'écrire *avec succès*” (emphasis added). The Library is a place of pleasurable retreat to the works of successful writers: the glory of success on the stage makes *Œdipe* worthy of a place in the ‘Temple de la Gloire’ of posterity, but it is not forasmuch solely based on the performance. The ultimate product of a flourishing muse is a Book.

Corneille praises Fouquet's patronage by saying that "nos dernieres années ont produit peu de *Livres* considérables...dont les Autheurs ne se soient mis sous une protection si glorieuse..." (emphasis added). The revival of his Muse has now succeeded in reviving history with "la profondeur de la doctrine,... la pompe et la netteté de l'expression, ... les agrements et la justesse de l'Art" that make *Oedipe* a work fit for the stage *and* the Library.

The recurring themes of tragedy's relation to stage and page seen above in the multi-layered paratexts by Guérin de Bouscal and Corneille are directly confirmed by a wide range of other prefaces from this period. Unpacking examples for each major point, we see first that the two-step reception of the play as judged by spectators and readers continues to surface in many paratexts. One strategic navigation from the Stage to the Study is seen in the dedicatory letter and sonnet preceding *La Porcie romaine* (1646) by Claude Boyer.⁶⁵ In this paratext, Boyer showcases the entry of the play into the *cabinet* as a step into posterity with the escort of a privileged reader. Dedicated to the fore-figure of the salons, la Marquise de Rambouillet, the title heroine comes to the *salonnière* for her approbation, wanting to know

si en quittant le langage de Rome, elle en a perdu les sentimens; Et sans tirer aucun avantage de tout ce qu'on a dit en sa faveur, c'est seulement par l'accueil que vous luy ferez, qu'elle veut juger d'elle-mesme.

The book sets aside other favorable voices to await the judgment pronounced by a particular reader as a measure of its merit. What's more, the specific evaluation demanded is based on a 'readerly' knowledge of ancient Rome, a judgment of the new Portia in light of her namesake in

⁶⁵ Claude Boyer (1618-1698) was a persistent playwright under Racine's shadow and Boileau's scrutiny, who counted many failures between the successes of his first and last works, but was nonetheless accepted into the Académie Française in 1666 (Beauchamps 2:230-5; Lérès 520-1). Designated by biographical notices as 'abbé', Boyer never signed his own name on title pages that way, including one of his last plays, *Judith* (1695), whose privilege presents him as *le sieur Claude Boyer de l'Académie Française* (Forestier, "Claude Boyer").

history. In a sonnet following the letter, Boyer claims that Mme de Rambouillet's sole voice of approval will ward off envious detractors and give his tragic heroine a "second life" and "un immortel renom", and will open the way to future hospitable welcomes:

n'estant plus estrangere, où vous estes si considerée, J'espere, MADAME, qu'elle aura assez de bonheur pour *avoir l'entrée de plus curieux cabinets*, et pour n'y perdre pas l'estime, qu'elle attend de vostre approbation (emphasis added).

In this case, it is the approval of a select reader with knowledge of historical precedents, rather than the approbation of the theater crowds, that gains the play-as-book entry into the immortality of the Study.

While Boyer envisions the publication, i.e. making public, of his work as spreading through its introduction to wider groups by a key influential reader, another writer finds it advantageous to acknowledge the power to judge in the hands of each reader. Historiographer Jean Puget de la Serre offers his *Saincte Catherine* (1640-1660) "aux Esprits Forts". I cite his short address in full:

Je donne en fin cet Ouvrage à vostre curiosité, pour voir si vous sçavez louer avec raison, ou médire de bonne grace. Ce n'est pas que je desire vostre approbation, ny que je craigne vostre censure; je cherche seulement ma satisfaction, vous donnant sujet de parler, pour avoir celuy de vous cognoistre. Il n'est point de Tableau qui ne demande et son jour et sa bordure. Que si celuy-cy avec tous ces ornemens ne peut encore vous agreer, vous me forcerez de croire que son éclat éblouit vostre veuë, ou que vos sentimens sont trop profanes pour un objet si divin. *Je vous laisse pourtant la liberté que je ne sçaurois vous oster, d'en juger à vostre fantaisie.* Mais je vous conseille de peser

vos paroles, puisque l'estime et le mespris qu'on en fera, vous servira de recompense, ou de punition (emphasis added).

The liberty of judgment is one that the poet attributes to the reader as a sort of inevitable by-product of making a work public. The dispersion of the book into many hands means many receptions which will produce praise or censure. But in authorizing the judgment of his work, the author also retains a measure of judgment over verdicts pronounced, which he may in turn evaluate “pour voir si vous sçavez louer avec raison, ou médire de bonne grace”. This preface thus sets up a relationship between author and public in which all are open to judge, and all judgments are open to evaluation, making room for future exchanges and counter-critiques of the reception his book receives. Racine, as we will see, will feel entitled to this kind of role as well.

In identifying spectators and readers as judges of the plays they make public, writers also often point to two distinct parts of their audience based on their level of learning. As we saw in Guérin de Bouscal’s preface, these often fall into “les Maistres de l’art et tous ceux qui ont assisté à sa representation”. Texts surrounding Isaac de Benserade’s *Méléagre* (1640-45) illustrate the divide between the expectations of the savants and the average spectator. In his address to the reader, Benserade⁶⁶ makes it clear that he is seeking to please a wider audience that includes both 'd'habiles et d'ignorans': "je veux bien m'élever, mais je ne veux pas qu'on me perde de veuë, et si je veux estre estimé de quelques-uns, je veux estre entendu de tout le monde". The poet explains further by what means he has aimed to satisfy different portions of his public. Different plays have different ways of pleasing, he says: some are bold but crude and only please from a distance and "ne descendent du Theatre qu'à leur honte" while others have

⁶⁶ Isaac de Benserade (1612-1691) was a gentleman from Normandy, related to Richelieu through his mother's side, who left his ecclesiastical studies at the Sorbonne to pursue his passion for theater and a certain *comédienne* for whom he wrote *Cléopâtre* at 18 years of age. Gaining favor for his wit, he wrote under the protection of Richelieu and Mazarin, was accepted into the Académie Française in 1674, and boasted six tragedies and 21 ballets at the time of his death by surgical accident in 1691 (Beauchamps 2:145-148; Lérès 510).

more delicate grace that is appreciated in *ruelles* and *cabinets*. But all should be “naives et intelligible”. The refinement of the verses may be best judged by the reader in the proximity of the salon and study, but their accessibility does not depend on special knowledge.⁶⁷ Benserade seeks to be “understood by all” in a more transparent way:

En vain de ce que je compose,
 Les doctes paroissent contens,
 A ma gloire il manque une chose
 Vulgaire si tu ne m'entens.

That said, he also notes criteria that will help him be “esteemed by a few” when he affirms that the rules of time and place have been followed, and insists that there is no shame if the plot is deemed too sterile for those reasons. In the end, he leaves the reader to decide: “Vous jugerez de celle-cy”. One of his readers, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, did judge and respond with a quatrain of his own:

Ce n'est pas pour toy que j'ecris,
 Indocte et stupide vulgaire:
 J'ecris pour les nobles esprits.
 Je serois marry de te plaire" (*Visionnaires* 9).

In this paratextual exchange the tension between the two parts of the audience remains unresolved, and the learned reader seems to have the upper hand.

The division of the audience along the lines of the learned and unlearned is often evoked in relation to criteria of judgment anticipated from them. Writers of tragedies feel compelled to

⁶⁷ This is perhaps why the play succeeded in winning over the female audience, as the liminary poem by Dalibray illustrates. ‘Les Dames’ as a category (and not particular females to whom works are dedicated) is typically associated with lack of special knowledge, as in Corneille’s comment in the preface to *La mort de Pompée* (1644) that offers readers eloquent proofs of his poetic sources which ‘les Dames se... feront expliquer’. It is assumed that women will need outside resources to decipher the Latin quotations.

justify themselves to those with learning in terms of the special knowledge associated with the Study, mostly centering on fidelity to history and to the ‘rules’ of the Ancients. We see this in a religious tragedy by Du Ryer, *Esther* (1644), where he makes an apology for the play’s title, which he says should have been called “Delivrance des Juifs” since that is the principle action. He says he chose to respect scripture over the ‘rules’ by using the name given to the story in the Bible. In any case, he admits that he felt the need to satisfy “those who would ask” where the unity of action was. Other writers similarly anticipated that there would be ‘those who would ask’ for justification of the tragedy in terms of fidelity to ancient rules and history. In the preface to *Le comte d’Essex* (1654), Gautier de Coste, sieur de La Calprenède, a provincial gentleman, soldier, and writer of novels as well as theater pieces, assures the reader that the fiction is squarely based on history: "Si vous trouvez quelque chose dans cette Tragedie que vous n'ayez point *leu* dans les Historiens Anglois, croyez que je ne l'ay point inventé" (emphasis added). This is apparently what La Calprenède’s readers would have assumed, as he must direct them to an alternative source that they would not have been able to *read* in English history. He substantiates his source as coming from the good memory of persons of condition who may have been part of the story itself. In most cases, however, the writer refers his readers to a previous text as the legitimating basis of his fable. Corneille, for instance, often gives precise references to his source texts, such as the Latin poet Lucan for *La mort de Pompée* (1644), the 34th book of the historian Justin for *Nicomède* (1651), or even offering an abridged prose version of the story behind *Polyeucte, martyre* (1643), “écrit par Simeon Metaphraste, et rapporté par Surius”. In another example of justification by source-texts, the first-time author cryptically identified as I.M.S. defines his treatment of *La mort de Roxane* (1648) in terms of its fidelity to ancient history and as a corrective to more recent literary treatments. His work attempts to restore the

“eclat” that his heroine had in the “verite de l'Histoire et que le Roman luy a indignement vole”, saying that 'l'auteur de l'Incomparable Cassandre' has given Roxane a bad reputation amongst our ladies today. Referring to La Calprenède's five-volume novel, which appeared between 1642 and 1650, I.M.S. supports his treatment of the subject by the hierarchical superiority of its source in “la verite de l'Histoire” as opposed to the fictional *roman* invented for consumption by “nos Dames”. In all of these instances, confirming what we saw earlier in Corneille's *Oedipe*, the authors choose to present their works to readers with the understanding that the tragedy must answer to the texts that precede it.

Theater pieces must also answer to the so-called neoclassical rules that most basically include the unities of time, place, and action; appropriate social station of the characters; and for tragedy, the excitement of terror and pity. Corneille addresses the relationship of his work to these expectations, and the conventional means of respecting them, in the prefaces to *Nicomède* (1651) and *Sertorius* (1662). As in many of his paratexts, Corneille offers proofs of his adherence to certain rules, while upholding his prerogative to stray from them when his art is better served. *Nicomède*, he states, is the 21st play he has put on stage, but one doesn't write that many verses without straying from the norm at some point. The play does not rely on tenderness and passion, just the grandeur of courage, and “ce Heros de ma façon sort un peu des regles de la Tragedie" by not exciting pity by an excess of *malheurs*. But the success of his play has shown that the admiration of a firm heart can be as pleasing to the spectators as the movement of pity brought on by misery. For this reason, he claims: "Il est bon de hazarder un peu, et ne s'attacher pas toujours si servilement à ses Preceptes, ne fust ce que pour pratiquer celui-cy de nostre Horace" in choosing which rules to submit to. For Corneille, the important thing is that the representation did not fail to please, and he has hopes that its reading will not detract from its

reputation at all, or be found unworthy of those works that precede it. At the same time, he cautions that deviation from the norm must be justified, and except for happily striking upon the right usage, often leaves one to be found “guilty”.

In the preface to *Sertorius*, Corneille again insists that success in the theater is not the result of following every rule and convention:

Ne cherchez point dans cette Tragedie les agréments qui sont en possession de faire reüssir au Theatre les Poèmes de cette nature; vous n'y trouverez, ny tendresses d'amour, ny emportements de passion, ny descriptions pompeuses, ny Narrations Pathétiques. Je puis dire toutefois qu'elle n'a point déplû, et que la dignité des noms illustres, la grandeur de leurs interests, et la nouveauté de quelques caracteres ont suppliée au manque de ces graces.

The applause of the spectators is not won by a formula that all can follow, but is the result of careful and artful selection. Corneille justifies at length various choices he has made, such as reducing the subject in time and place, and adding two women to the story. He reinforces these choices by saying that the Auditeur, who most often has no more than a superficial understanding of history, does not take offense when *vraisemblance* is observed, but “tout l’Auditoire” would have revolted against the Author if he had taken impudent liberties. Thus the art lies in discerning which parts of history to modify. The success in the theater has already proven that the spectators accepted his changes as reasonable, but the “Critiques” must now be persuaded. Speaking to them in particular, he justifies one change of fact as necessary for preserving the unity of place, and even goes so far as to “pardon” a certain hastiness of actions by citing Aristotle’s allowance for things to sometimes be put on the stage “sans raison” if it seems they will be well-received. In both of these paratexts, Corneille explains the relationship

of his tragedies to the expectations that they meet or break, justifying certain authorial choices by the rules that he observes, and supporting the ways that he strays from other rules by the pleasure of the spectators and the authority of Ancient poets. In both cases, his commentary reinforces the relationship of tragedy to the historical and textual precedents that he perceives his readers to judge the plays by.

Page to Stage to Page

These precedents for tragedy's rapport with Stage and Study, taken together with the constraints on the tragic genre as compared to its comic counterpart, reveal that tragedy, if judged in the moment by its movement of the passions, is also always judged in relation to a prior body of knowledge. The defining characteristics of tragedy require it to take up great men and grand reversals of fortune that must be known only at a distance, most often through the pages of history or ancient drama. As Muratore notes, French Neo-Classical texts must imitate not only reality, but also previous texts (14). The fiction of tragedy is scrutinized by experts and readers in a second moment of judgment not as a mirror of the public it is presented to, but in relation to the books it is drawn from: ancient rules, historical accounts, former dramatic treatments, and past paratexts and polemics by poets both ancient and contemporary. We can therefore say that if the Dramatic Poem at large is navigating the passage from stage to page in print publication, tragedy in particular is moving from *page* to stage to page. Writers of tragedy must acknowledge this pre-requisite step because they understand that their work cannot exist purely in the moment of representation, apart from 'readerly' ways of knowing, as comedy can. And because tragedy's demand for distance precludes its ability to write its critique and defense into its fiction, the discourses surrounding the dramatic texts become particularly important for shaping the public's understanding of the genre and their functional relationship to it as judges.

As we have seen, in the paratexts of the decades preceding Racine's rise to fame, the kinds of precedents for tragedy's relationship to judgment in the theater and in the study reveal a clear link between tragedy and special knowledge that is deemed to render a more authoritative verdict on the play. Even though some, such as Desmarets, would claim that prefaces should not "prevenir les jugemens par des raisons estudiées à dessein de se faire valoir", we have seen that many do. In the preface to *Scipion* (1641) Desmarets essentially claims that those who possess the necessary knowledge will see the hidden art, while those who do not will nonetheless enjoy its effects:

Plus l'art est caché plus il est beau: Les sçavans judicieux qui sçavent seuls le descouvrir, l'admirent en le trouvant; et mieux il a sceu eviter de parestre, plus ils luy donnent de loüanges. Ceux qui ont une erudition mediocre, et ceux mesmes qui sans aucun sçavoir ont du jugement, ayment les choses qu'un bel art a produites, encore qu'ils ne le voyent pas; et pour ceux qui n'ont ny sçavoir ny jugement, c'est un soin bien inutile que celuy d'aller au devant de leurs objections; puisque les raisons qu'on leur pourroit alleguer ne leur donneroient pas plus d'esprit que ne leur en a donné la Nature (*Œuvres poëtiques*).

For Desmarets, there exists a natural selection of those fit to make judgments of theater by perception of its inner workings, and those fit to simply 'like' the things that art has produced. This view is corroborated by Corneille's paratextual interventions that justify his craft in part by the affective response of the spectators, but also with reference to the 'readerly' criteria of dramatic rules, historical knowledge, and ancient authorities for the benefit of critics, or as Du Ryer put it, 'those who would ask'. *But what happens when a mixed public of savants and mediocre minds is exposed to decades of such prefaces that reveal 'l'art caché' and validate as superior those judgments based on the rules of Aristotle and the authority of the Ancients?* The

public that Racine inherits has ways of conceiving of and judging tragedy that have been shaped not only by the constraints inherent to the genre, but also by the paratextual precedents we have just seen.

Part Two: Racine's paratexts: re-educating a problematic public

By the time Racine's plays take the stage, the reading public of tragedies has been exposed to many prefatory and polemical texts that condition their expectations for the play they *see on the stage* as well as read in the book. The ways of knowing and interacting with a play ascribed to the Reader have come to bear on the act of spectatorship as well, as described by Christian Biet:

Devant les vertiges de l'apparence et les ivresses toujours possibles du paraître et de l'oral, les lecteurs de tragédie—et peu à peu de comédie—sont donc institués en juges raisonnables et ne sont plus, en principe, happés par le monde de l'illusion éblouie.... Par la publication, la raison s'installe avec plus d'autorité, ce qui peut fort bien, en retour *gagner le monde du spectacle*: placée entre le monde de l'illusion et l'oeil qui le contemple, la raison intervient dans la réception du processus théâtral qui a alors pour objet d'être compris, analysé par des individus raisonnables exerçant raisonnablement leurs émotions elles-mêmes maîtrisées. De l'acte de jouissance de l'ouïe et de l'immédiateté de l'image efficace, on est donc passé, pour la tragédie et bientôt pour la comédie, à l'acte de plaisir réflexif qui sait corriger et analyser l'image en vue d'une maîtrise du monde ("C'est un scélérat qui parle" 81, emphasis added).

The public's encounter with the dramatic poem in the Theater has been altered by its repeated encounters with it in the Study: the imperative of reason has conquered the world of the spectacle, and the pleasure of the performance is one step removed from the moment of

representation, in the reflection on it. Of course, this shift in the reception of theater pieces is a gradual one, marked not by a clean triumph of reason over illusion, but by a period of instability and degrees of (un-)mastery of the expectations for the judgment of a play on the stage and the page. It involves not only “les sçavans judicieux” of Desmarets, but also “ceux qui ont une erudition mediocre” and a loud voice in the theater. As Biet remarks, authors want to control their product from one end to the other, but also have to take into account the “practices” it is submitted to (“C'est un scélérat qui parle” 66). In this context of shifting practices by his public, the way that Racine chooses to intervene in the reception of his works must adapt as well.

In light of the changing judgments that his work is being submitted to, many of Racine’s paratextual interventions serve a different function than those of his predecessors. We have already seen that writers of tragedy exploited the paratextual space for the purpose of finessing the reception of their work in ‘readerly’ terms as it took on a new form as a book. In looking at Racine’s paratextual interventions, however, it is striking to see that the handful of texts he did choose to revise respond to different concerns for the judgment of his work in both the Theater and the Study. Examining the original and revised versions of paratexts for several plays by Racine, we see that in the original prefaces, he identifies his public as spectator-readers, and in a gesture of re-education, presents models and anti-models of good spectatorship. In these paratexts we observe that the public is no longer adhering to a two-step reception of the play by the ways of judging normally associated with the Theater and the Study, a change in practice that is problematic for Racine as he attempts to move his plays from stage to page (and the security of posterity). In light of this, I will demonstrate that in his first paratexts, Racine is concerned with correcting the dynamic between the ways of judging associated with the Study and those associated with the Theater, reaffirming judgments made by the effects of the performance that

threaten to be lost to 'academic' critiques by would-be experts in the playhouse. In contrast, in the revised versions of these prefaces, Racine seems less concerned with contending for his plays' reception in the theater, than for having the last word as they move from page to posterity. In this way, his continued involvement in the presentation of his works to his public seems to trace a completed circle from their source in ancient texts preserved for posterity, through the trial of the stage, the transition to literary object on the printed page, and finally to their own secure place in the 'Temple of Memory'.

Original Paratexts

The prefaces from Racine's early works show an effort to correct the problem of spectators who come to the theater with the posture of critical readers. In the paratexts accompanying the first editions of Racine's successful and controversial *Alexandre le Grand* (1666), *Andromaque* (1668), *Britannicus* (1670) and *Bérénice* (1671), the poet uses the written space accompanying his plays to justify his authorial choices, but specifically in a way that educates his *readers* through models and anti-models of good spectatorship. In what we could term a polemical didacticism, Racine responds to criticisms made by those who had attended performances by trumping their authority with superior models of good judgment, and exposing their unfitness as spectators.

The dedicatees of Racine's early plays serve as models of good judgment in the Theater in two ways: by their superior qualities, and by bearing witness to the pleasure given to their superiors. At the pinnacle of the social order, the King and Queen perform only the first function. In the dedication of *Alexandre le Grand*, Louis XIV is praised as equaling and surpassing both Alexander and Cesar. The first among the "premieres Personnes de la Terre, et les Alexandres de nostre siècle" who loudly declared their approbation of the play, Louis has

earned the right to judge such a great hero as peer. Defending his hero against those who would have him be more deferent to his mistress, Racine says:

C'est assez pour moi que ce qui se passe pour une faute auprès de ces Esprits qui n'ont lu l'Histoire que dans les Romans... a reçu des louanges de ceux qui *étant eux-mêmes de grands Héros, ont doit de juger* de la vertu de leurs pareils (emphasis added).

What others have only read about in novels, or at best in history, Louis embodies himself as a living Alexander. He has obtained the enduring status of a hero, one whose deeds and character are committed to memory for generations to come. By possessing in his person the glorious attributes of Ancient heroes, the monarch cannot err from good judgment. He is therefore an unrivaled judge of the fitness of Racine's own *Alexandre* for the 'temple of Memory'.

If Louis functions as a modern day embodiment of immortal heroism, Madame the Queen seems to offer the best that mere mortals may achieve in the union of head and heart in judgment. Upon hearing *Andromaque* in a private reading by the poet, her majesty "honored it with several tears". But the stirring of her passions was not the sole basis for her appreciation: "ce n'est pas seulement du coeur que vous jugez de la bonté d'un Ouvrage, c'est avec une intelligence, qu'aucune fausse lueur ne sçauroit tromper". By joining both sense and sensibility, the Queen models judgment by what the Académie Française had called a 'contentement raisonnable' (Gasté 360). Her appreciation of a work's merit, as evidenced by her natural response of pleasure or displeasure, is so fully guided by reason that it can replace the 'rules' themselves :

La Cour vous regarde comme l'Arbitre de tout ce qui se fait d'agréable. Et nous qui travaillons pour plaire au public, n'avons plus que faire de demander aux Sçavans si nous travaillons selon les Regles. La Regle souveraine, est de plaire à V.A.R.

Her judgment may become a new standard, a new rule, by which others may perceive the merit of a play.⁶⁸ Because of this, Racine asks "de quel autre nom pourrois-je esbloüir les yeux de mes Lecteurs que de celuy dont mes Spectateurs ont esté si heureusement esbloüis?" The Queen's response to the performance was another spectacle for the theater-goers to appreciate; similarly, her approval should strike the eyes of readers. For lack of the perceptive powers and knowledge needed to respond as judiciously as that great lady had, Spectators and Readers alike should look to her response as a surer evaluation than any made by their own understanding of the 'rules'.

In illustration of this point, the Duc de Chevreuse and Colbert figure in the dedications to *Britannicus* and *Bérénice* respectively, less as examples of sound judgment in their own right, than models of witnessing the pleasure given to a superior. In the first example, Racine thanks the Duc de Chevreuse for his role as a go-between for the poet to read before the duke's father-in-law Colbert:

[It is too advantageous to me that] mes Amis ne vous sont pas indifferens, que vous prenez part à tous mes Ouvrages, et que vous m'avez procuré l'honneur de lire celui-cy devant un Homme don't toutes les heures sont pretieuseses. Vous fustes témoin avec quelle penetration d'esprit il jugea de l'oconomie de la Piece, et combien l'idée s'est formée d'une excellente Tragedie.

The value of the duke's own opinion is a mild one to which his friends are "not indifferent". But the role played in accessing a superior judge, and witnessing the penetration of his judgment which produced a favorable opinion is highly prized. The lesson for readers of this dedication would be to act as Chevreuse, taking humble pleasure in the opinions rendered by greater men,

⁶⁸ This move is similar to Corneille's in the dedication of *Horace* (1641) to Richelieu, in which the poet treats the cardinal's response to the play as a spectacle from which he learns what has succeeded in pleasing, gaining knowledge more effectively than in hours of book reading. See Jouhaud, *Les Pouvoirs de la littérature* pp 292-307.

and accepting their response as proof of the play's merit. Racine revisits this model in the dedication of *Bérénice*, where Colbert himself plays the role that Chevreuse played for him in the previous text. "Vous ne l'avez pas jugée tout à fait indigne de votre approbation", says Racine, but the greatest merit comes from you having been witness (*témoin*) to the happiness that it had of pleasing His Majesty. Here Racine elaborates on the privileged pleasure of serving a superior. He observes that for Colbert, little things take on consideration when they serve to glorify or please His Majesty; adding that that is why he does not disdain descending down to the leisure that poets provide. A model civil servant and royal subject finds pleasure in the pleasure given to his sovereign. Likewise, a good spectator should look to the pleasure of his superiors to find a model for, and measure of, his own satisfaction in an entertainment.

The good spectator is then one who embodies noble characteristics, good judgment, and appropriate sensitivity to the movement of the passions. Moreover, he or she judges the success of the work by the pleasure it produces for those capable of understanding and feeling the effects of the dramatic action. This involves attention to one's own response (as we will see momentarily) as well as deference to the pleasure of superior minds (as we have just seen). A measure of grace and restraint is further added to this portrait. Countering those self-assured and ignorant critics who believe to show their knowledge by disparaging another's work, Racine praises sound judgment for its discretion:

Ceux qui voyent le mieux nos deffauts, sont ceux qui les dissimulent le plus volontiers.

Ils nous pardonnent les endroits qui leur ont déplû, en faveur de ceux qui leur ont donné du plaisir (preface *Britannicus*).

These judiciously silent critics see the flaws and feel appropriate displeasure at them, but focus primarily on the moments that succeeded in entertaining and moving them. They perhaps

mention areas for improvement to the poet in private, that he might ameliorate his work (preface *Alexandre*). The grandeur of such amicable experts is embodied in the dedicatees of the works we have just seen, who serve as models for others. The connoisseurs above all participate in the literary sphere apart from personal motivations of attaining status or financial gain through their appreciations. The same may not be said for many who participate in the literary quarrels of the period. When referring to critics within the circle of *gens de lettres* (or would-be *gens de lettres*), unsurprisingly, the ideal seems to be constructed more in negative terms than positive examples.

Anti-models of spectatorship: sense and sensibility

The anti-model for good spectatorship that emerges in Racine's paratexts (and interestingly, in the polemical texts of his adversaries) points to a degenerated hybrid of the ways of judging that had been clearly associated with the Theater and the Study in previous decades. Most basically, it is a distortion of both sense and sensibility. The unfit spectator-judge is first of all ignorant. Without the penetrating judgment of a learned man, the ignorant critic is all the more vocal about his observations. In contrast to the discrete spectator above,

Il n'y a rien...de plus injuste qu'un ignorant. Il croit toujours que l'admiration est le partage des gens qui ne savent rien. Il condamne toute une Piece pour une Scene qu'il n'approuve pas. Il s'attaque même aux endroits les plus éclatans pour faire croire qu'il a de l'esprit. Et pour peu que nous resistions à ses sentimens, il nous traite de presomptueux qui ne veulent croire personne, et ne songe pas qu'il tire quelquefois plus de vanité d'une critique fort mauvaise, que nous n'en tirons d'une assez bonne piece de theatre.

While the unlearned and ungracious critic feels justified in sharing his negative opinion, his mastery of the knowledge needed to undergird his claims is highly questionable. His understanding of history, ancient mythology, and past renderings of dramatic subjects is either based on inferior sources, or has been insufficiently acquired. We will illustrate each point in turn.

In a dig at the hierarchy of written sources, Racine in the preface to *Alexandre le Grand*, mocks those “Esprits qui n’ont lu l’Histoire que dans les Romans”, and who therefore cannot properly judge the deference a hero should give to his mistress. Echoing this retort in the preface to *Andromaque*, he excuses his hero, saying, “Mais que faire? Pyrrhus n'avoit pas lû nos Romans”, implying that expectations for a tragic figure drawn from contemporary novels are inherently inferior to those drawn from dramatic models of Antiquity. Similarly, for ancient poetics, while Racine refers readers to the proofs from Aristotle that he has already made for his heroes in a previous preface,⁶⁹ he makes it clear that paratexts are no substitute for the original texts themselves. He belittles a critic of *Bérénice*—presumably Villars, whose *Critique de Bérénice* was printed 17 December 1670, over a month before *Bérénice* appeared, having finished printing on 24 January 1671—for using savant terms like Protase and Catastrophe while having obviously never read Sophocles or Aristotle “que dans quelques Préfaces de Tragédies”.

This brings us to our second point: not only does an unfit judge draw from inferior sources, but his understanding of the authorities he does read is imperfect, as evidenced by his unrefined taste. For Racine, on one side of what would develop into the quarrel between Ancients and Moderns, good taste is necessarily in line with that of the Ancients.⁷⁰ Responding

⁶⁹ In the original preface to *Britannicus*, Racine speaks of unreasonable spectator-readers, saying: "Je leur ay déclaré dans la Preface d'Andromaque les sentimens d'Aristote sur le Heros de la Tragedie".

⁷⁰ Although the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes would not come into full force until the last decades of the century, by the Querelle d'Alceste of 1674 there were already established groups or ‘cabales’ who favored one view

to claims that the action of *Alexandre le Grand* was too simple and sterile, Racine says, "Je ne représente point à ces Critiques le goût de l'Antiquité. Je vois bien qu'ils le connaissent médiocrement". The implication here is that if they were more familiar with the tastes of Antiquity, they would share those tastes and appreciate Racine's aesthetic more; thus their lack of pleasure is associated with their imperfect knowledge. The link between knowledge and taste is further drawn out in the preface to *Britannicus*, again concerning the simplicity of the dramatic action: "Que faudroit-il faire pour contenter les Juges si difficiles? La chose seroit aisée pour peu qu'on voulust trahir le bon sens". The taste of the audience is one that strays from the 'good sense' of the classical rules. To content such critics, instead of a simple plot moved forward by the characters, he would have to make one with more incidents than can happen in a month, a great number of *jeux de théâtre* more surprising than *vraisemblable*, and an infinity of declamations where you make the Actors say the opposite of what they should. "Voilà sans doute dequoy faire récrier tous ces Messieurs. Mais que diroit cependant le petit nombre de gens sages ausquels je m'efforce de plaire?" If the taste of the difficult judges is based on ignorance of the reasoned principles of Antiquity, that of the 'small number' of good judges *is* the taste of Antiquity. The "véritables spectateurs" that poets should propose for themselves and always bear in mind are the Ancients themselves: "Que dirait Homère et Virgile s'ils lisaient ces vers? Que dirait Sophocle s'il voyait représenter cette Scène?" The spectator with refined taste, then, would be one who has fully integrated the aesthetic appreciations of the Ancients into his own way of measuring pleasure at the theater.

or the other and related to each other in terms of their opposed views on the matter (B. Norman 252, 255; see also Joan DeJean's *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin De Siècle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.) Racine's comments in this 1666 preface are in line with the position he will continue to hold throughout the quarrel.

Racine's jabs at critics regarding their inferior textual sources and the superior taste of the Ancients are turned against him by opponents who paint his supporters in these same terms. In Subligny's *La Folle Querelle, ou la Critique d'Andromaque* (1668), Éraste, the adamant supporter of Racine's play, is portrayed as an obstinate and ignorant would-be *bel esprit*:

Ton Maître qui est l'homme du monde le plus contredisant, s'avise de faire le bel esprit chez nous, depuis qu'il se mêle d'aller à la Comédie; et que quand Madame en dit son avis, il prend le parti contraire à tort et à travers; quoiqu'on sache bien que ce soit la chose dont il puisse le moins parler, et qu'il s'y connaisse moins qu'à de l'Hébreu (264).

Without knowledge of the Theater, Éraste nonetheless feels entitled to defend his judgment of it. Drawing on an increasingly popular type, Subligny identifies Éraste as part of a group of vain young nobles who made a habit of boldly pronouncing their unfounded opinions, even during the performance which they viewed from the stage. To this end, Éraste declares: "Tous ceux avec qui j'étais *sur le Théâtre*, ont dit qu[e la pièce] était belle" (268, emphasis added). Forestier confirms that this is referring to his seating on the stage, where only the *petits marquis* thought the play was good (*Théâtre* note 1, 1373). Barbara Mittman examines the practice of stage seating extensively, noting that the term *petits marquis* came about later, in 1683, to designate "a little band of young nobles dedicated to leading life in as outrageous and shocking a manner possible" (26) who sought to flaunt their often newly-acquired social position through the visibility of their self-display and bold judgments:

Apart from matters of social status, stage seats were convenient for confirmation of what passed in the eyes of some as intellectual status. It was virtually *de rigueur* for persons seated on the stage to pass judgment on the spectacle at hand in as contentious and

ostentatious a manner as possible, as often as not a judgment exactly opposite from that of the *parterre* (31).

Thus Éraсте's good opinion of the play is founded neither on knowledge of theater, nor on good common sense. Identified with a ridiculous section of the audience, Éraсте's insufficient knowledge is further proven in a discussion with his cousin Alcipe. In this scene, as the two argue over the appropriateness of *tutoiement* between Pylade and Oreste, Alcipe claims that if Éraсте does not know that both characters are kings, it is because he has not read History (270). Éraсте responds:

L'Histoire? Ah! Il est là bon l'Histoire! c'est bien des gens comme moi, va, qui se soucient de l'Histoire. C'est assez que j'ai lu *Clélie* avec la Vicomtesse, et que je sais *l'Andromaque* sur le bout du doigt (270).

In this satire, it is Racine's supporters who have only read history in novels. Moreover, Racine's own tragedy has been added to the list of inferior texts from which faulty knowledge is drawn.

A few years later, the Querelle des Bérénices will elaborate on these concerns of legitimacy of judgment by textual knowledge. *La Critique de Bérénice* by Nicolas Pierre Henri de Montfaucon, abbé de Villars echoes the association between novels and Racine's tragedy when he claims to have overcome his disappointment in the tragic hero after realizing that the poet was not trying to give a Roman hero, but a perfect lover of novels, like Céladon (515). This realization was made possible, Villars facetiously claims, by shedding himself of the knowledge that had prevented him from enjoying himself the first time he saw the play:

Je veux grand mal à ces règles, et je sais fort mauvais gré à Corneille de me les avoir apprises dans ce que j'ai vu de pièces de sa façon. J'ai été privé à la première fois que j'ai vu *Bérénice* à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, du plaisir que je voyais qu'y prenaient ceux qui ne

les savaient pas: mais je me suis ravisé le second jour, j'ai attrapé M. Corneille, j'ai laissé mes Demoiselles les règles à la porte, j'ai vu la Comédie, je l'ai trouvée fort affligeante, et j'y ai pleuré *comme un ignorant* (511, emphasis added).⁷¹

In this reversal of Racine's own portrayal of his critics, it is knowledge of the Ancient masters that gives one *distaste* for his play, and ignorance that allows one to be touched by it.

Villar's opinion will be undermined by a counter-critique published by Pierre de Saint-Glas, abbé de Saint-Ussans in February 1671. Echoing Racine's portrait of Villars in the preface to *Bérénice* as ignorant of authoritative ancient sources, he critiques him in a tone of false amicability. He says it is a good thing that Villars told everyone he left "Mesdemoiselles les règles à la porte", because that way people assume he "had" them at some point, otherwise they would have had no way of guessing (522). Since the rules that Villars does use in his critique are by no author that Saint-Ussans has ever heard of, he imagines they must be from the *Poétique des Sylphes* (521), mocking an early publication by Villars.⁷² Similarly, he entreats Villars to print his Sophocles, as it is one that no one else has ever seen before (531-2), and he is sure that Villars would have followed Aristotle's rules if his own hadn't been better (522). Finally, Saint-Ussans tells Villars that Racine is to be pitied for only having Euripides and others as authors to follow, since they are unknown by him and don't benefit from having him as Censeur (533). In this polemical text, Saint-Ussans leverages all the characteristics of the anti-model of the well-informed spectator to undermine his opponent, calling into question the origin and mastery of his knowledge of dramatic principles by which to judge effectively.

⁷¹ Villars' comments on Corneille should be read in the spirit of satire. Perhaps following in example of Donneau de Visé, as Forestier suggests, Villars sought to gain publicity through the 'querelle des Bérénices' by critiquing first Racine's play and then Corneille's with equal fervor (Forestier, *Théâtre* 1483).

⁷² Villars, Nicolas P. H. M. *Le Comte De Gabalis: Ou, Entretiens Sur Les Sciences Secretes*. Paris: C. Barbin, 1670. Print.

Another amusing example of this kind of attack is found in Boursault's description of the premier of *Britannicus* in "Artémise et Poliante". According to Boursault, those who had paid 30 sous for their entry, in other words the Parterre, whose 15 sous price for standing places was doubled during premiers (Forestier, *Théâtre* note 1, 1441; Lough 108), and thought that their ticket bought them the right to speak their mind, found the "novelty" of the "catastrophe" amazing and were so touched by Junie's decision to enter the order of Vesta that they were going to call it a Tragédie Chrétienne if someone hadn't told them that Vesta was not Christian (440). In this instance, amazement at Racine's play is associated with the humblest part of the theater audience, and the charm of its dénouement with ignorance of history. Although the author himself is standing in the pit, he disassociates himself from the group of *ignorants* as he speaks about them, and more closely aligns himself with the "banc formidable" of "les Auteurs qui ont la malice de s'attrouper pour décider souverainement des Pièces de Théâtre" and who had dispersed that evening in fear of their imminent death by Racine's anticipated masterpiece (439-440). While the ignorant are blown away by the play, the experts are increasingly relieved as its lack of perfection is unfolded act by act. In this and the previous examples, we see that both supporters and opponents of Racine's plays agree that mastery of the written corpus that informs the genre of tragedy is deemed necessary to render a legitimate, reasoned judgment of a play. The problem is that this manner of judging has been brought inappropriately into the theater setting in a way that interferes with the longstanding evaluation of a tragedy by its movement of the passions.

If sense is distorted in the anti-model for spectatorship found in Racine's paratexts, sensibility is as well. Due to the inappropriate importation of 'readerly' judgments into the playhouse, the unfit spectator-judge is (at best) out of touch with his own sentiments, or (at

worst) willingly blocking the effects of the passions in the drama. In the first case, the dynamic between the head and the heart must be stripped of misconceptions due to the vulgarization of the ‘rules’. In the preface to *Bérénice*, Racine speaks of exciting emotion in the hearts of Spectators, with the “tristesse majestueuse qui fait tout le plaisir de la Tragédie”. Linking the pleasurable effect of the playwright’s craft to the passions aroused, as evidenced by ‘tant de larmes’ at its thirty representations, Racine shows that many spectators misunderstand the relationship between the rules and the pleasure produced by a play. Speaking of those who reproached the same simplicity that he had sought after with such care, he says:

Ils ont crû qu'une Tragédie qui estoit si peu chargée d'Intrigues, ne pouvoit estre selon les Regles du Theatre. Je m'informay s'ils se plaignoient qu'elle les eust ennuyez. On me dit qu'ils avoüoient tous qu'elle n'ennuyoit point, quelle les touchoit mesme en plusieurs endroits, et qu'ils la verroient encore avec plaisir. Que veulent-ils davantage?

Then, proceeding in a didactic voice, he says,

Je les conjure d'avoir assez bonne opinion d'eux-mesmes, pour ne pas croire qu'une Piece qui les touche, et qui leur donne du plaisir, puisse estre absolument contre les Regles. La principale Regle est de plaire et de toucher. Toutes les autres ne sont faites que pour parvenir à cette premiere (emphasis added).

The spectators thoroughly enjoyed themselves, but second-guessed their pleasure for fear of its having been illegitimately produced. In a similar incident in the preface to *Les Plaideurs*, Racine associates this behavior with the tragic genre, saying that his audience treated his comedy like a tragedy, afraid that they had not laughed according to the rules. Speaking of such well-meaning but confused spectators, he advises them not to worry about the rules: “Qu'ils se reposent sur nous de la fatigue d'éclaircir les difficultez de la Poëtique d'Aristote. Qu'ils se réservent le plaisir

de pleurer et d'estre attendris" (preface *Bérénice*). In the preface to *Bérénice*, Racine is re-educating his public in the relationship between head and heart that is theirs to worry about: Spectators are meant to be the judges of the rules in the play by their response to the effects they produce, rather than by an inventory of their application. It is the poet's job to employ the rules for the purpose of moving the passions of his audience; it is the audience's job to be moved by that which naturally incites them to pity. Racine would have his spectators return to the role prescribed by Desmarets of 'liking' rather than analyzing the art of the dramatic poet. The separation of roles is necessary because the effectiveness of the rules cannot be known without proper spectators to experience and give voice to the effects they produced. If a 'contentement raisonnable' is produced by a good play, it is the reasonableness of action to the average viewer, rather than an understanding of the rules, which determines the pleasure it produces.

For those who do "possess the Rules", the judgment of a play by the effects of the rules may be more difficult when the head threatens to block the way to the heart. This critical posture is denounced as unnatural. In the preface to *Alexandre le Grand*, Racine claims to have never pretended to give a perfect work to the public, but that he did form a good opinion of his tragedy when he saw the trouble some people took to come out against it:

On ne fait point tant de brigues contre un Ouvrage qu'on n'estime pas. On se contente de ne le plus voir quand on l'a veu une fois, et on le laisse tomber de luy-mesme, sans digner seulement contribuër à sa chute. Cependant j'ay eû le plaisir de voir plus de six fois de suite à ma Piece le visage de ses Censeurs. *Ils n'ont pas craint de s'exposer si souvent à entendre une chose qui leur déplaisoit.* Ils ont prodigué libéralement leur temps et leurs peines pour la venir critiquer, sans conter les chagrins que leur ont peut estre cousté les

applaudissemens que leur presence n'a pas empesché le Public de me donner (emphasis added).

In this reasoning, the critics' repeat attendance at the performances of *Alexandre le Grand* belies their insistence on the displeasure it caused them. They would not suffer through six sittings at a play that had not succeeded in drawing them in and moving them at some level. Yet the unnatural spectator allows his critical mind to overpower the pleasure produced by the play, and advertises his affected distaste to the rest of the theater:

[Some critics] pretendent assujettir le goust du Public aux dégousts d'un Esprit malade, qui vont au Theatre avec un ferme dessein de n'y point prendre de plaisir, et qui croyent prouver à tous les Spectateurs par un branlement de teste, et par des grimaces affectées, qu'ils ont étudié à fonds la Poétique d'Aristote.

Only a sick mind represses the natural movements of emotion produced by the play to display instead a contrary opinion supposedly indicative of great learning. By denouncing such disingenuous judgments in the printed space of his preface, Racine can only hope to mitigate their effect on his next play's reception in the Theater.

Polemical texts surrounding *Bérénice* further illustrate the improper relationship of sense and sentiments as targeted by Racine's paratexts. In *La Critique de Bérénice*, published before Racine's play had come into print, l'abbé de Villars challenges the reliability of pleasure as an indicator of a good play. As mentioned previously, Villar's critique is structured around the satirical claim that he attended the play one time with the 'rules' at his side, and the next time ditched them at the door. He was enchanted by the second representation of play, where he cried at the example of a *femme de qualité* and did not find that the play was not good "parce que les règles du Théâtre y sont mal observées" (511). All the play's beauties became apparent the

second time because "[il] ne [s]'attach[a] qu'à l'expression des passions", while the first time he had been influenced by the taste and habit Corneille had given him to look for virtuous characters (514). He admits facetiously that his critical humor had prevented him from enjoying himself:

Il n'y a rien tel quand on va à la Comédie, que de se dépouiller de l'esprit de Critique, rien ne trouble le plaisir qu'on y prend et rien n'empêche que les passions ne s'apaisent et ne soient purgées (pour parler en termes de l'art). Le premier jour mon humeur critique me rendit un très méchant office... (515).

Whereas Villars exposes a disconnect between the observation of the rules and the pleasure one experiences at the theater, Racine insists, as we have seen, on the compatibility of reason and pleasure, and the subordination of the rules to the theatergoer's natural response, since the rules are aimed at producing what will most likely please. It is this understanding of the rules as being appreciated by that which naturally pleases in the play that is underscored by Saint-Ussans in his response to Villars' critique.

Saint-Ussans paints Villars as an unnatural spectator, insensitive to the universally-accepted beauties of the play. Speaking of Titus' being on the verge of seeking death due to the violence of his passions, he compares the hero with Villars:

Hélas, Monsieur, ce ne serait pas vous qui en viendriez à cette extrémité; vous n'avez pas l'âme assez tendre pour cela, vous qui riez à l'endroit qu'on dirait être le plus touchant de toute la pièce dont nous parlons (527).

The critic is portrayed as giving an unnatural response—laughing at the moment that should have made him cry—and thus being incapable of identifying with the tragic hero. By extension, this renders him incapable of representing the rest of the spectators in the way that Saint-Ussans can.

Speaking of a scene that recalls to the spectators "ces sentiments de tristesse, ...cette langueur affligeante, et ... cette douleur mortelle dont l'âme de Titus est abattue" (527), Saint-Ussans himself is appropriately moved : "Je vous avoue mon faible, je ne vois jamais de pareils endroits que je ne me sente attendrir. Ils ont le secret d'exciter la pitié dans mon âme..." (528). Villars, on the other hand, is inhumane for his insensitivity : "Je porte envie à cette grandeur héroïque, qui vous met *au-dessus de l'humanité*, et qui fait que vous vous choquez des pleurs d'un Empereur" (528, emphasis added). In your rules of poetics, Saint-Ussans continues, the end of poetry cannot be to excite pity, for it would be a vain attempt in your case "puisque ces mouvements pathétiques, qui font pleurer l'Acteur même, ne peuvent rien sur vous" (528). With such a humor, therefore, he counsels against his reading Homer, Sophocles, Ovid, Seneca, Virgil, and others who would undoubtedly displease him (528). An un-moveable spectator or reader is therefore not in a position to judge the value of great works, and should not be trusted by others.

In the portraits of models and anti-models of spectatorship, we see that Racine and his contemporaries are dealing with a different kind of public than in previous decades, one whose expectations for the genre of tragedy have assimilated the learned discourses of prefaces and 'readerly' criteria for judging theater pieces. The imperfect mastery of this special knowledge by many, as well as its importation to the theater setting, create a difficulty for tragic authors who want to be able to win the approval of "tous ceux qui ont assisté à sa représentation" by the effects of the art before having to win over critical "Maîtres de l'art" by the soundness of their historical knowledge or formal adherence to rules. The demand for 'paratextual' sorts of discourse threatens the moment when the tragic *text* itself should speak to its *Auditeurs*. In denouncing inappropriate ways of bringing the Study to bear on the theater experience, and by educating readers in their separate role as spectators, Racine's original paratexts reveal that

correcting the dynamic for the judgment of his plays in the Theater was of primary importance. He chose to deviate from the norm and use the paratextual space for that purpose in the first editions, but would eventually choose to complete the circle from page to stage to page by offering revised prefaces directed to his public as *readers*.

Revised prefaces

When preparing the collected editions of his works for 1675-6, 1687, and 1697, Racine would make substantial changes to many of the paratexts that we examined. To begin with, no dedicatory letters accompany his plays into these collections. In addition, of the original prefaces that we examined—*Alexandre le Grand* (1666), *Andromaque* (1668), *Britannicus* (1670) and *Bérénice* (1671)—Racine would choose to revise only the first three. He made changes to the paratexts for other plays not figuring prominently in this discussion: the prefaces for *Bajazet* and *Mithridate* were revised, and *La Thébayde, ou les Frères ennemis* received a preface for the first time. But for some reason he chose to leave the preface to *Bérénice* intact. Before analyzing the prefaces that he did modify, we will present some facts and hypotheses surrounding this exception. In the first edition of *Bérénice* (published 24 January 1671) Racine mentions “ce Libelle qu'on a fait contre moi”, identified by Forestier as Villars' *La Critique de Bérénice*, which had been published at the beginning of 1671 (and bearing a privilege from 'le dernier jour de décembre 1670') (*Théâtre* note 3, 1470; 1483). In Racine's preface he says that “les Lecteurs me dispenseront volontiers d'y répondre”. Indeed, he did not feel the need in the future to respond to these critiques in any direct manner. This was the first preface of a play since *Alexandre le grand* not to undergo substantial changes for the 1676 collected works edition (Forestier, *Théâtre* note 1, 1468). Even the play itself was revised relatively little throughout the editions overseen by Racine in 1675-6, 1687, and 1697, although Racine did modify *Bérénice*'s

religion in response to a critique by Villars (Forestier *Théâtre* 1467). Without any direct evidence for why Racine chose to leave this preface intact, we may nonetheless suggest the following reasons: that the critique by Villars was published prior to the appearance of *Bérénice* in print, giving Racine a chance to have the last word for his readers; that both the facetious nature of Villar's critique (and the fact that he treated Corneille's play with equal venom a week later) as well as the comical dissection of the rival plays in the anonymous "Tite et Titus, ou Critique sur les Bérénices: comédie" lessened his interest in penning a serious response; and that Racine's play had been vindicated by another written source in the interim, namely *Réponse à la Critique de Bérénice* by Saint-Ussans. In any case, the later editions from Racine's lifetime carry with them the most didactic of his original prefaces, in which he entreats his public to return to a pleasure at the performance that is unbridled by concerns of rules and reason: "Qu'ils se reposent sur nous de la fatigue d'éclaircir les difficultez de la Poétique d'Aristote. Qu'ils se réservent le plaisir de pleurer et d'estre attendris". The continued need for readers to be reminded of their role as spectators may be another reason for Racine to leave this preface intact.

If the original versions of the paratexts to *Alexandre le Grand* (1666), *Andromaque* (1668), *Britannicus* (1670) and *Bérénice* (1671), train readers as spectators for the better reception of theater pieces, the subsequent revisions of the first three prefaces reveal a more traditional use of the paratextual space to prepare readerly reception of the plays as literary objects. In these later versions of the prefaces, Racine moves away from engaging in present or future relationships with his public as spectators, evoking their past response and focusing instead on his readers as the present and future recipients of his work. He moves away from denouncing bad spectators and training readers in good spectatorship to providing readers with textual support to enter into the textual body of the play. Instead of openly contending for the

taste of the Ancients, he shows how his plays have succeeded in pleasing the taste of his contemporaries, and uses the authority of the Ancients to justify all of his authorial decisions. In short, Racine intervenes in the reception of his books once more to validate their timeless literary qualities, in reference to other texts preserved for posterity, over their temporal (and temporary) struggles to win over critical spectators. Making sure that he has the last word, Racine re-frames his paratextual thresholds to assure that future readers will enter the text with the special knowledge most suited to a favorable reception of his tragedies.

In the revised preface to *Alexandre le Grand*, most likely penned in 1674 and printed in 1675 (B. Norman 252), Racine changes his presentation from an openly defensive one against critical spectators to a more assured commentary on the play that quietly responds to the critiques of a reader.⁷³ Gone are the references to *brigues*, *Censeurs*, and the *Esprit malade* with affected grimaces. Gone as well are the dedication to the king and the pitting of his judgment as an Alexander of the age against lesser powers of perception. If in the first preface, Racine was defending his play against critiques at its performances and preparing for the reception of his next work on the stage, in the revised version, he is responding to the critiques of a reader and sending the play off into the *cabinet* for good. The 1675 preface situates the play in line with its textual precedents: "Il n'y a guère de Tragédie, où l'Histoire soit plus fidèlement suivie que dans celle-ci" (*Œuvres* 191). The ensuing paragraph references Racine's ancient sources and summarizes the historical account of the play's subject. The reason for this history lesson, which in the original preface was deemed unnecessary and cumbersome: "il faudrait copier tout le huitième Livre de Quinte-Curce [sic]", becomes apparent in the second paragraph when Racine refers to his authorial choices:

⁷³ Between the original 1666 preface and the 1675 revision, there was a preliminary revision in 1672 which maintained some of the aggressive tone, although much less overtly (B. Norman 258).

J'ai tâché de représenter en Porus un Ennemi digne d'Alexandre. Et je puis dire que son caractère a plu extrêmement sur notre théâtre; jusque-là, que des Personnes m'ont reproché que je faisais ce Prince plus grand qu'Alexandre (*Œuvres* 191).

Turning the critique into proof of his success in designing his character to please, Racine responds to both “des Personnes” mentioned in the first preface, and more specifically, I would argue, to the *Dissertation sur le Grand Alexandre* by Saint-Évremond.

Published in 1668, two and a half years after the performance of *Alexandre*,⁷⁴ Saint-Évremond’s critique laments the lack of historical specificity in Racine’s characters, and the too-familiar, too-favorable treatment of Porus in particular: “il paraît qu’il a voulu donner une plus grande idée de Porus que d’Alexandre” (183). The revised preface responds in order to all three of Saint-Évremond’s major critiques, offering ‘readerly’ proof of his play’s historical fidelity, its treatment of Porus, and its justification for portraying the love between Cléofile and Alexandre, which includes a direct response to Saint-Évremond’s accusation that Racine made up fictional princesses for his play (Forestier, *Théâtre* note 2, 1317). Concerning the most important accusation, Racine uses proof from his own dramatic text as well as quotes from ancient authors to assert that his treatment of the antagonist was correct. First, instead of his snide remark on those who only read history in novels, Racine more diplomatically points to the dramatic action and verses, stating that “ces personnes” do not consider that in the battle and in the victory, Alexander proves himself superior and that every verse sings his praise (*Œuvres* 191-2). Offering further proof, Racine quotes Seneca in both Latin and French: "Nous sommes de telle nature, qu'il n'y a rien au monde qui se fasse tant admirer qu'un homme qui sait être malheureux

⁷⁴ No authorized publications of Saint-Évremond’s works made during his lifetime; selected works were printed without permission by Claude Barbin in 1668 (“Charles de Marguetel...”).

avec courage" (192). Using this quote to show why people find Porus more intriguing, Racine applies ancient wisdom to interpreting the response of his critics.

We may also say with confidence that Racine responds to Saint-Évremond as a *reader*. We know from the fact of his exile, and more concretely from correspondence between Saint-Évremond and Mme Bourneau, that his encounter with the play took place in the *cabinet* rather than the theater. In his first letter he asks for her to send him the play that she has been talking about so advantageously (181): "Si elle n'est pas imprimée, tâchez d'en avoir un acte de l'Auteur, ou des Comédiens, une Scène seule où je puisse comparer ses sentiments, et ses vers, avec ceux de Corneille" (181). His primary concern, before even reading the play, was that it may be full of general magnanimous sentiments without the historical character of Alexander (181). After reading the play, he wrote: "J'ai lu la Pièce que vous m'avez envoyée, avec plus de curiosité que de plaisir" (182), finding it mediocre, especially in capturing the specificity of the ancient manners and national characteristics (182). The fact that Racine responds to these concerns in his revised preface shows that he is addressing his commentary to readers (or at least one reader) rather than to ignorant and critical spectators. The spatial and temporal distance of the written commentary from the staged production, especially in the case of the *Dissertation* which was slow to appear in print, seems to allow Racine to defend his work in a tone "désormais dépourvu de toute agressivité" (Forestier, *Théâtre* note 1, 1317) as he redirects his authorial voice, previously needed to finesse the spectator's reception in the Theater, back towards the reader's reception in the Study.

Racine's revised paratext for *Andromaque* similarly changes tack from justifying his controversial depiction of Pyrrhus by opposing the rules of theater to the critiques of modern taste, to emphasizing the success of his authorial choices in portraying the subject to his public's

liking. The polemical tone is dropped first of all in the removal of the dedicatory letter, which attempted to trump critical voices by making the Queen the incarnation of the rules which they would have to contradict. No longer vying for supremacy of judgment on his side by pitting her royal highness against critics, Racine begins his presentation not with references to the performance of the play, but to its historical and literary origins. Opening the preface with the same quote from Virgil that appeared in his first edition, the poet steers his commentary on it in a different direction. In the first preface, Racine claimed that his characters were so famous that everyone would see that he had kept them as the ancients had given them, only making Pyrrhus less ferocious than Seneca or Virgil had. He justified his treatment of Pyrrhus by pitting the rules of ancients against the tastes of the modern audience, responding to complaints that the hero was not resigned enough to his mistress: "Mais que faire? Pyrrhus n'avoit pas lû nos Romans." He reminded his audience that Aristotle does not call for perfect heroes, but those with a mediocre goodness who can fall with pity but not indignation, adding that it is not up to him to change the rules of Theater.

In the revised version, undoubtedly influenced by the unfavorable treatment of Pyrrhus in Subligny's satirical *La Folle Querelle ou la Critique d'Andromaque*, which had been on the stage in May 1668 and then again briefly in November of that year when Racine's *Les Plaideurs* debuted, Racine no longer finds it advantageous to draw attention to the hero in his prefatory remarks. Instead, he follows his quote from Virgil by saying that the subject of the play as found in Euripides is almost all he borrowed from that author. He turns his discussion away from the controversial hero as justified by the ancients to focus on the well-received heroine as crafted with his audience in mind. He reveals that he changed some historical elements of the story, simplifying the family relations to make Andromaque fear for the life of Astyanax son of Hector

rather than Molossus son on Pyrrhus: "J'ai cru en cela me conformer à l'idée que nous avons maintenant de cette Princesse" (*Œuvres* 297-8). In this way, Racine claims to have tailored his subject matter to the expectations of his public, who knows Andromaque as the wife of Hector and mother of Astyanax, and whom the historically accurate version would have struck as false or unrealistic. Instead of pitting ancient authority against modern taste, here Racine tries to show that his authorial choices respect both. To this end, he responds to Subligny's critique of making Astyanax live longer than he should have (Forestier, *Théâtre* note 1, 1375) by leveraging both French literary tradition and ancient sources. He lives in a country, he claims, where the liberty of extending a character's life by a few years cannot be taken badly (*Œuvres* 298). Ronsard freely adapted history to spare Astyanax's life and allow him to become the founding monarch of the future France. This reference to a great French poet is unusual in Racine's prefaces, and noteworthy in the context of 1674 that B. Norman identifies as the first tremors of the quarrel between Ancients and Moderns (254, 260). Norman sees the revised preface as dealing with the most important issues raised by the 'modern' camp's Charles Perrault. While Racine maintained in 1668, and in the intermediate revision of 1673, that he should not be obligated to please by turning the tragic hero in the perfect man in novels, here he clearly finds it better to emphasize his success in tailoring the "histoire" to please, even if he "passes up the opportunity to take a strong stand against one of the key tenets of the Moderns" (B. Norman 258). In a more anticipated apology, Racine gives the example of Euripides taking far greater liberties than he has, maintaining that he doesn't need to justify himself, and that there is a big difference between completely changing the foundation of the story and modifying a few incidences (*Œuvres* 298). He finishes with a quote from Sophocles:

Qu'il ne faut point s'amuser à chicaner les Poètes pour quelques changements qu'ils ont pu faire dans la Fable, mais qu'il faut s'attacher à considérer l'excellent usage qu'ils ont fait de ces changements, et la manière ingénieuse dont ils ont su accommoder la Fable à leur sujet (298).

Justifying his departure from the ancients by the authority of the same, Racine maintains his emphasis that the changes he made to “accommodate” the tale for his tragedy were pleasing to his public while being warranted by antiquity. In his revised preface, he thus sends his book into the hands of readers as one in a succession of respected renderings of the subject by both ancient poets and France’s best poets of generations past and present. This is now a paratext that truly leads the play across the threshold to posterity.

Racine’s revised preface to *Britannicus* from 1675 offers perhaps the most striking change of tone amongst the paratexts under consideration, moving from a lamentation of impossible demands on his work to a clear and confident affirmation of the enduring place achieved by his tragedy. In 1670, Racine bemoaned that to the degree that he worked hard to please, the critics rose up against him: “Il n'y a point de cabale qu'ils n'ayent faite, point de critique dont ils ne se soient avisez”. Caught between the unreasonable demands of his critics (for example, for some Nero is too evil and for others Nero is too good), and the imperative to follow the “good sense” of the Ancients, Racine says, “Je plains fort le mal-heur d'un homme qui travaille pour le Public.” “Que faudroit-il faire pour contenter les Juges si difficiles?” Racine could “trahir le bon sens” and aim to please his contemporaries, but he prefers to write for “le petit nombre de gens sages”, keeping as his judge the taste of the ancient masters. In 1674, at the time of penning his revision (B. Norman 252), Racine presents his work with a much more assured tone. No longer torn between pleasing his peers and producing works worthy of literary

endurance, he calmly admits that *Britannicus* was the play he worked on the most, although it did not at first respond to the success he had hoped (*Œuvres* 443). But as for all good plays, he says, "Les critiques se sont évanouies. La Pièce est demeurée" and most *Connaisseurs* agree that it is his best work (443). The critics and *cabales* vanish, but the small number of knowledgeable judges remains, and deems the play worthy of esteem. It is their judgment that endures, and carries over into the theater setting, where once-divided spectators now readily see his play performed again (443).

Conclusion

The paratextual presentations of tragedies in the years preceding Racine's theatrical activity influenced the expectations of his public and its ways of judging his works both in the Theater and in the Study. In light of the seventeenth century conventions for tragedy, which sought to complete a circle from page to stage to print and posterity, we can better understand Racine's choice to intervene twice in the paratextual presentations of a handful of his tragedies. The customary movement from stage to page was disrupted by an inappropriate application of 'readerly' rules to the pleasure-driven experience of the live stage. The knowledge of the hidden art of theater that had been exposed to the reading public for decades strayed from its place in the study of the poet or connoisseur and threatened the magic of the moment in the Theater. Tragedy could not divorce itself from its relationship to history and ancient rules; nor could it adapt to respond to its critics through its fiction. Therefore, Racine made use of the paratextual space to re-educate his public in its roles as first Spectator, then Reader. In the selected paratexts that he chose to revise, his original writings contended for his tragedies to bring them down from the stage with the glory they deserved, while his revised prefaces sought to prepare the way for them to take their place in the Temple of Memory. Through that gesture, he was able to say of

all these tragedies, as he did of his final secular piece, *Phèdre* (1677): “Je laisse & aux Lecteurs & au temps à décider de son véritable prix”.

Conclusion

Through the analyses carried out in its three chapters, this dissertation has contributed to current and future scholarship by offering fresh perspectives on familiar bodies of work as well as drawing attention to an underutilized corpus of paratextual materials. This study has articulated and traced a new legacy of the famous Querelle du *Cid* along the lines of the Dramatic Poem's relationship to its public in the Theater and Study. This new reading was made possible by contextualizing the quarrel in the publication practices and authorial presentations of plays in the 1630s, and following them systematically through the 1670s. In the process, the preceding analyses have shed new light on such famous texts as Corneille's *Excuse à Ariste*, Molière's *Critique de l'École des femmes*, and Racine's prefaces to masterpieces like *Andromaque*. The major conclusions of each of these case studies is briefly summarized in this conclusion, followed by reflections on the significance of the dissertation as a whole for answering the questions we posed in the introduction, as well as new avenues for future inquiries related to the Stage and Study in seventeenth century French theater.

Summary of chapters

The three chapters in this dissertation have allowed us to draw new insights on the relationship of theater pieces to their public in seventeenth century France through contextualized analyses of key moments and strategies in the careers of Corneille, Molière and Racine. More specifically, in **chapter 1**, I established that the conventional paratexts of the 1630s revealed the playwrights' acknowledgement of a two-step reception of their work first as performance and then as print. We saw in comparison how Corneille's transition of the *Cid* from performance to print without the conventional civility of acknowledging the second

judgment of the play by his Reader set up the ensuing quarrel to be articulated in terms that pitted the opinions of spectators in the Theater against those of readers in the Study. After tracing this dichotomy through the Querelle du *Cid* in a new reading of this corpus, my work showed that the intervention of Richelieu's Académie Française in the quarrel officially promoted a hierarchy of judgments that valued the literary elements and neoclassical regularity of the Dramatic Poem above its spectacular elements, placing the literary expert in a privileged position of judgment. Finally, we saw that in the aftermath of the quarrel writers continued to grapple in their paratexts with the tension established between their works' evaluation by spectator pleasure in the Theater and by dramaturgical rules in the Study, a tension that would play out in the remainder of the century.

In **chapter 2**, we traced the legacy of the Querelle du *Cid*'s separation and hierarchization of Stage and Study as evident in the career of Molière. Through comparison with contemporary authors adhering to the two-step reception seen in the 1630s, I demonstrated that Molière chose to print his theater pieces while distracting his public from associations of the printed play with a 'readerly' judgment in the Study. By theatricalizing his authorial persona and his publication gesture, mixing the conventions of paratextual authorial interventions and theatrical entertainment on both the stage and page, Molière was able to maintain a rapport between his work and his public that prized the pleasure of the moment above all else, thus inscribing all of his work in the realm of the Theater over the Study.

In **chapter 3**, I demonstrated that the effects of the hierarchy of the Study over Theater that was published by the Querelle du *Cid* impacted the presentation and judgment of tragedy as a genre more than comedy. Comparing the defining limitations and precedents for both genres, I showed that tragedy in seventeenth century France had a strong association with the Study,

inseparable from its literary and historical sources, and unable to engage in direct polemical discourse from the stage. My analysis of paratexts for tragedies in the decades preceding Racine's career allowed us to conclude that the abstraction of the reading public, as shaped by the polemical and paratextual discourses over the decades by poets and critics, evolved to resemble the experts in the Study, and led spectator-readers of tragedy to apply literary judgments of the plays to performances as well as printed books. Having established that Racine inherited a public whose conception of its role of judgment vis-à-vis his tragedies had been shaped by these publications, I laid out how his strategic paratextual interventions as an author aimed to correct the disrupted two-step reception of his work, reeducating readers in their role as spectators in his original prefaces before revising them to present his work as a literary object for posterity in the Study.

Legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* on the 'neoclassical' public

The inquiry carried through these three chapters has elucidated a new legacy of the Querelle du *Cid*. At a particular moment in the esthetic and publication developments of the Dramatic Poem which emphasized the public offering of plays in two moments for spectators and readers, the Querelle articulated a tension between the two forms of theater pieces and published a hierarchy that promoted a neoclassical esthetic as associated with a 'readerly' approach to judging a play. Not only did baroque flourishes lose ground to classical unities and *vraisemblance*, but the privilege of the spectator gradually gave way in discourse on plays to the role of the reader and literary expert as judge. This rapport of the play to Stage and Study was re-articulated in polemical pieces and in the majority of authorial paratexts over the ensuing decades, establishing a precedent for the way the public interacted with the plays in general, and tragedies in particular. In tracing this evolution, this dissertation has shown that in the

seventeenth century, the tension between Stage and Study, as published in the *Querelle du Cid* and subsequent polemics and paratexts, promoted an approach to the plays as literary objects in the *cabinet* and eventually in the *théâtre* itself. Thus the great age of neoclassical theater in France was in fact a Theater constantly negotiating its relationship to the Study.

Moreover, by insisting on the unique situation of the theater in seventeenth century France as a dual-natured genre occupying performance and print, this dissertation has nuanced the concept of literary activity creating its public, adding to the work done by Merlin, Jouhaud and others in this field. I have demonstrated that the *Querelle du Cid* articulated its abstraction of the 'public' on behalf of whom it spoke in the specific terms of spectators and readers, and published this abstraction for consumption by spectator-readers who came to view their role as the public vis-à-vis the theater pieces in new ways. More specifically, this study has prompted us to reconsider 'neoclassical' expectations for theater pieces by taking a more nuanced view of the plays in two forms and their public in two roles, as well as the difference that genre makes for the criteria and perceptions of judgment throughout this period. Theater pieces in seventeenth century France were indeed judged by adherence to the classical unities, ancient authorities, and refinement of language as prescribed by *bienséance*. But my analysis has shown that the criteria by which a play was deemed 'successful' (by those whose estimations have survived for us modern-day readers) differed from stage to page, comedy to tragedy, and evolved in the course of the century as the public of spectator-readers was exposed to the abstractions of itself in the paratextual and polemical discourse published by poets and critics. The legacy of the *Querelle du Cid* for the codification of the neoclassical rules and the public who judged by them was thus a dynamic one for playwrights on the paratextual threshold between Stage and Study.

Legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* on theater and the rise of opera

This legacy of the tension between Stage and Study in the Dramatic Poem is also significant for understanding the subordination of theater, and in particular comedy-ballet, to the increasingly favored *opéra* in the royal entertainments of the later seventeenth century. In the evolving expectations for the Dramatic Poem, a genre which inherently bore the tension between the literary and spectacular in the majority of the seventeenth century, the separation initiated by the Querelle du *Cid* between Stage and Study seems to have bifurcated the tastes of theatergoers for their theatrical entertainments. On the one hand, they came to see themselves as judging Dramatic Poems (plot-driven imitations of human action by Aristotle's definition) by literary criteria, even in the Theater, as we saw lamented by Racine and his contemporaries. The Académie's ideal of a 'reasonable contentment' was overtaken more by reason than pleasure, as eloquently stated in the appraisal of Christian Biet, which we revisit:

...placée entre le monde de l'illusion et l'oeil qui le contemple, la raison intervient dans la réception du processus théâtral qui a alors pour objet d'être compris, analysé par des individus raisonnables exerçant raisonnablement leurs émotions elles-mêmes maîtrisées. De l'acte de jouissance de l'ouïe et de l'immédiateté de l'image efficace, on est donc passé, pour la tragédie et bientôt pour la comédie, à l'acte de plaisir réflexif qui sait corriger et analyser l'image en vue d'une maîtrise du monde" ("C'est un scélérat qui parle" 81).

The upper hand given in the Querelle du *Cid* to the ways of judging associated with the Study effectively conditioned the type of pleasure associated with the Theater, separating it from its origins in the spectacular stirring of the moment.

On the other hand, the public found its desire for the pure movement of the senses and passions satisfied in the spectacular effects of the opera. Alain Niderst describes the triumph of the opera in these terms:

Au lieu d'une œuvre où le langage et l'action demeuraient l'essentiel, s'imposait une splendeur presque abstraite. Le public n'allait plus chercher dans le spectacle une représentation sérieuse et émouvante de l'amour, de l'héroïsme, des actions et des tourments de l'humanité, il allait vers une somptuosité où s'unissaient tous les arts, et qui ne conviait au fond qu'à désirer ou regretter un univers surnaturel (305).

While the Dramatic Poem had become encumbered with 'neoclassical' expectations that emphasized its literary elements of language and dramatic action to be appreciated in both performance and print, the opera offered an unambiguously spectacular entertainment aimed at the senses and sensibilities. Operas were truly separate from the realm of the Study, unlike the hybrid forms of Molière's comedy-ballets which retained the literary properties of Dramatic Poems even in their emphasis on the entertainment as a whole.

The appeal of the opera that led Louis XIV to shift his favor from the poet Molière to the composer Lully in 1672⁷⁵ may be explained in part by the developments that had led the special knowledge of the Study to overtake the experience of the performance, and consequently the political expediency that Richelieu had envisioned for it decades earlier. In his rearrangement of the theater space to mirror a political hierarchy and display a "simulacrum of the prince's privileged epistemological position in the absolutist imaginations" (Shoemaker 171), Richelieu had implemented a political use of the theater event and act of spectatorship. As Christian

⁷⁵ Molière was effectively cut out of overseeing royal entertainments by his former collaborator Jean-Baptiste Lully, who obtained a monopoly over all musical entertainments from Colbert on 13 mars 1672 (Niderst 304). Molière's appeal for justice was unsuccessful (Niderst 304), and he took this as evidence of the king's favor passing (Touchard 625, Duchêne 648).

Jouhaud surmises in *Les Pouvoirs de la littérature*, it was for both personal pleasure and strategic ends that the political man was active in watching the theater, rendering his verdict on the play under the gaze of others:

Le théâtre est donc un endroit où l'homme de pouvoir s'affiche dans la posture de divertissement mais où il ne cesse pas d'agir pour autant, révélant le rapport privilégié qu'il entretient avec ce que la représentation montre, et légitimant en retour la qualité des effets de la représentation (298).

Jouhaud goes on to say that, unlike what happens in the *cour* or *cabinet*, "il n'y a pas, au théâtre, d'écart entre ce qui est livré au regard d'autrui par l'action dramatique et ce que l'homme de pouvoir montre de ce qu'il en a reçu" (298). A player himself on the political stage, the man of power performs his judgment of the spectacle as a spectacle for others, reinforcing his privileged position. In light of this double use of spectacle, the critical reason associated with 'readerly' judgments of plays in the legacy of the Querelle is incompatible with the mindset spectators ought to have for the displays of royal power in the court entertainments. Racine attempted to fight against this critical posture by reminding his readers of the appropriate pleasure one derives from bearing witness to the effects of the spectacle on superior judges such as the king, queen, and Colbert (chapter 3). But in light of the Study's infringement on the theater event, it was perhaps wise for Louis to direct his public's attention to a less problematic genre for his performances of royal power, one where *l'éblouissement* would not be competing with maxims of Aristotle and Horace in the minds of spectators in an age where "tout le monde croit avoir le droit de juger de la Poësie" (Scudéry, dedication to *l'Amour tyrannique*).

Recommendations for future study

The conclusions of this dissertation were made possible in large part by the scope of paratextual materials that informed my research. The work done in preparation of my analyses

drew from a larger body of prefatory materials to plays than has been previously used to discuss the rapport of theater pieces to Stage and Study. Including roughly 210 plays by over 70 authors from the 1630s to 1670s, the paratexts I analyzed represent an underutilized corpus ripe for future work. It is my hope that the generalizations I have drawn from these paratexts may serve as the basis for other scholars to delve into particular inquiries beyond the scope of this dissertation, and that the paratexts themselves may be analyzed from new angles.

One recommendation for further research drawn directly from this study is a more in-depth analysis of Corneille's paratextual *oeuvre* (a true opus in itself, spanning the better part of the century with numerous revisions, *examens*, etc) in light of the major developments of Stage and Study drawn out in this dissertation. Another direction to expand would be to analyze paratexts from the 1680s to *fin-de-règne* period, taking into account how later developments such as the rise of opera and the establishment of the Comédie-Française, with its monopoly on French-language entertainments, shaped authorial presentations of plays. It may also be fruitful to explore the intersection of the Querelle du *Cid*'s legacy for judging theater pieces in the Theater and Study with Christian Biet's study of judgment and literature in *Droit et littérature sous l'Ancien Régime: le jeu de la valeur et de la loi*. In this book Biet explores the rapport between the fields of literature and law, drawing out the role of amateur judge that readers and spectators play when 'new' characters with ambiguous juridical status are placed before them. As he does not address the difference made by genre in shaping the approaches to judgment of the (literary) public, Biet's arguments could be nuanced and expanded along that line in light of the developments shown in this dissertation.

To close our observations, we pause to consider the ramifications of this study for our own rapport with seventeenth century plays in the modes associated with the Theater and Study.

As academic readers, we tend to approach plays as literary objects, especially those 'masterpieces' from the seventeenth century that have found their place into the 'Temple de la Mémoire'. Unpacking the legacy of the Querelle du *Cid* on the evolution of theater pieces and their rapport to their public in this period should remind us of the life of the plays before their entrance to the hallows of posterity. The prefaces, dedicatory letters, and critical essays served to negotiate the passage of the plays from stage to page and posterity, where we look back as readers through the discourses crafted for spectator-readers influenced by the hierarchy of Study over Theater promoted in the quarrel. Understanding the circumstances that gave rise to the articulation of a neoclassical esthetic in terms of spectators versus readers should warn us not to rely too heavily on approaching these Dramatic Poems as literary objects, at the risk of overemphasizing the importance of the neoclassical rules in the actual success of the plays that made it from the stage to the pages we read, or of overlooking the form always in tension with the printed book: the theater performance. Despite the numerous citations of Aristotle, claims to regularity and historical accuracy, the fact remains now as it did then that "la principale Regle est de plaire et de toucher. Toutes les autres ne sont faites que pour parvenir à cette premiere" (Racine, preface to *Bérénice*). Heeding the advice of Racine in his unaltered preface to *Bérénice*, may we pause occasionally with the books in our hands to step away from the mode of the Study and recapture the spirit of the Theater: "Que [nous nous reposions] sur [les poètes] de la fatigue d'éclaircir les difficultez des la Poétique d'Aristote. Que [nous nous réservions] le plaisir de pleurer et d'estre attendris".

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Figure A. Bosse, Abraham. *La Galerie du Palais*. 1638. Etching. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.



Figure B. Frontispiece to *Le Véritable Coriolan*. 1638. Etching. Likely by Issac Briot, the known creator of an etching for the play's title page featuring cupids.

For the <i>Cid</i>	Against the <i>Cid</i>
Excuse à Ariste (Corneille)	
Rondeau (Corneille)	L'auteur du vray <i>Cid</i> espagnol à son traducteur francoys (Mairet)
La deffense du <i>cid</i> (1637). (Faret?)	Observations sur le <i>Cid</i>. A Paris, aux despens de l'auteur (1637). (Scudéry)
Lettre apoligitique du Sr Corneille, contentant sa response aux observations faictes par le Sr Scudery sur le <i>Cid</i> (1637). (Corneille)	
La voix publique à Monsieur de Scudery sur les Observations du <i>Cid</i> (1637). (unknown)	
L'Incognu et véritable amy de Messieurs de Scudery et Corneille (1637). (Rotrou?)	
Le souhait du <i>Cid</i> en faveur de Scudéri, une paire de lunettes pour mieux faire ses observations (1637) , (signed 'Mon ris'--Sirmond?)	Lettre du Sr Claveret au Sr Corneille, soy disant auteur du <i>Cid</i> (1637). (Claveret)
L'amy du <i>Cid</i> à Claveret (1637) (unknown)	L'acomodement du <i>Cid</i> et de son censeur (1637). (unknown)
Lettre pour Monsieur de Corneille, contre les mots de la Lettre sous le nom d'Ariste (unknown)	La victoire du sieur Corneille, Scudery et Claveret.... (1637) (unknown)
Response de *** à *** sous le nom d'Ariste (1637) (unknown)	Lettre à *** sous le nom d'Ariste (Faucon de Ris, seigneur de Charleval)
Paraphrase de la Devise sur l'Observateur (attribué à Corneille?)	Lettre de Mr de Scudery à l'illustre Académie. (1637) (Scudéry)
Epistre aux poètes de ce temps sur leur Querelle du <i>Cid</i> (1637) (unknown)	La preuve des passages alleguez dans les Observations sur le <i>Cid</i> . A Messieurs de l'Académie. (1637) (Scudéry)
Pour le sieur Corneille contre les ennemis du <i>Cid</i> (1637). Sonnet et quatrain. (unknown)	
Le Jugement du <i>Cid</i> composé par un Bourgeois de Paris (Ch. Sorel ?)	
Discours à Cliton sur les Observations du <i>Cid</i>, avec un traité de la disposition du Poème dramatique et de la prétendue règle de vingt-quatre heures. (attribué par M.H. Cardon--mais sous réserves,--à M. le comte de Belin?)	Epistre familière du Sr Mairet au Sr Corneille, sur la Tragi-Comédie du <i>Cid</i>. (1637) (Mairet)
Lettre du Desinteressé au sieur Mairet (Corneille ou l'un de ses amis intimes)	(?) Lettre du sieur Claveret à Monsieur Corneille (Claveret)
Advertissement au Besançonnois Mairet (Corneille? ou l'un de ses amis)	Apologie pour Monsieur Mairet, contre les calomnies du sieur Corneille de Rouen (1637) (Scarron? Et Mairet (Lettre de Mairet, sent from Belin [in le Mans], 30 September 1637)
(?) La suite du <i>Cid</i> en abrégé, ou le triomphe de son Auteur, en despit des envieux. ... (Scarron?)	
Lettre de M. l'abbé de Boisrobert à M. Mariet (Boisrobert), from Charonne, 5 October 1637.	
Les sentiments de l'Académie française sur la tragi-comédie du <i>Cid</i>. (1638). (Chapelain).	
Observations sur les sentiments de l'Académie française (MS) (unknown)	Et la response de M. de Scudery à M. de Balzac (Scudéry)
Lettre de M. de Balzac à M. de Scudery sur les observations du <i>Cid</i> (Balzac)	Avec la lettre de M. de Scudery à Messieurs de l'Académie française sur le jugement qu'ils ont fait du <i>Cid</i> et de ses observations. (1637). (Scudéry)
L'innocence et le véritable amour de Chymene, dédié aux Dames. (1638) (unknown)	

*Follows chronology in Gasté 56-62.

Figure C.

VITA

Jessica Kamin completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in European Studies—French in 2005 at Seattle Pacific University, where she taught language courses after completing a Master of Arts in French Language and Pedagogy from Middlebury College in 2006. During her year with Middlebury’s C.V. Starr School in France, Jessica performed in a French-language theater production and earned certificates in teaching French as a Foreign Language from Université de Paris III and Business French from the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2012 she earned a Doctor of Philosophy at University of Washington in French Literature.