FATALITY IN RACINE'S TRAGEDIES

FATALITY AS PORTRAYED IN THE TRAGEDIES OF RACINE

by

NORMA NEITA NELSON, B.A., U.W.I.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

October 1969

MASTER OF ARTS (1969) McMASTER UNIVERSITY
(Romance Languages) Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Fatality as Portrayed in the Tragedies of Racine

AUTHOR: Norma Neita Nelson, B.A., U.W.I.

SUPERVISOR: Dr. G. A. Warner

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 104

SCOPE AND CONTENTS: A discussion of Fatality, its origin in the theatre; its effect on French tragedians up to Racine and its portrayal in Racinian tragedy.

PREFACE

Volumes have been written about Racine, his life, works and religion; and rightly so, since he is not only one of the leading divinities of the French Pantheon but one of the world's greatest tragic dramatists. This thesis makes no claim of producing novel and astounding discoveries or views. It is simply the product of an intimate acquaintance with Racine and a deep admiration for his work. From this acquaintance formulates a burning question: What caused Racine to present in his theatre, a tragic art almost ignored by the major tragic dramatists of his era? Did this sense of fatality come from the Greeks or his own temperament, from his Jansenist upbringing or his experience in life? An attempt has been made to embody in this study most of the important results of Racinian research and to give a carefully weighted but personal judgment on this aspect of his work.

Because certain critics have gone too far into the psychological aspect of his tragedies, I have not fully accepted their ideas--e.g. Martin Turnell who sees Phèdre in the Freudian context; neither do I fully agree with Prof. L. Goldmann who sees all of Racine's tragedies as showing man's relations with a Jansenist God. Racine is not exceptionally different from the seventeenth century moralists like La Rochefoucauld, and La Fontaine who specialised in the

study of man; besides, whilst the tragic genre saw man struggling with superior forces, Racine did not limit himself to this portrayal only, and neither were his tragedies all under the aegis of Jansenism. It was quite à la mode to see a tragic hero struggling with interior forces which threatened to overwhelm him and sometimes did.

This study is by no means to be taken as a complete survey of Fatality in Racine's tragic theatre; it is limited to a consideration of those instruments of fatality, major and minor, depicted in the tragedies. In nearly every tragedy can be found all the instruments mentioned but I have limited myself to a discussion of them in different tragedies for the simple reason that had I treated them separately in each tragedy this work would be swollen to several times its present size.

In preparing this study, three main objectives have been kept in view:

1. To sketch the artistic background that explains this aspect of his work;

2. To show the influence of this background on him and other tragic dramatists before him;

3. To attempt a critical analysis and estimate of this aspect of his plays.

The findings presented in this thesis are not guaranteed unshakeable, although founded on a sound basis. The subject has other aspects to it which I should like to investigate

further.

I should like to express my grateful appreciation to Drs. G. M. Paul and V. Warrior for their help in the section dealing with the Greek Tragedians. My thanks, also go to Prof. P. M. Conlon for his kind advice. In particular I am greatly indebted to Dr. G. A. Warner, my Supervisor, for his valuable suggestions, insights and helpful criticism of the entire thesis. To Prof. Jean Mesnard of Bordeaux University, I owe special gratitude for his guidance and help in choosing the title, drawing up a plan and with whom I had invaluable discussions. Finally let me express my thanks to Mrs. M. Belec for typing the manuscript.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART A

CHAPTER I

FATALITY AND THE GREEK STAGE

> If there were no eternal consciousness in a man, if at the foundation of all, there lay only a wildly seething power which, writhing with obscure passions, produced everything that is great and everything that is insignificant, if a bottomless void never satiated, lay hidden beneath all--what then would life be but despair?
>
> Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling

In tragic literature, the characterization of fatality is very widespread, and quite profound. It seems to find a spectacular place in most serious literature and philosophy, and as such attracts the attention of many critical minds. These, however, in their attempt to discuss its presence in the works of individual authors have neglected most often to define in general terms what fatality is.

It must be granted that, as with all terms of this kind, any meaning imposed upon it must be an arbitrary one that may not command agreement. But, agreed upon or not, it is valuable critically as it throws a consistently clear light upon a broad enough and deep enough area of the author slated for study. I propose here to view Fatality in a broad sense since a very restricted meaning would somewhat mislead us in the understanding of the author, and this aspect of his work.

According to certain doctrines, anything which happens in the world and especially in the lives of men, is foreordained or predestined by the God, the gods or their agents. Fatality then, is seen as the philosophy of pre-determination. But it is not in any way limited only to the power of a Superior being or beings; any other determining force superior to and independent of rational control can motivate one's destiny--e.g. Love, Jealousy, heredity and even the presence of another person.

By extention, it has come to mean any kind of necessity or determination like sickness or accidents and finally to a succession of inexplicable coincidences and unfortunate circumstances as demonstrated by Loti: Matelot XXVIII: "une fatalité de décisions mal prises, d'espérances irréalisées, de projets manqués continuait de poursuivre la vie de Jean".

The dogma of foreordained fate was accepted by most of the Ancients whose works dealt in great part with stories of murder, vengeance, curses and divine resentment. It should be noted that in their theatre the gods and fate are sometimes confounded and often it is very difficult to distinguish one from the other. Thus throughout the present thesis, when mention is made of the Gods working out their will in the lives of men, this should be seen as Fate through their instrumentality.

There is scarcely a coherent image of the gods in the works of the Ancients. Sometimes, they are depicted as mythological characters; sometimes, the incarnation of an order and at other times they are objects of worship; and the reader cannot clearly distinguish between these aspects. The relationship between them and men is a complex and ambiguous one. Yet the divine will is always carried out by human intermediary, for man always collaborates with the gods. The reverse is also true, but it is often a difficult task to tell which of the two actions is a reflection of the other. That the Gods always conducted human affairs is accepted as a truism, but this is not quite so. Many times they stand by and witness man's struggles and uncertainty. They do sometimes warn him by means of oracles but generally it is always too late or of no avail. Man stands alone in ignorance viewing his failures but at the same time, like Prometheus, conscious of his noble efforts and his suffering.

The Ancient Greeks attributed a divine nature to the blind force termed Chance or Necessity, Τύχη ἡ Ἀνάγκη which became Moĭra--man's portion allotted to him by the gods and finally Fatum--fate or destiny. The latter was soon accepted as a supreme being wielding power over men and Gods alike, who were either its tools or its victims. By means of its incomprehensible and unchanging decrees, this destiny guided the order of the happenings in a man's life.

Thus in Greece and the Greek nation, Fatality played an inevitable role.

To substantiate these remarks, it is necessary to turn to the Greek tragedians in whose works fatality played an important part. The first of these is Aeschylus, acclaimed as the "father of tragedy", whose plays seem envelopped in a coat of pessimism, for the dogma of fatality shows everthing moving in a steady, progressive line towards disaster. However, before passing judgment on Aeschylus as an incurable pessimist, it is best to examine carefully his background and the atmosphere in which he lived.

He was born at Eleusis, a town where the mystic rites of Dionysius were celebrated. As a young man he was aware of the changes in aristocratic rule of Greece, for he was of aristocratic lineage. He was almost an adult when the tyrants then ruling his country were deposed and Cleisthenes, a nobleman, took control of the government as leader of the people thus imposing a stable form of government, and equality among the citizens. But this state of blessed peace seemed threatened "when the kings of Sparta campaigned against Athens and conquered among others the town of the poet's birth. The Boetians crossed Cithaeron and the Chalcidians attacking Athens in the rear, destroyed the wastelands of the Euripus".[1] At the last moment,

---

[1]Albin Lesky, Greek Tragedy, trans. H. A. Frankfort

the kings disagreed among themselves and the attack on Athens was averted. The Greeks, terribly religious, saw in this the protection of their city by the gods and the mind of the young man, Aeschylus, must have been impressed.

As an adult, he did not fail to see the hand of the divine gods in the crushing victory of Athens and Greece over the Persians. This chapter of Greek history is of special significance to him since he fought in this war. As Lesky more eloquently explains:

> We can grasp the importance of this battle for Aeschylus in the light of what it meant to others who experienced it. To them it was not as if distant gods had influenced the course from afar, they knew that the divine powers of their homeland had taken part.[2]

The Athenians having attained this victory arrogated to themselves none of the praise but attributed it all to the Gods. Such was the religious air that Aeschylus breathed and he accepted like his forebears the fact that the gods took an active part in human affairs. Therefore, his tragedies will all be coloured by the workings of fate.

Using a few of his extant tragedies, I shall trace the theme of fatality or the intervention of the Gods. In

---

(London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1965), p. 55.

[2]Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 56.

these few tragedies, fatality is portrayed as a terrible divinity presiding over man's affairs with invincible power. It changes willy-nilly man's greatest hour of triumph into disaster and his despair into joy. Seated on his throne this divine being reigns like a tyrant, and hands down to men and even the gods themselves, good and evil, punishment and recompense. From the very beginning of the plays, this despot hovers on the scene until the end. The characters are never free and even if they seem to have some form of freedom, it's only to accomplish the will of the gods.

In Seven Against Thebes also treated by Racine, Aeschylus begins at the point where Polynices is about to attack the city of Thebes because his brother, Eteocles, refuses to allow him his one year of rule as was decided between them both. He stations six leaders with their divisions at the six gates and he himself will take up his position at the seventh. The play reaches its height when Eteocles distributes by lot the Theban leaders who are to defend the gates from within and it seems that Fate has left to him the seventh gate at which he must face his brother, Polynices. Immediately Eteocles sees this as Fatality working persistently to eliminate his race:

> O frenzy-stricken, hated sore of Gods!
> O woe-fraught race (my race!) of Oedipus
> Ah, me! my father's curse is now fulfilled.[3]

---

[3] Tragedies of Aeschylus, a new translation by the late

He has come to the realisation that his fate must be executed. Aeschylus depicts here Fatality working from within and without. Though the character is predestined to destruction he willingly goes forth to meet death in a fratricidal combat. Against his will, Eteocles is pushed by his father's curse and an irresistible power.

To this sombre fatality is linked his unswerving will, and with lucidity, he goes out to the fray. The chorus is powerless to restrain him:

> Chorus: What dost thous crave my son?
> Let not ill fate
> Frenzied and hot for war
> Carry thee headlong on;
> Check the first onset of an evil heart.

But Eteocles attributing all to the gods retorts:

> Since god so hotly urges on the matter,
> Let all of Laius' race whom Phoebus hates
> Drift with the breeze up on Colcytos' wave
>
> Chorus: An over-fierce and passionate desire
> Stirs and pricks thee on
> To work an evil deed,
> Of guilt of blood thy hand should never shed
>
> Eteocles: Nay, my dear father's curse in full-grown hate,
> Dwells on dry eyes that cannot shed a tear
> And speaks of gain before the after-doom.

The suggestion is made that he offer sacrifices to try and avert the anger of the gods and disaster on the city:

Very Rev. E. H. Plumptre, D.D. (London: Isbister and Co. Ltd., 1891), "Seven Against Thebes", I, 650-652.

Chorus: Be not urged on. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Dark-robed Erinnys enter not the house
When at men's hands the Gods
Accept their sacrifice.

But the hero refuses for he is aware of his preordained doom. Isn't he a member of the household of Laius and Oedipus?

Eteocles: As for the Gods, they scorned us long ago.
And smile but on the offering of our deaths
What boots it then on death's doom still to fawn?
If gods grant it, he shall not escape harm.[4]

Every tragedy of Aeschylus sets forth dramatically some great work of destiny. Behind the visible works untiringly the invisible and as Albin Lesky sees it: "Human existence is constantly threatened from the realm of the gods".[5] Aeschylus believes and expresses the idea that human action obeys a superior force which is unconsciously manifested in certain unchangeable forms like heredity, a family curse or the role of the fates or Erinnys. In his works, this fatal force subjugates man, according to its whims and fancies. Sometimes it acts as an ally but more often as an enemy, a severe judge or a jealous rival.

---

[4]Aeschylus, Seven Against Thebes, trans. by E. H. Plumptre, X, 683-716.

[5]Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 62.

One other force stands out in his plays and moves the leading characters. This is their passionate, indomitable will which acts in conjunction with Fatality and brings about the catastrophe. Like other passions (Love and Jealousy e.g. in Euripides) it is almost inflexible e.g. the will of Eteocles in the Seven against Thebes. It is a sort of irresistible force which causes suffering to the characters. For they see the difficulties, quicksands and chasms of horror into which it is about to plunge them irremediably but they cannot waver; their will is subordinated to that of the Gods. Thus, it seems as if the characters are doing what they themselves wish but in reality, they are only performing duties ordered by cruel Destiny and the gods. Like Macbeth, the characters see the fatal, hallucinatory dagger before them, "the handle towards their hand", and inevitably, they too grasp it. Listen to Eteocles, as he rushes to commit fratricide heedless of the pleadings of the chorus:

> Since God so hotly driveth to the deed,
> Content ye; and let all Laius' breed,
> Before the wind of great Apollo's hate
> Drift to the River of wailing consecrate.[6]

---

[6] Aeschylus: Seven against Thebes, trans. by Gilbert Murray (London, 1959), II, 689-692.

Sophocles

"Was the younger contemporary and for a decade the rival of Aeschylus, drawing for the most part on the same store of legends, familiar with the same religious ideas".[7]

He is a reflection of the thoughts of his age; in his works--the earlier ones--the gods are sometimes cruel but more often indifferent and deaf. In his later works, however, there is a definite change; Sophocles no longer shows the supernatural agents in control of the action; instead he concentrates on the individual, showing him grappling with his destiny already irrevocable. As Greene declares:

> Instead of systematically justifying the divine order, or tracing the operation of fate or of a family curse through successive generations in trilogies of tragedies, he concentrates his attention in single dramas on the effect of tremendous forces on individual persons; he shows them battling with circumstance or with opposing persons; he reveals their motives. In a word, he creates tragedy of character.[8]

His heroes know that they must act in a certain manner but though fully aware of this, they can do nothing. They are swept along involuntarily to their destruction. Yet, Sophocles' heroes are not inextricably enmeshed by a brutal

---

[7]W. C. Greene, Moira, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 138.

[8]Ibid., p. 138.

divinity. They are not constantly watched by a supernatural force: they fall prey to their own violent passions and beliefs with which they are preoccupied and which eventually lead them astray. Nevertheless, they regard themselves as arbiter of their own decisions; they realise that, to a certain extent, their acts are motivated by their own free will. Of course, fatality can make the heroes unhappy but that is as far as it goes. Fatality cannot dominate their will. The all-powerful exterior divinity now yields the first place to man struggling with his passions and his will-power "marchant librement dans cette carrière que le destin lui a ouverte".[9]

With this in mind, let us analyse two tragedies of Sophocles; one in which, like those of Aeschylus, the Gods are all-powerful, and another where passions become the fatal motive power.

In the Ajax, the chief character of the same name, enraged because he was not awarded the armour of Achilles, tried to kill the Greek leaders. His anger, however, was diverted from them to the animals taken as spoil, by the Goddess Athena who cruelly and scornfully tries to demean still more the great warrior in the presence of Odysseus, her favourite. She advises him to learn a lesson of the strength of the gods:

---

[9]Jean Grosjean, Tragiques Grecs. Eschyle et Sophocle

> Let this example teach you to beware
> To speak profanity against the gods.
> And if perhaps in riches or in power
> You seem superior, be not insolent;
> For know, one day suffices to exalt
> Or to depress the state of mortal man.
> The wise and good are cherished by the gods,
> But those who practise evil, they abhor.[10]

In the person of Athena is seen the gods all-powerful and sovereign, masters of man's destiny. They raise up and lay low feeble mortals; they protect the humble and chastise the proud. "Athena plays the part of fatality and her deed is known at the beginning of the play. The divine origin and therefore the inevitability of the madness is emphasised by the chorus and by Ajax himself".[11]

The gods are leaving the forefront in the Trachiniae. They will give way to man and his passions. Soon they will only be figure-heads lacking life; a mere ornament in the tragedies of Sophocles. Deianira, wife of Heracles has waited for his return fifteen long months and now she realises that his love has been transferred to another--Iole. Jealousy "that green-eyed monster" is slowly rearing its head and attains its full enormity when she learns from Lichas, Heracles' faithful companion, the truth of their long sojourn away from her. Deianira cannot endure that Iole

---

fragments traduits par R. Dreyfus.

[10] Sophocles, Ajax, trans. by Cedric Whitman, p. 67.

[11] W. C. Greene, Moira, p. 148.

shares her house and the love of her husband. Jealous of the fresh beauty of the young girl, she forsees her as queen when all her own beauty shall have faded. Driven on by this fatal power, she tries to regain the love of her husband by a magic potion; she is like a wilting rose rejected by the gardener who gently plucks the newly opened flower--Iole, and the thought of Heracles being her husband only in name but everything else to Iole tortures her and feeds her jealousy. She will regain his love by using the charm of Nessus: won't this induce him to love her now as he did formerly in blooming youth? Her passion blinds her to the fact that the potion was prescribed by her husband's enemy and indeed the "shirt of Nessus" proved a fiery grave for Heracles.

Love turned to jealousy has ruined their lives. It has taken the place usually reserved for the Gods or their agents accomplishing their work. This tragedy is indicative of the road Sophoclean drama will take from now on.

> The persons in this drama are not confronting irrational, intangible forces. Although prophecies set events in motion, in the actual play, their actions and sufferings are entirely prompted from within themselves. We have noted that the personality of the hero is of far greater importance than in Aeschylus for whom divinity was the protagonist.[12]

---

[12] Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 123.

Euripides

In the realm of tragedy, Sophocles is succeeded by Euripides who, like the sophists, centred all decision in man. Unlike this, though, he does not deny the existence of the Gods, and higher powers. He agrees that they exist and fashion destinies; but for him, as for the sophists, man is the real centre of events. Compared with the views of Aeschylus, those of Euripides are at the opposite end of the pole. For the later writer, "destiny evolves entirely out of man himself and the strength of his passions".[13] He brought tragedy down from heaven and planted it solidly upon the earth".[14] The Gods are mentioned in his works but they no longer direct the destiny of the characters. They merely raise and lower the curtain on the tragedy; Euripides has expunged Fatality from his tragedies. Whereas his predecessors depicted the gods as sending man inevitable misfortunes, Euripides depicted them sending mortals invincible passions. Formerly men had to struggle with exterior forces; with this tragedian they are at war with internal ones. Their fatal enemy has now changed his abode to the heart.

To demonstrate these views, let us review one or two of

---

[13] Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 136.

[14] G. M. A. Grube, The Drama of Euripides (London: Methuen and Co., 1941), p. 7.

his tragedies and see this type of Fatality at work. In the Medea, "the poet's skill is unsurpassed in showing how the daemon in human hearts will shape their actions and their fate".[15] This is a drama of jealousy and ruthless revenge, a picture of the excess of passion in a woman. Deserted by Jason for another woman, Medea, like Deianira before her, accedes to the calling of Jealousy, and wreaks vengeance on all and sundry both loved and unloved. In the play, there is a total absence of the Gods. The sorceress has no need of divine aid to weave her fatal nets and the gods do not intervene to save Jason or his princess, Glauce. They are left to Medea's passion helped by her magic powers. Right from the start we are informed that Medea's love has turned to hatred "until her whole soul is dominated by a lust for vengeance which overpowers even maternal love".[16]

> Nurse: But now her world has turned to enmity
> and wounds her
> Where her affection's deepest. Jason
> has betrayed his sons
> And my mistress for a royal bed. . . .
> . . . . . .
> She hates her sons:
> To see them is no pleasure to her.[17]

---

[15] Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 143.

[16] Grube, Drama of Euripides, p. 147.

[17] Euripides, Medea and Other Plays, trans. by Philip Vellacott (Penguin Classics, 1963), pp. 17-18.

The dominating note of the passage is overwhelming anger changing to hatred, as is noted in the following lines:

> Nurse: now, children, hurry in doors;
> And don't go within sight of her,
> Or anywhere near her; keep a safe distance
> Her mood is cruel, her nature dangerous.
> . . . . . .
> It will burst aflame as her anger rises
> Deep in passion and unrelenting.[18]

Catching sight of the children, Medea exclaims: "Children, your mother is hated, and you are cursed./ Death take you with your father and perish his whole house."[19] Prophetic words foretelling to what extent fatality is working under the guise of passion.

When Medea is finally brought on stage she is calm and composed as she makes her famous speech on the misfortunes of womankind, but behind the sorrow of her words, burns undisguised passion,--hatred--which startles us seeing that Creon has granted her respite of one more day before exile. Her jealousy and hatred fused together burst into roaring flames as she gloatingly reviews the various ways in which she can destroy her enemies. "The sentence of exile and her success in getting one day respite have brought her to a frenzy of passion and hate."[20]

---

[18] Euripides, Medea and Other Plays, p. 20.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Grube, Drama of Euripides, p. 154.

'--Oh what a fool!' she says
By banishing me at once, he could have thwarted me
Utterly; instead, he allows me to remain one day.
Today, three of my enemies, I shall strike dead.
Father and daughter, and my husband.[21]

With Jason's entry is felt the sweeping power of Medea's hatred and fury as she reproaches him for daring to present himself before her. "Then", says Grube, "with hissing bitterness, she reminds Jason of all she did for his sake; with angry despair she describes her present plight and points out that she has no refuge to which she may turn".[22]

Her passion attains tragic height when she struggles with the thought of whether to kill her children or no:

Why should I hurt them to make
Their father suffer, when I shall suffer twice
as much
Myself? I won't do it.

but then:

Are my enemies to laugh at me?
Am I to let them off scot free?
I must steel myself to it.[23]

Passion--fatality--has made her "unbalanced, hallucinated, almost insane".[24]

The Hippolytus, often regarded as the greatest of all extant tragedies, must be mentioned before taking leave of this

---

[21]Euripides, Medea, p. 22.

[22]Grube, Drama of Euripides, p. 155.

[23]Euripides, Medea, p. 49.

[24]Grube, Drama of Euripides, p. 162.

author. In it the tragedian shows that he too, like his predecessors, does take the gods, makers of destiny, into account. Here the gods are intimately bound with the human drama and hold a significant place throughout. A brief preview of the part played by exterior and interior fatality will be given.

This is "another drama of vengeance, but this time it is the goddess Aphrodite herself, who slighted by the refusal of young Hippolytus to think of love, uses Phaedra as a means of revenge, to the ruin of both Phaedra and Hippolytus".[25] She appears in the prologue where she explains her role, but it must not be taken that the Goddess is the all-powerful force in this tragedy. Love is most powerful, for Phaedra is willing to face life in yielding to the seductive promise of the nurse that her love will find fulfillment. However, when contrary to the expectations of the nurse, Hippolytus replies with self-righteous contempt and horror, Phaedra's love is changed uncontrollably and leads to disaster as she destroys "the self-assured man who has ruined her".[26] In Hippolytus, there is conflict between two powers, Love and Chastity: the one very beautiful if rightly channelled but also very "terrible in its potentialities",[27] for it can

---

[25] Greene, Moira, p. 179.

[26] Lesky, Greek Tragedy, p. 153.

[27] Greene, Moira, p. 180.

be both sweet and painful, both lovely and extremely dangerous if denied.

With Euripides, Fatality is changed from without and is now within. The Moderns will find it thus and most of them will keep it thus. Henceforth, passion, in its varying shades and forms, powerful as any God, will begin her reign in the theatre. The dynasty of the gods has been thrown down, that of man is now set up. Tragedians right up to the sixteenth century will try to follow the example of the Ancients but what of the seventeenth century?

CHAPTER II

FATALITY A LA GRECQUE IN THE TRAGEDIES OF RACINE AND THOSE OF HIS SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PREDECESSORS

Before asserting that Fatality appears in some form or another among the Classical tragedians, and that this stemmed from the influence of the Ancients, we must first show whether these tragedians were ever exposed to the works of the Ancient masters. Prof. R. C. Knight[1] who has done extensive studies on the role of Greece in the works of Racine and the Classical theatre has a lot to say on the topic. Though I shall draw some quotations from this learned work, I do not agree with him in all his conclusions.

In the sixteenth century, a limited amount of work was done on the Ancient Greeks in France. Their theatre was known more by translation than by dramatic adaptation.[2] By the Renaissance period, four greek tragedies had been published in French.[3] This, however, is no conclusive evidence showing that seventeenth century tragedians did not read

---

[1] R. C. Knight, Racine et la Grèce (Paris: Boivin et Cie, 1950).

[2] Ibid., p. 54.

[3] Ibid.; from the works of Sophocles: Electra (L. de Baïf, 1537); Antigone (J-A de Baïf, 1573); from Euripides: Hécuba (Bochetel, 1544); Iphigenia at Aulis (Sebillet, 1549).

other plays of the masters. Whilst they were deprived of the authentic works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, most of them read or became familiar with the plays of Seneca--the latin playwright. It is certain that he had known the works of the greeks, for his own tragedies are imbued with the same spirit and the dramas he produced had in essence the stamp of the greek masters. Then, too, there were in print some latin translations of a few greek texts. Granted that only a few of the seventeenth century authors knew greek, most on the other hand were familiar with latin and so were able to read the plays which interested them.

In dealing with the tragedies of authors prior to Racine, a brief mention will be made of one or two minor tragedians but my attention will be specifically turned to the works of Pierre Corneille and Jean de Rotrou. Prof. Knight ably demonstrated that the dramatists of the seventeenth century did not make extensive use of the "monde grec"; however, it would seem that a sizeable amount of their work is imbued with the "esprit grec". It is known that minor tragedians like Du Royer, Boyer and Gilbert etc. used their knowledge of latin to read stories of adventures both ancient and modern, and in their works are found a few anecdotes from greek literature along with the names of greek characters,[4] but quite naturally they had a preference for modern romantic

---

[4]H. C. Lancaster, French Dramatic Literature in the

themes. In spite of this, a few of their tragedies are greek flavoured. An example of this is Claude Boyer's Clotilde. Though not what would be termed a greek play, it is definitely motivated by a form of fatality found chiefly in the works of Euripides. The characters of the play lack a sense of duty. They are moved by ambition, love and a desire for revenge. Deuthère is ruled primarily by her ambition to be queen and also by a consuming desire for vengeance which makes her strive to kill her child in order to rule. When foiled, she commits suicide. Clotilde, another character, is dominated by love of Clidamant. She terms it "ce-je-ne-sçay-quoy qu'on ignore et qu'on sent"[5] which pushes her to defy both her mother and her king; in Clidamant, on the other hand, love is changed into an equally supreme motivation, hatred. His sole desire is to prevent the woman who has scorned him from becoming queen, and this is realised when he forces Deuthère to commit suicide. The other characters, Clodomire and Théodébert have themselves fallen prey to the fatal goddess, Love, and are almost destroyed.[6]

Gabriel Gilbert, another minor tragedian produced

Seventeenth Century (Baltimore, 1932), Part I, I, p. 282.

[5]Claude Boyer, Clotilde (Paris: de Sercy, 1659), Act V, Sc. I, quoted by H. C. Lancaster, Part 3, II, p. 448.

[6]Ibid.

one play amongst his few, having not only the greek spirit but also a greek topic found very often in French dramatic history--the theme of Phèdre and Hippolyte. This tragedy, Hypolite ou le Garçon Insensible based on the tragedy depicted by Seneca and Euripides shows fatality conducting the important characters from the beginning, to a tragic end. As is usual with the earlier greek tragedians, the Gods are on the scene. Aphrodite and Minerva are indeed the chief protagonists, and Phèdre and Hypolite are only the tools with which they work. Phèdre is cognisant of the fact that she is being used by a superior power when she says to her confidante:

> Je sçay bien que l'amour est fatale à l'honneur
> Mais dans mon sort bizarre et mon malheur extrême
> Pour conserver le mien, le destin veut que j'aime.
> Dans l'état où je suis, je dois faire pitié.[7]

The goddess, Aphrodite is using her as the instrument of destruction to Hypolite who, though somewhat affected by her power, will not fully bend the knee to her.

Though the examples drawn show some aspect of fatality in the works of lesser classical tragedians, yet the bulk of their production attest to the fact that they preferred romantic themes; or like their most brilliant counterpart, subjects which treat the triumphant exercise of the will. Corneille, for we recognise him in the last statement, outshines these lesser lights as a tragedian whose tragedies are generally accepted as lacking in any form of fatality. Such an

---

[7] G. Gilbert, Hypolite ou le Garçon Insensible, I.2.

assumption is most often justified by the fact that he was schooled by the Jesuits, champions of Humanism. Moreover, continue the proposers of this point, his favourite authors were Seneca and Lucan, latin writers in whose philosophic teachings stress is put especially on the role of the will in man's moral life.

Indeed, in most of Corneille's works, the triumph of the will is evident. Yet, once or twice, the powerful force of fatality does show up---in two forms--once as the force of passion and again through the instrumentality of the gods. Corneille, eternally regarded as the enemy of passions, almost confirms this idea of himself when he wrote: "J'ai cru jusques ici que l'amour était une passion trop chargée de faiblesse pour être la dominante dans une pièce héroïque".[8] It would, nevertheless be unfair to regard this as a formal condemnation of passion in tragedy. He merely says that love should not take first place, nor be the leading motive of a tragedy. He does not advocate eliminating it altogether since in Horace, Camille does not, like Chimène of Le Cid, stake her glory on the accomplishment of a social duty. She is wholly consecrated to her love for Curiace and refuses all

---

[8]Corneille, Lettre à Saint-Evremond pour le remercier des éloges contenus dans sa Dissertation sur l'Alexandre, quoted by Bénichou in Morales du Grand Siècle, p. 43. This was written at the time of Racine's Alexandre.

other laws except that of her passion. Her lucidity in this respect is comparable to that of Racinian characters. Listen as she describes love to her sister-in-law, Sabine:

> Je le vois bien, ma soeur, vous n'aimâtes jamais
> Vous ne connaissez point ni l'amour ni ses traits:
> On peut lui résister quand il commence à naître,
> Mais non pas le bannir quand il s'est rendu maître;
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Il entre avec douceur, mais il règne par force.[9]
> (III.4)

Later on in the play, totally controlled by her love, she curses Rome and her brother who incarnates the glory of the city, only to be killed for placing this fatal force above traditional virtues.

Two of his least known tragedies stem directly from Greek mythology. Corneille made stressed remarks that his play, Oëdipe, differs markedly from those of the Greeks and Seneca. According to him he was not writing a play in which greek fatality was a dominant force. Oedipus does not regard himself as fatally pursued; nevertheless Dirce, daughter of Jocaste, the queen, sees him thus and is amazed at his endurance seeing that he "ne s'emporte point contre un sort si barbare",[10] On learning of her mother's death, this same Dirce exclaims:

---

[9]Corneille, Théâtre Complet (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1950).

[10]Corneille, Oedipe, V.8.

> . . . .Jusques où portez-vous
> Impitoyables Dieux, votre injuste courroux![11]

which words recall Jocaste's inveighing against the Gods in Racine's La Thébaïde. Hereby, Fatality is accused for the first time, for all the misfortunes of Thebes and Oedipus. Nérina, her suivante, also hints at the effects of Fate when she, together with other palace attendants, stands rooted to the spot as the queen kills herself:

> On dirait que du ciel l'implacable colère,
> Nous arrête les bras pour lui laisser tout faire.[12]

Médée, for my part, is an undeniable example of a fatal force holding sway in one of Corneille's plays. The heroine is wholly controlled by her love changed into hatred. Her impassioned speeches recall those of her counterpart in Euripides:

> Tu t'abuses, Jason, je suis encor moi-même
> Tout ce qu'en ta faveur fit mon amour extrême,
> Je le ferai par haine; et je veux pour le moins
> . . . . . .
> Que mon sanglant divorce, en meurtres, en carnage
> S'égale aux premiers jours de notre mariage,
> Et que notre union, que rompt ton changement
> Trouve une fin pareille à son commencement
> Déchirer par morceaux l'enfant aux yeux du père
> N'est que le moindre effet qui suivra ma colère.
> (I.4)

Moreso, in hearing this line: "S'il cesse de m'aimer, qu'il commence à me craindre", one thinks at once of another line, this time found in Racine's Andromaque.

---

[11] Corneille, Oedipe.

[12] Ibid.

"Crains encor, d'y trouver Hermione" raves Hermione when she realises that Pyrrhus is determined to marry her rival. Throughout the play, Médée, are multitudinous lines pertaining to her fatal rage which if it does not destroy her is inimical to her children, the king, Créon, and his daughter, Créuse, Jason's new love. It takes absolute control of her, blotting out all gentler emotions and leaving her deaf to the entreaties of her confidante, Nérine. Though the natural instinct of a mother's love, at one juncture, wrestles with this hatred, it is overpowered as Médée raves:

> . . . .Immolons avec joie,
> Ceux qu'à me dire adieu Créuse me renvoie
> . . . . . .
> Ils viennent de sa part et ne sont plus à moi.
> (V.2)

Even if these examples are not dynamic, they do have some significance, showing that Corneille was influenced (even in a minor way) by the Greeks. As the major portion of his tragedies prove, Corneille is appreciated more for his "conception de la vie héroïque" which consists in the successful exercise of the will.[13] His characters display self-mastery and control over their passion; they face events which come to test them with disdain. Passion is not repressed but dominated by their "volonté".

---

[13]Gustave Lanson, Esquisse d'une Histoire de la Tragédie Française (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honore Champion, 1954), p. 81.

After a survey of facts, it is quite clear that Corneille does not treasure the idea of fatality, source of the tragic in Greek tragedy. Instead, he rigorously cuts back on tragic grief but makes use of the "misère tragique" as the starting-point for heroic effort. In this way, he gets rid of the spectacle of human distress and cuts out all pity for the heroes. Greek tragedy deplores human helplessness in face of destiny but Corneille for the most part, exalts the force and freedom of the human will.[14]

Rotrou, one of Corneille's contemporaries, devoted himself to tragedy after the publication of Le Cid, and produced five tragedies together with his masterpiece, Venceslas. With his Antigone, he is looked upon as the first to introduce the Greek poets on the French stage. Like his Greek predecessor, Euripides, from whose work he drew, Rotrou places the accent on the mutual hatred of the two brothers. Hémon describes their meeting thus:

> Et qu'au champ du combat chacun d'eux consentit,
> La rage s'y vint rendre et nature en sortit:
> Pareils à deux lions, et plus cruels encore,
> Du geste chacun d'eux l'un l'autre se dévore.[15]

When they kill each other, Antigone looks upon the whole affair

---

[14]Lanson, Equisse d'une Histoire, pp. 85-86.

[15]Oeuvres de Jean Rotrou, ed. Félix Hémon (Paris: Chex Th. Desoer, 1820), Antigone III.2.

as the terrible vengeance of fatality pursuing the house of Oedipus:

> C'est bien visiblement, ma soeur, ma chère Ismène,
> Que le ciel aujourd'hui nous déclare sa haine,
> Et que son bras vengeur, poussé par son courroux,
> Poursuit encore Oedipe et le punit en nous.[16]
> (III.5)

Herein is demonstrated the fact that Rotrou is influenced by the greek poet Euripides, in depicting heredity as a fatal force which must be reckoned with.

In his introduction to Iphigénie en Aulide, M. Hémon says: "Voici encore une tragédie dont Rotrou a puisé le sujet chez les Grecs; il s'est même borné à imiter Euripide dans les caractères qu'il prête à ses personnages et dans la conduite de sa pièce. Rotrou a suivi Euripide pas à pas et n'a rien changé à son modèle".[17] The statement underlined is of particular importance. It is a verification of a premise made heretofore: that Rotrou was indeed influenced by the Greeks and that Fatality figured in some of his tragedies. The chief characters, Agamemnon and Iphigénie do not deny that the Gods are afflicting them and their words authenticate this:

> Agamemnon: Allez, mon mauvais sort ne reçoit plus
> d'excuses,
> Il a plus fin que moi, su détourner mes
> ruses;
> Il a paré mes coups, confondu mes desseins.
> (II.3)

Consequently, they refrain from vain struggles and calmly accept

---

[17] Introduction to Iphigénie en Aulide, Tome IV.

their lot. Agamemnon yields to Diana with these words "Diane, prends mon sang et satisfais ta haine" whilst Iphigénie remonstrates with Achille "Je suis destinée aux autels de Diane et non pas d'Hyménée".

It is impossible to leave Rotrou without observing his tragedy, Cosroès. This is a truly classical play at the centre of which is fatality directing all the events. The political problems posed enable the author to show how the situation of the Persian kingdom dictates Syroès' attitude, and how he is forced by his partisans and events to engage in a political manoeuvre which he detests. Rotrou concentrates his efforts on delineating Syroès' character; and

> conformément à la pratique des plus grands classiques, il met au centre de sa pièce une victime exemplaire de la fatalité, dans l'âme de qui retentissent douloureusement toutes les péripéties et toutes les démarches des autres personnages et il s'attache surtout à peindre dans cette âme les orages que provoque un conflit insoluble par nature.[18]

Destiny acts quickly in the play; in prison, Mardesane commits suicide. Syroès, himself struggles against dire Necessity right to the last minute, but like the other characters, he too walks straight to his destiny. He is led in spite of himself towards disaster; Cosroès, Mardesane, and he all esteem justice and love but despite themselves, they become involved

---

[18]Rotrou, Cosroès, Edition Critique publiée par Jacques Schérer (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1950), pp. xv-xvi.

in a series of horrifying crimes for which they pay the penalty in remorse, madness and suicide.

Fatality even expresses itself by means of guilt. Some years before, Cosroês killed his father, Hormisdas and now the memory of this crime weighs on his conscience leading him to cry:

> Maudite ambition dont je crois trop les flammes,
> Que tu m'as cher vendu le plaisir de règner.
> (II.1)

and sending him as mad as Orestes of Racine:

> Noires Divinités, filles impitoiables,
> Des vengeances du Ciel, ministres effroiables,
> Cruelles, redoublez ou cessez vostre effort
> Pour me laisser la vie on me donner la mort.
> (II.7.)

But the occurrence of Fatality in the works of the seventeenth century tragedians is no where more marked than in the tragedies of Jean Racine who was introduced to the Greeks by his masters at Port-Royal. Informed sources[19] say that in the school, each pupil was usually given a specific work to be read. He should spend at least an hour per day on it, and then at the end of the week give a résumé to his master. The young Racine is reputed to have read the whole

---

[19]H. C. Lancaster, French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century; R. C. Knight, Racine et la Grèce.

works of certain authors which "l'enchantèrent à un tel point qu'il passait les journées à les lire et à les apprendre par coeur dans les bois qui sont autour de l'étang de Port-Royal".[20]

Be that as it may, it is well-known from annotated works of these authors that Racine was quite familiar with their tragedies; but that which must needs be demonstrated is whether he was influenced by them and to what extent. Since these same tragedies will be studied in detail in a later section, only a brief study will be given to them here.

In certain of his works, Racine makes mention of his debt to some great tragedian, most often Euripides. In his Andromaque, "la jalousie et les emportements" of Hermione come from the Andromache of Euripides, asserts Racine.[21] Mesnard also shows that Racine used Euripides' Daughters of Troy and Orestes, because Orestes' madness comes straight from Euripides' Orestes. Racine, in his Andromaque "presented the intense emotions of the Ancients".[22] Following his greek counterpart, the french tragedian links by love Orestes to Hermione and Hermione to Pyrrhus; by jealousy Orestes to Pyrrhus, Hermione

---

[20]Knight, Racine et la Grèce, p. 156.

[21]First Preface to Andromaque.

[22]Lancaster, Part IV, I, p. 54.

to Andromaque.[23] In both tragedians, Orestes' fate depends on that of Andromaque; but Orestes pursued by a family curse and the Erinnyes recalls the portrayal of fatality in Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Racine admits in his Preface to Phèdre that he owed her character and everything appearing "plus éclatant" to Euripides' tragedy. There he found the idea that pernicious passion is sent by the gods; Phèdre's love for Hippolyte, her strenuous efforts to overcome it, her feeling of guilt, confession to her confidante, references to the loves of her mother and sister all come from Euripides. Like Euripides' characters, Racine's condemn the Gods and protest the injustice of their actions.[24] Orestes in Andromaque decries their actions.[25] Like Euripides, Racine generalizes the gods.

In La Thébaïde, fatality conveyed by the Gods who demand the sacrifice of a person, and the mysterious forces which urge the characters to commit crimes against their will are found in the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In Act III, Scene 2, Jocaste monologues her involuntary crime sent by the gods who punish the children for the unwanted crime of the parents. Tragic irony is common to both Racine and Sophocles. In

---

[23]Lancaster, French Dramatic Literature, Pt. IV, I, 268.

[24]J. C. Lapp, Aspects of Racinian Tragedy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), p. 156.

[25]Andromaque, III.1.

Oedipus, Sophocles makes us aware of the hero's guilt from the beginning; Racine carefully reveals Eriphile's true identity in Iphigénie and Thésée's death in Phèdre. There is no need to believe that Racine underrated Aeschylus as Prof. Knight tries to intimate.[26] The foreboding felt in his plays recalls Aeschylus.

It can be inferred that certain forms of fatality found in Racine's works come from the greek tragedians. From Aeschylus, and Sophocles, he gets the Gods sinking their adamantine nails into their victims, relaxing their hold and then tightening it again when the victims think they are free,[27] and pushing mortals to commit unwitting crimes for which their progeny are later punished.[28] Yet, although Racine's tragic inspiration comes in part from the greeks, he has proved himself quite independent of Hellenism. Fatality in Aeschylus and Sophocles was associated with religion; Racine takes their idea and secularizes it. Passion in Euripides was somehow linked with the gods; he gives it a purely natural character for the most part. Conclusive then is the evidence that Racine

---

[26] See Knight, Racine et la Grèce, p. 224.

[27] See Sophocles, Oedipe-Rex.

[28] See Aeschylus, Seven against Thebes.

was a disciple of the Greeks, but yet different from them in that he stressed love as they had never done. "It is the hopes, perceptions, misunderstandings, fears, jealousy, vengeances of lovers that make up most of his drama".[29] Euripides' Phèdre cannot endure the thought of losing her life and leaving behind the man who spurned her. Racine's heroine repents but regrets not having tasted the fruits of her sin:

> Hélas! du crime affreux dont la honte me suit
> Jamais mon triste coeur n'a recueilli le fruit.
> (IV.6)

Where then did Racine know of the feelings just described by Lancaster? Perhaps this omnipresent Destiny is a legacy of his youthful religious background.

---

[29]Lancaster, French Dramatic Literature, Pt. IV, I, 129.

CHAPTER III

EFFECT OF JANSENISM ON RACINE WITH RESPECT TO THE PORTRAYAL OF FATALITY

Reared in the school of Port-Royal, regarded as the seat of Jansenism, Racine is regarded as being the mouthpiece of the doctrines in the dramatic field as Nicole is, in the philosophic. Before attesting or refuting the validity of this widely held belief, a discussion of the tenets of the doctrine and its relationship to fatality as depicted in the tragedies, is necessary. Jansenism invented no new dogma. The ideas of fallen humanity, the depravity of the human heart, pride and the dangers of passions have always haunted Christian theology since the beginning. What is characteristic of it, however, from a moral standpoint, and this is of primary importance to this study, is the stress it lays on certain factors.

Psychologically and theologically speaking Jansenism is based on the total corruption of man; this is the consequence of original sin, and man can only recover his former state by the grace of God received through Jesus Christ. But this is only offered to a few whom God in his mercy has predestined to salvation; the others, He has given over to the punishment which their sins deserve. This is a part of the doctrine of Predestination as propounded by St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo,

and it formed an important part of the Augustinus of Jansenius --father of Jansenism.

According to Augustine, all are stained by sin, and deserve damnation. God, of his grace, has by his free choice selected some to be saved and designated others whom He will not save. Moreover, the exact number of those who are to receive his grace is predetermined and that number is so certain that one can neither be added to them nor taken from them. Those of the elect will then be saved, for God in his grace will accord them the gift of perseverance, so that even though they commit sins, they will repent; and finally they will be unable to commit sin.[1]

His ideas did not in any way settle the age-old question of fallen man; another side of the issue was brought up at the time of the Renaissance: Did man have the power to exercise free-will? The Jansenists were in agreement with other ideas exposed by Augustine but they gave much credence to Calvin's thoughts on the issue. In the Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin advocates that "man is now destitute of free will and miserably subjected to every evil".[2] He affirms with St. Augustine that "the natural gifts were corrupted in man by

---

[1]St. Augustine, On the Predestination of the Saints. The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Anti-Pelagian Writings, V.5.

[2]François Wendel, Calvin, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 189-90.

sin and that the supernatural gifts were altogether abolished".[3] By supernatural gifts, he means "the light of faith and righteousness which would have been sufficient for the attainment of heavenly life and everlasting felicity".[4] Man by losing these spiritual gifts is shut off from heavenly things and cannot even conceive of them. Faith, love for God and his neighbour are completely foreign to his nature. The natural gifts are not wholly lost but they are less effective. Such is the case with the will. Since the Fall, man has no free will to do good without God's grace. He is a slave to sin and whatever is said or done is only evil continually. As Calvin says, echoing the words of St. Bernard: "Simply to will is the part of man, to will ill, the part of corrupt nature, to will well the part of Grace".[5] Lest it may be said that man, being in a state of sin, is not responsible for his evil deeds, Calvin shows that from experience, we realise that this sin is our own. We sin not from compulsion but voluntarily by means of our corrupted and evil will. Christ through salvation however regenerates our deformed will--but only for the elect.

---

[3] Institutes of the Christian Religion, Bk. II, Chap. 2, Sect. 12 of J. Calvin by H. Beveridge (Edinburgh, 1845). Hereafter the book shall be referred to as simply Institutes, p. 339.

[4] Institutes, II, 3:6, p. 343.

[5] Institutes, II, 3:5, p. 342.

The humanists represented by the Jesuits strongly rejected this pessimistic view of man but were bitterly reproached by the Jansenists led by Arnauld and Nicole. The former in the defence of Jansenius published his Apologie de Jansenius in which is found his treatise on grace. In it Arnauld "resolutely defends Jansenius' denial of universal sufficient grace".[6] He agrees that there is habitual and justifying grace, but like his leader asserts "the absolute uselessness of 'scholastic sufficient grace'".[7] He reviews Augustine's stand on this question thus showing that the Augustinians are right in their acceptance of efficacious grace. He declares that the doctrine of universal grace is semi-pelagianism. He continued by tracing the theory of grace from St. Augustine through St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas right to the Doctors of the Sorbonne in the sixteenth century.

In his Seconde Apologie, the fourth article is "capital for Arnauld, since it dealt with the 'grace of the angels and of of innocent man'".[8] Here he asserts that the Jansenist doctrine is identical with that of St. Augustine, whilst in Article 5, he deals with the "modus operandi of efficacious grace in

---

[6]N. Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 212.

[7]Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism, p. 212.

[8]Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism, p. 216.

relation to human freedom".[9] Unlike Calvin's thesis, he demonstrated that man cooperated with grace in the work of piety, but that anything done without grace is valueless.

What is clear from this over view of Jansenism and its debates is that the tenets of the doctrine are in accordance with the terms of Fatality expressed in Chapter I. Man's actions are preordained; he has no power to do anything good except as he is guided in the right by some higher power.

Now it is necessary to show whether Racine was at all influenced by his jansenist upbringing in the production of his tragedies. Whilst original sin has enfeebled and vitiated reason and free will, it has debased but at the same time strengthened the emotive powers. In the first instance, all tendencies towards good are reduced to nil, and man is left free to follow his evil bent. On the other hand, by depriving him of will power and reason the emotions become "la faculté maîtresse de l'homme".[10] Man is a slave to his emotions and "changé en bête sauvage par ses passions, l'homme dépassera la rage du chien, la violence du scorpion, le venin du serpent".[11]

In his tragedies, Racine seems to recall to mind this concept of human nature which certainly is reminiscent of

---

[9] Abercrombie, The Origins of Jansenism, p. 216.

[10] E. J. Tanquerey, Le Jansénisme et les Tragédies de Racine, Revue de Cours et Conférences, p. 62.

[11] Jansénius Augustinus de Statu Naturae Lapsae, II, Pt. I, Chapt. II, Sect. 1. Trans. by J. Paquier and quoted by Tanquerey, p. 62.

the later ideas of Sophocles and more specifically Euripides, (cf. the Medea). The characters looked upon as the true Racinian heroes are people wholly dominated by passion and hence unbalanced. Pyrrhus and Hermione, Orestes, Agrippine and Néron, Roxane, Eriphile and Phèdre yield themselves fully to their emotions thereby stilling any other voice. Had Racine followed closely the Poetics of Aristotle, and portrayed characters "ni extrêmement bons, ni méchants par excès",[12] we would have seen men and women being half-good and half-bad. But such a mixture in natural man is according to Jansenist theorists absolutely impossible. The problem seems resolved then: Racine is a Jansenist author propounding the ideas of his faith in his tragedies. This is not the case, however; his tragedies are more complex: they are more than a portrayal of characters being psychologically true to their "fallen nature" as Nicole would say.

The emotion of man ranks high in the plays. It arrogates to itself the rights and functions of reason; the heart now becomes the omnipotent organ of the body, "le siège de la vérite"[13] and finally becomes "le guide suprême et pour ainsi dire le grand ressort de la conduite humaine".[14] Thus

---

[12] First preface to Andromaque.

[13] Tanquerey, Le Jansénisme, p. 67.

[14] Ibid.

it is folly to believe that "l'homme se conduit par raison alors qu'il ne se conduit que par la passion que le domine".[15] This is exactly what happens in most of the tragedies. When Reason tries to assert her right, she is crushed in advance. Egotism, the dominant emotion both in Jansenism and Racinian tragedy unable to be contained in the soul, becomes the mobile of all our actions even when expressed under the guise of love with the other attendant passions, hatred and ambition.

It is my intention to show the link up of these two forms of fatality in Racine with Jansenist theory. There is no doubt that in the tragedies love is the fruit of "amour-propre", as stated by the Jansenists. One has only to look briefly at the passionate characters like Hermione, Roxane, Mithridate, Eriphile and Phèdre; love in them is a pursuit of self-interest and Hermione is its most striking characterisation. She falls in love with Pyrrhus out of mere pride and vanity as we discern from her words:

> Nos vaisseaux tout chargés des dépouilles de Troie,
> Les exploits de son père effacés par les siens
> Ses feux que je croyais plus ardents que les miens.[16]
> Mon coeur,. . .enfin de sa gloire éblouie,[16]

This same vanity keeps her at Buthrote for she is afraid to

---

[15]Nicole, Réflexions sur le Traité de Sénéque: "De la Brièveté de la Vie", II, p. 269.

[16]Racine, Andromaque in the edit. P. Mesnard, II.1.

return home humiliated and lacking the prestigious husband she sought. Love coupled with egotism urges her to try and win back Pyrrhus. Isn't she the rightful fiancée, why should a mere captive supplant her? Her egotism develops into an implacable hatred for Andromaque; therefore, instead of forgiving her and helping her to save Astyanax, she prefers, at this critical moment, when everything can be turned to her advantage, to drive back Andromaque into Pyrrhus' arms. Later she directs her hatred towards him and plans his death. She is so dominated by this passion that not once do we hear a word from her or an inflexion in her voice which suggests disinterested feeling. She gives no impression of loving Pyrrhus for himself; in no way does she appear anxious for his happiness; or to safeguard his honour and kingly grandeur.

Love-passion viewed in this light is typically jansenist in conception. But let us not hasten to a conclusion on this score; it should be noted that Racine goes even further than this concept of love deeply coloured by amour-propre. In this case, love becomes total egotism; the lovers are in no way concerned about the feelings of the one they purport to love. They are concerned about themselves; they need promises for self-satisfaction--even empty promises.[17]

---

[17]Bajazet, Act II, Sc. 5.

"Viens m'engager ta foi, le temps fera le reste"[18] pleads Roxane with Bajazet. For her, this simple bond is sufficient as long as she has some nebulous hope that he will turn to her in the future. In a philosophic manner, these lovers (most often women) speak of the unfeelingness of the men they are pursuing with their love. "Je ne me verrai pas préférer de rivale",[19] exclaims Phèdre even though she is aware of Hippolyte's indifference. Finally, they not only agree to marriage with their indifferent mates, they literally propose such a relationship--e.g. Roxane to Bajazet.

Love-passion is selfish in a double manner; it sacrifices the loved one and, most distressing, it sacrifices the noble sentiments--self-respect, dignity and honour--of the one who loves. This canvas is blacker in hue than even that painted by the Jansenists, which leads me to conclude that Racine was not in any way producing Jansenist drama. Of course, he was impressed by Port-Royal and its doctrines, but his love of the worldly life outweighed his love of the church. By no means should the role of God be left out of the discussion. The Jansenist God offers grace to the elect and all others are damned. Racine's works do offer certain elements of predestination but they are not jansenist tragedies. La Thébaide, Andromaque and Phèdre, to name a few, are tragedies of fatality but not only that they are tragedies of

---

[18] Bajazet, Act V, Sc. 4.

[19] Phèdre, Act II, Sc. 1.

revolt. This being the case, they lose at once their Christian character and so of necessity cannot be Jansenist. For this chapter, I shall look at La Thébaïde, elsewhere Phèdre will be given adequate treatment.[20] Antigone and her mother Jocaste rebel against the injustice of God:

> Antigone: Eh quoi! si parmi nous on a fait quelque offense,
> Le ciel doit-il sur vous (Hémon) en prendre la vengeance?
> Et n'est-ce pas assez du père et des enfants,
> Sans qu'il aille plus loin chercher des innocents?
>
> (II.2)

and Jocaste, Antigone's mother, likewise protests:

> . . . .Ô Dieux, un crime involontaire
> Devait-il attirer toute votre colère?
> Le connoissois-je, hélas! ce fils infortuné?
> Vous-même dans mes bras, vous l'avez amené.
> C'est vous dont la rigueur m'ouvrit ce précipice.
> Voilà de ces grands Dieux la suprême justice!
> Jusques au bord du crime, ils conduisent nos pas;
> Ils nous le font commettre et ne l'excusent pas!
> Prennent-ils donc plaisir à faire des coupables,
> Afin d'en faire après d'illustres misérables?
>
> (III.2)

It is impossible, then, to attribute to Jansenism this religious concept found in La Thébaïde and so many other of his tragedies, since the Jansenist adherents still believed in a good and just God no matter what were their opinions on efficacious Grace. Therefore, a God who led his victim in the paths of wrongdoing and then punishes not only him but his children as well; a God who plays a cat-and-mouse game with these same victims before

---

[20] See Chapter IV of Section II.

striking them down would find no place in the tenets of this religion.

Their God does not ferret out the innocent to destroy him.[21] The God of La Thébaïde, Andromaque, Iphigénie etc. inspires not love but hatred and would never appeal to the Jansenists, and it is certain that Racine did not see this painting of God at Port-Royal or else he would not have written in the margin of his Plutarch "Si Dieu fait quelque mal, il n'est pas Dieu".[22]

Jansenism, then, only helped him to better express the violence of passion and even this view was not exclusively Jansenist when one recalls that Euripides, a pagan, had before him envisaged passion in the same manner. His Medea shows man "esclave de son affectivité et de son amour-propre".[23] Besides his tragedies do not represent all his characters as fallen beings, enslaved by their emotions. There are certain ones who seem quite balanced, demonstrating an even working of feeling, reason and will-power; persons like Titus, Iphigénie, Bajazet and especially Monime. Their love is not always

---

[21]See Andromaque, Orestes' speech, Act III, Sc. 1; Act V, Sc. 5.

[22]Mesnard, VI, p. 304.

[23]Tanquerey, Le Jansénisme, p. 69.

selfish, neither is the virtue they display merely a form of self-interest. No, the afore-mentioned characters seem to love and cultivate virtue for itself. Many of them, truly in love, are willing to make self-sacrifice on behalf of the loved one and names such as Andromaque, Xipharès, Hippolyte and Monime come rushing to mind. This point is worthy of stress--that the above-named characters depict that aspect of the world that Racine truly appreciated.

Wherefore it can be stated with some certainty that he has been influenced by Jansenism in the representation of fatality, but that the Jansenist ideas were not paramount in his depiction. Rather, it is much better to conclude that his knowledge of Greek drama, linked with the tenets of Jansenism together with his own remarkable genius led to such a portrayal unparalleled in French Literature. To such illustration we shall now direct our attention in the forthcoming section.

PART B

In his preface to Bérénice, Racine wrote: "La principale règle est de plaire et de toucher", and to realise this aim, Racine made use of proven formulas borrowed from the greek tragedians, and enjoined by Aristotle. He strove to evoke pity and fear, in the minds of the spectators. To maintain this tragic emotion, he depicted characters engaged in a desperate struggle with a superior force which crushes and annihilates their will. If this power relaxes its hold on the victims for a moment, it is only to better strike the final blow. Racinian tragedy portrays fatality triumphant over human woes.

This fatality does not assume the same character in all the tragedies. As a matter of fact, it manifests itself in varying forms under two distinct groupings, which we shall call Exterior and Interior Fatality.

The first group comprises all the forces which work from without on the characters and lead them to their final destruction, whilst the second incorporates the interior semi-divine forces, superior to the hero which penetrate his desires and wishes and make of him, a docile instrument.

CHAPTER I

EXTERIOR FATALITY - THE HEAVENLY INSTRUMENTS

Let us see the work of the veritable but invisible protagonists on the racinian stage--the gods. It is quite natural to find them figuring in his tragedies seeing that they were the first tragic heroes. Besides, traditional fatality, though superior to the gods themselves, most often acts through their instrumentality. They are most often the gods of Greece and Rome to whom the characters have free recourse but who offer no refuge from fatality. Indeed, they are most likely the servants of fatality itself, and so remain unheeding to the suppliants at their altar.

For no apparent reason, they seem to unleash unwarranted hatred in the breasts of the characters; order unjustifiable sacrifices, and wreak unceasing vengeance on certain families even to the last descendant.

In Phèdre, the authors of destruction are the implacable and inhuman gods. Most prominent is Venus who is bent on destroying the queen. Phèdre knows that the goddess bears a grudge against her:

> Je reconnus Vénus et ses feux redoutables,
> (I.3)

She sees herself as an unwilling victim:

> Ce n'est plus une ardeur dans mes veines cachées:
> C'est Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée.
> (I.3)

but concedes that it is fruitless to fight against the gods. She becomes a suppliant at the altars of the goddess who turns a deaf ear to her pleadings, and changes her adorations into hallucinations. Wherever, she turns for help, a divine power combats her; to whomever, she cries, that person is transposed into Hippolyte. There is no help from the gods to those who seek grace, for fatality does not accord life but death, and so when Thésée prays for the destruction of Hippolyte, Neptune does not hesitate to send a monster at once. Such a swift granting of his wishes later fills Thésée with bitterness towards these gods who have served him too well. He now finds them unfair and treacherous bestowing a curse upon him under the guise of a blessing. Like Orestes, he realises that those in whom the gods take an interest, are the most wretched of the earth:

> Je hais jusques au soin dont m'honorent les Dieux
> Et je m'en vais pleurer leurs faveurs meurtrières,
> Sans plus les fatiguer d'inutiles prières.
> Quoi qu'ils fissent pour moi, leur funeste bonté
> Ne me saurait payer de ce qu'ils m'ont ôté.
> (V.7)

On the whole, the tragedy is enmeshed in the snares of the gods, since each important character has a vengeful or protecting deity; Phèdre has her Venus, Thésée, his Neptune and Hippolyte Diana. The acme of the drama is attained when the human and the divine entwine. Then, the helpless queen is overwhelmed by an interminable concatenation of fatalities revealed in her finest speech:

> Misérable! Et je vis? Et je soutiens la vue
> De ce sacré soleil dont je suis descendue?
> J'ai pour aïeul le père et le maître des dieux;
> Le ciel, tout l'univers est plein de mes aïeux.
> Où me cacher? Fuyons dans la nuit infernale:
> Mais que dis-je? Mon père y tient l'urne fatale.
> Le Sort, dit-on, l'a mise en ses sévères mains.
> Minos juge aux Enfers tous les pâles humains.
> (IV.6)

On every side, the gods are against her. Fatality has weaved around her an inextricable net. There's no hiding place for her.

In Andromaque, a city and a man are equally relentlessly pursued by the vengeance of the Gods. Their hatred of Troy is now assuaged except for the miserable scion remaining--Andromaque and Astyanax, and they are in captivity. But it is on Orestes that th ir vengeance is directed in the play. They lead him to Buthrote to commit a crime and then they pursue him after the deed: Orestes, conscious of this, accuses Fatality of using him as a tool:

> Hélas! qui peut savoir le destin qui m'amène?
> (I.1)

In his opinion the gods are only inimical to the innocent:

> Je ne sais de tout temps quelle injuste puissance
> Laisse le crime en paix et poursuit l'innocence.
> De quelque part sur moi que je tourne les yeux,
> Je ne vois que malheurs qui comdamnent les Dieux.
> (III.1)

and he feels himself specially earmarked by them. He knows no rest; there are only brief moments of respite, when he becomes convinced that his innocence is his only fault and so he throws down the gauntlet to the gods:

> Méritons leur courroux, justifions leur haine.
> (III: 1)

They accept the challenge, and at the end of the play reveal their sinister presence to the demented man, who recognises their hand on him:

> Grâce aux Dieux, mon malheur passe mon espérance
> Oui, je te loue, ô ciel de ta persévérance
> (V.5)

As the snake-haired Furies hiss around him, however, he scornfully orders these baleful servants of the gods to withdraw and leave their work of vengeance to Hermione who is better able to torture him:

> Mais non, retirez vous, laissez-faire Hermione:
> L'ingrate mieux que vous saura me déchirer.
> (V.5)

Indeed, in this scene of madness is emphasised the latin sentence: Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat.

But "c'est avec Iphigénie que la fatalité racinienne trouve son visage véritable";[1] for, with this tragedy, Racine plunges us into the universe of ancient fatality where the gods are felt everywhere on stage. Never before is the implacable presence of the divinity felt weighing so much on man's destiny. The gods intervene directly. They demand the sacrifice of Iphigénie to procure fair winds:

> Vous armez contre Troie une puissance vaine,
> Si dans un sacrifce auguste et solennel
> Une fille du sang d'Hélène

---

[1]Thierry Maulnier, Racine (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), p. 242.

> De Diane en ces lieux n'ensanglante l'autel.
> Pour obtenir les vents que le ciel vous dénie,
> Sacrifiez Iphigénie.
> (I.1)

thunders the oracle explained by Calchas, the priest.

Agamemnon tries various means of saving his daughter, but when the gods speak, and cruel Destiny decides, no man gainsays it. Their secret voice convinces him that it is expedient for his glory to sacrifice the princess, and it's in answer to their call that Eriphile goes to Aulis to meet her death:

> J'ignore qui je suis; et pour comble d'horreur,
> Un oracle effrayant m'attache à mon erreur,
> Et, quand je veux chercher le sang qui m'a fait
> naître,
> Me dit que sans périr je ne me puis connaître.
> (II.1)

Their hatred of men is merciless; against it, there is no recourse; beneath it appears the jealousy of the immortals who cannot tolerate the insolent excess of daring or happiness that certain mortals seem to enjoy. If fact, they blind the characters, and keep them from seeing situations in their true light. The characters, therefore, have absolutely no idea of the "machine infernale" which is set in motion ready to churn them up. They always seem victims of their own actions, and quite often put into motion the machinery which destroys them: but, really, their will is entirely dominated by the gods, who make sport of them.

Twice Agamemnon tries to keep his daughter from the greek camp, twice the gods lie in wait for him and cause his

attempts to fail:

> Les Dieux n'ont pas voulu qu'il vous ait rencontrée,
> Ils ont trompé les soins d'un père infortuné.
> (IV.4)

The ancient sentiment of Nemesis has passed from greek tragedy to Racine. That is why Ulysse advises Achille not to irritate the gods with the pomp and display of a wedding party in this time of trouble, and to Agamemnon he counsels submission to the will of the gods. But their anger is most often incomprehensible to men as the king's words imply:

> Les Dieux depuis un temps me sont cruels et sourds.
> (II.2)

The surprising factor in this tragedy is that not only do the gods demand human sacrifice, but they are exacting enough to withhold the winds until human blood is shed. If Iphigénie is saved, it is only because Eriphile is dead; tragic fatality only spares the designated victim if its demands are met by another victim. In all, in this tragedy, "la fatalité, est plus que jamais vivante, associée à des divinités vivantes, manifestant au-dessus des hommes et contre les hommes des intentions et des rancunes presque humaines".[2] In fact, the whole tragedy is like a poem to fatality, under the direction of the gods, who begin and end the play. It is also equivalent to a religious ceremony composed of prophecies, sacrifice, miracles and finally the direct intervention of the god who

---

[2]Maulnier, Racine, p. 269.

"lance le tonnerre, [fait] gronder la foudre et trembler la terre".

But it is time to draw aside this veil of mythology and look at fatality operating through the God of the Bible. Racine goes straight to the Old Testament for subjects which would incorpate fatality. There he chooses two subjects which deal with the same story: a race and lineage chosen by Jehovah, through which the Saviour of the world should be born. Esther and Athalie describe the course of Divine will in sacred history leading to the birth of Christ; the characters, instruments of God, are endowed with divine power; their enemies are put down and the race of David triumphs--in bloody victories.

In Esther, the historic context is situated in the perspective of the captivity of Israel, of which Esther's elevation is a considerable event. From the beginning, the miraculous arrival of Elise suggests that Jehovah has his secret plans into which Mardochée must have had a glimpse. The chief protagonists are Aman and God who will act through his elected ones. As the choice of Esther for queen is obvious since "Le ciel pour (elle) fit pencher la balance" and "Dieu tient le coeur des rois entre ses mains puissantes" (I.1). So the destruction of Aman is inevitable, for God's will must be accomplished and the Jewish race must survive, the

Deliverer being fated to come from it.

In this drama, fatality associated with the mystic ceremonies of the jewish faith, is somewhat fierce, but with Athalie the cruelty of fatality reaches once more the pinnacle as observed in Phèdre. Whereas in his previous tragedies, the characters had some form of autonomy, in Athalie, their will is totally subordinated to that of the divine; they merely act as its intermediaries or its tools. Jehovah commands everyone and everything, characters and situations alike. It is possible to look on him as the sole important actor and Racine himself seems to agree when he wrote in the Preface to Esther:

> Il me sembla que. . .je pourrais remplir
> toute mon action avec les seules scènes
> que Dieu lui-même pour ainsi dire a
> préparées.

In the foreground appears the fatal power which is in control and not the persons to whom it is fatal. The eternal, invisible and omnipotent God is to take an active part in this sacred drama. Jehovah is the mainspring of the principal dramatic action and the hero of the developing action of the tragedy. Just as the gods concern themselves with the actions and fates of the principal actors of Greek tragedy, so time and again, the hand of the Jewish God will be seen guiding and controlling the incidents in the play. This idea is strongly confirmed by Joad in his speech:

> Et comptez-vous pour rien Dieu, qui combat pour
> nous?
> Dieu, qui de l'orphelin protège l'innocence,
> Et fait dans la faiblesse éclater sa puissance;
> (I.II)

and by Athalie in hers:

> Dieu des Juifs, tu l'emportes!
> et. . . .
> Impitoyable Dieu, toi seul as tout conduit.
> (V.6)

The play itself is a series of miracles wrought by Jehovah. Joas is miraculously preserved, the last of a long lineage; Athalie, successful and unperturbed in her crimes over a long period, is now suddenly disturbed by a dream; Joas' replies to Athalie's interrogations are much more than coïncidental; Athalie, herself, being hesitant for the first time as noted by Mathan:

> Ce n'est plus cette reine éclairée, intrépide,
> . . . . . .
> Elle flotte, elle hésite; en un mot elle est femme.
> (III: III)

Abner set free from his sudden imprisonment reminiscent of Peter's deliverance from jail;[3] the courage of the Levites, and most important Athalie's entry into the Temple, all are miraculous events. From scene to scene, the terrifying presence of Jehovah is felt, and Racine certainly acknowledges his supreme sway and power when he puts into the mouth of Athalie these telling words--a fitting end to the tragedy:

> Impitoyable Dieu, toi seul as tout conduit.
> (V.6)

---

[3]Acts of the Apostles, Chap. 12.

Playing a very active role in the destruction of the characters, and placed a little lower than the gods, is the force of Heredity. Four of Racine's tragedies deal with well-known families of Greek legend who are fated by the gods to destruction, and are incapable of escaping their preordained history. Orestes and Hermione of Andromaque are offspring of the fated family of the Atridae--one the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnaestra; the other, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen. Both are grand children of Atreus, the grim, evil-fated brother of Thyestes, and great-grandchildren of Pelops, son of Tantalus. Orestes and Hermione cannot escape the curse laid on the house from which they spring. He is driven by his evil fate. He cannot resist the destiny which urges him to deceit and treachery towards his countrymen although he tries to remain faithful to his family and country; but heredity is more than his will-power, as is demonstrated in his words: "Je me livre en aveugle au destin qui m'entraîne".[4] Orestes here is a weak-minded person. The curse that dogs his race seems to have taken him in the form of extreme feebleness coupled with extreme violence. He has no command whatever over his actions; not only is he a degenerate, criminal scion of an old family which with him will sink into madness and decay, but he is a wretched youth undermined from

---

[4]Andromaque, Act I, Sc. I.

birth by his evil heredity. He is physically and morally decadent, but he is not responsible for this. He comes of that lineage which could not fail to produce decadent offspring. Racine has changed the story he has borrowed, in that Orestes in Andromaque seems to have forgotten the terrible tragedy of his assassination of his mother, Clytemnaestra. His half-demented brain is void of everything else except his lament for Hermione. Herein we now see this murder as one of the effects of his vicious heredity. The old form of the tragic story of Orestes has as its central point this matricide --the culmination of the curse laid on his house, at least in his case. In Racine's play, the curse works through Orestes' character and through his words and deeds draws him and those connected to him nearer and nearer to their foreordained fate.

Our angry young man cries and raves that he is an innocent victim of fatality. Yes, he is! a preordained predestined prey, the last weak progency of a decaying line, born to misfortune and ruin, and nothing can save him. He yields without any struggle, and Hermione, too, from the same house is powerless to control the lethal power of the blood which flows within her veins. She too must succumb like her mother before her, to her heredity, and love, only to be destroyed and cause destruction.

But it is in Phèdre and La Thébaïde that heredity fully displays its tenacious grasp on poor feeble mortals. The first-mentioned tragedy is greek by inspiration and evokes

a world of legend and mystery where disaster in any form is the heirloom of certain families. Phèdre, the heroine, is the offspring of one such family. As Hippolyte remarks when he disdains even to name her, she is "la fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé". At once, the reader conjures up in his mind the legends in which these names figure; and forthwith dawns the realisation that over Phèdre hovers the amorous aberrations of her mother. Of this she is conscious and consistently directs our attention to her unhappy race, as she deplores her unfortunate state: In the following passage she makes allusions to the monstrous love of her mother, Pasiphaé, for a bull. Oenone tries to dissuade this recollection but to no avail:

Phèdre: . . . .O fatale colère!
Dans quels égarements l'amour jeta ma mère!
Oenone: Oublions-les, Madame, et qu'à tout l'avenir
Un silence éternel cache ce souvenir.
Phèdre: Ariane, ma soeur de quel amour blessée,
Vous mourûtes aux bords où vous fûtes laissée!
Oenone: Que faites-vous, Madame? et quel mortel ennui
Contre tout votre sang vous anime aujourd' hui?
Phèdre: Puisque Vénus le veut, de ce sang déplorable
Je péris la dernière et la plus misérable.
(I.3)

Love, then, is for Phèdre, as well as the other members of her family an hereditary malignant tumor, which will wipe out the tree root and branch. Nevertheless, she is worthy of admiration; she does not voluntarily commit the crimes for

which she is punished. Her race has been cursed and this hereditary curse forces her to be incestuous and false. The vengeful fury attached to her family determines this ill-starred queen to perpetrate such ignoble deeds against her will for, since the beginning of the play, she preferred death to dishonour. When man proposes, Fatality disposes. Thus, for all her lofty resolutions and her brave stand to stem the tide of her hereditary nature, she succumbs and finally goes under after a cataclysmal fall.

We have seen how a queen is finally degraded by the unnatural forces inherent in her race. Whilst this force declared itself in the mature woman, the "frères ennemis" of La Thébaïde demonstrated their hatred of each other even in the prenatal stage. Says Etéocle:

> Pendant qu'un même sein nous renfermait tous deux,
> Dans les flancs de ma mère une guerre intestine
> De nos divisions lui marqua l'origine.
>
> (IV.1)

It continues through infancy:

> Elles ont, tu le sais, paru dans le berceau,
> Et nous suivront, peut-être encor dans le tombeau.
>
> (IV.1)

into adulthood and finally into the grave. From whence springs this hatred? The question is answered by the mother of the two men:

La race de Laïus les a rendus vulgaires.
. . . . . .
Tu ne t'étonnes pas si mes fils sont perfides
. . . . . .
Tu sais qu'ils sont sortis d'un sang incestueux.
(I.1)

and Etéocle himself sees his parents' incest as his heritage for he explains:

On dirait que le ciel, par un arrêt funeste,
Voulut de nos parents punir ainsi l'inceste,
Et que dans notre sang il voulut mettre au jour
Tout ce qu'ont de plus noir et la haine et l'amour.
(IV.1)

The cajolings and tears of a mother, the persuasions of a sister are of no benefit, since that which is inborn takes root like a cancer and is only exterminated by death. Both young men perceive the inutility of the family's efforts to exorcise this form of fatality by effecting a reconciliation. Therefore, true to the blood flowing within their veins, they engage in a fratricidal combat and tread the path prepared for them by the sins of their parents. When Antigone and Créon accept the inevitability of their position and death, then the hereditary curse placed on the house of Laïus and Oedipe is expiated and the "dernier sang du malheureux Laïus" ceases to exist.

Such a form of fatality as delineated in the foregoing pages is not domiciled only in the annals of greek mythology. It is with a jolt that we realise that it takes root even in Sacred History, in the lineage of Ahab and Jezebel, parents of Athalie. This queen by her actions is only showing herself true to her heredity. She springs

from a stock hardened in treacherous crimes.[5] Wherefore, it is natural that an evil tree bears sour fruits, an example of which is Athalie's entire destruction of her children and grandchildren in maniacal fury. When she finds herself outwitted by Jehovah and his instruments, she transmits her terrible heredity to Joas in cries of rage:

> Qu'indocile à ton joug, fatigué de ta loi,
> Fidèle au sang d'Achab, qu'il a reçu de moi,
> Conforme à son aïeul, à son père semblable,
> On verra de David l'héritier détestable
> Abolir tes honneurs, profaner ton autel,
> Et venger Athalie, Achab et Jésabel.
> (V.6)

Already, the young Joas feels this accursed hereditary blood taking hold of him and pitifully he prays:

> Dieu, qui voyez mon trouble et mon affliction,
> Détournez loin de moi sa malédiction,
> Et ne souffrez jamais qu'elle soit accomplie.
> Faites que Joas meure avant qu'il vous oublie.
> (V.7)

Vain prayer, seeing that within a few years, he will perpetrate one of the most disgraceful crimes in Biblical History, killing the High Priest, at the foot of the altar.

As Hubert says of La Thébaïde, we might say of the various Racinian characters examined that they converge "vers cette descente symbolique aux enfers où apparaît momentanément la vie inténeure d[es] damné[s]".[6] The fact that in

---

[5]Ahab, her father, had Naboth murdered in order to get his vineyard. See I Kings, Chap. 20. And Jezebel, his wife, killed the prophets of Jehovah and threatened the life of Elijah. See I Kings, Chps. 17-20.

[6]J. D. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse Racinienne (Paris: Nizet, 1956), p. 39.

Athalie, Joas' prayer to Jehovah bears no fruit, expresses "l'impuissance de l'homme à mettre un frein à la fatalité et à créer un ordre stable dans le monde".[7] And just as the heavenly instruments of fatality cannot be gainsaid or changed by means of sacrifices or prayers, so the earthly forms are unchanging since the men we shall meet on earth are themselves the progeny of gods.

[7] J. D. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse Racinienne, p. 42.

CHAPTER II

THE SECULAR IMPLEMENTS OF FATALITY

Being a versatile dramatist, Racine does not confine himself to fatality in "heavenly places", but shows that even on earth where man regards himself as lord and master, there is a force which overrules his action. Many people tend to think that when a man is ruler of his city or kingdom, he is free to do as he pleases. There are forces on this earth which limit to an extensive degree the freedom and actions of all men, and whether we like it or not, we must act in accordance with it or pay the supreme penalty.

Bérénice, in the play named after her, is confident that Titus, now Emperor, will marry her, but later she finds out that he is avoiding her and she is at a loss to see the reason. In fact, Titus has decided not to marry her but send her back to Palestine. He exposes his reasons to his confidant, Paulin, who encourages him in this decision by recalling the great national traditions and the hostility of the Romans to any form of sovereignty. Racine makes it clear that Imperial Rome interposes itself as a fatal force between Bérénice and Titus. Rome directs his actions and cripples his liberty. Though he loves her "Rome ne l'attend point

pour son impératrice",[1] because "elle est reine".[2] Of course, we are aware that Titus knows this long before his accession but this is how Fatality delights in blighting the happiness of mortals. It is when the whole Roman world accepts Titus as Emperor, when he has the option of doing what pleases him, that the age-old unchanging law of Rome which:

> N'admet avec son sang aucun sang étranger
> Et ne reconnaît point les fruits illégitimes
> Qui naissent d'un hymen contraire à ses maximes [3]

exerts full sway on the conscience of the new Emperor. The Senate and Roman people watch his actions like the gods themselves and force him to make decisions in accordance with their will, as is clearly demonstrated in Act IV when Titus chooses to receive a delegation instead of giving aid to Bérénice. His newly acquired grandeur weighs too on him like a fatality. Bérénice can have no place in his new world, though she looks forward to being empress with him. In defying the Roman Senate and people, Titus runs the risk of provoking either a revolt which will end in bloodshed or setting up for himself deferential treatment which can later bring on tragic consequences. If he yields to his love, the legal statutes of roman heroism will condemn him, because his duty is to maintain the laws even if they reduce him to the depths of

---

[1] Bérénice, Act II, Sc. ii.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

despair. Fatality ignores the fact that the private citizen and the emperor are no different biologically; and leaves Titus to bewail his unhappy condition:

> Ah Rome! ah Bérénice! ah prince malheureux!
> Pourquoi suis-je empereur? Pourquoi suis-je amoureux?
>
> (IV. 6)

Rome, the Senate, the majesty of the Roman people, all combine to crush him and destroy his love-life. To M. Hubert, the whole theme of Bérénice, is incompatibility between political power and the power of love.[4] He continues by saying that Titus forces himself to remain faithful to his duty as emperor, i.e. to the roman tradition without betraying Bérénice,[5] for if he sidesteps his duty then he will lower himself to the rank of a freedman, as Paulin suggests.[6]

> De l'affranchi Pallas nous avons vu le frère,
> Des fers de Claudius Félix encor flétri,
> De deux reines, Seigneur, devenir le mari;
> Et s'il faut jusqu'au bout que je vous obéisse,
> Ces deux reines étaient du sang de Bérénice.
> Et vous croiriez pouvoir sans blesser nos regards,
> Faïre entrer une reine au lit de nos Césars,
> Tandis que l'Orient dans le lit de ses reines
> Voit passer un esclave au sortir nos chaînes?
>
> (II.2)

Therefore to remain faithful to the austere virtues of the

---

[4] Hubert, Essais d'exégèse Racinienne, p. 120.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 126.

Roman tradition, he must exile Bérénice. These young lovers feel the inflexible will of the Senate bear down on them like a decree of Destiny. Though they do not at once realise it, it is just such a decree, and they submit to it in such a painfully obvious manner of resignation and distress, that the spectators pity rather than admire them, for they stand out as victims of Fate. Their blood does not flow but their youth is forever destroyed by this heartbreak.

Nevertheless, their form of fatality is more easily endured than that which crushes the heroes of Bajazet. If the love of Bérénice and Titus is not consummated, their lives are, anyhow, spared as they continue to reign in their respective kingdoms. Bajazet and Roxane are enslaved from the outset of the play; they stand within the shadows of the fiendish power of an infidel but absent tyrant who keeps them confined in the seraglio, where one feels as if he is locked in hell with its demons and damned, so stifling and oppressive is the atmosphere. In itself, the seraglio prefigures all sorts of crimes and certain death seeing that once you have entered, you cannot come out, at least not alive. For this reason, Osmin is surprised to see Acomat throwing caution to the winds and defying fate:

> Et depuis quand, Seigneur, entre-t-on dans ces
> lieux,
> Dont l'accès était même interdit à nos yeux?
> Jadis une mort prompte eût suivi cette audace.
> (I.1)

The characters in the play seek every means of escape from this harem; chief of them is Bajazet, the unfortunate prisoner condemned to death. Representative of the incarnation of liberty, he fights against fatality presented as the imperial power of his brother. In order to escape it, Bajazet is at first willing to play the game of love with Roxane, the chosen Sultana of Amurat. She too, tries to evade her fate by loving Bajazet but when he rejects her, she willingly assumes the role of destroyer of his life, whilst acknowledging at the same time the undeniable sway of Amurat over both of them. We understand this clearly from her order given to Acomat after Bajazet's refusal:

> Du sultan Amurat, je reconnais l'empire;
> Sortez. Que le Sérail soit désormais fermé,
> Et que tout rentre ici dans l'ordre accoutumé.
> (II.2)

Both Roxane and Bajazet are caught in the net of the supreme power of the sultan. Between them and death, there is only the distance which divides the seraglio from the camp of the victorious Amurat. Even though it is Roxane who sends Bajazet into the deadly hands of the mutes, she does so, guided by the order of the absent Sultan, and she knows and foresees that it is her own doom she will bring about by punishing him. Yet she does so, hoping somewhat to escape her own condemnation. Yet, despite this desperate bid to evade her impending doom, the invisible Orcan, instrument of the imperial power, eventually cuts her off.

Not only the tradition of an Empire and imperial power, but individuals also are employed as conductive elements through which fatality passes. Whenever critics make mention of Fatality in Racine's drama, this source is scarcely recognised, although it plays an important part in the plays seeing that in at least three tragedies the disaster engineered by Fatality is accomplished wittingly or unwittingly through the instrumentality of minor characters and in one case through the heroine herself. Such is the case in Britannicus. To both Britannicus and Néron, Narcisse is an evil influence. In his own words, he is "une âme basse",[7] who speaks little when he's with Britannicus, but with those few words pushes the young man to the pit of destruction. By a plausible argument:

> N'importe. Elle se sent comme vous outragée (I.4)

he waves aside the doubts of Britannicus concerning Agrippine, attacking at the same moment the young prince's vanity:

> Il n'en faut point douter, vous vous plaindrez toujours. (I.4)

---

[7] Britannicus, Act I, Sc. 4.

Pretending to be the friend of the young man, he gives him treacherous advice and leads him to his doom. This, Narcisse himself, prepares under the aegis of Néron to whom he is even more fatal. Néron's misfortunes result from his conversations with Narcisse, in which his passions are developed. The majority of his sordid deeds are planned whilst conversing with this evil soul. In Act II, both discuss Britannicus and at the end of twenty lines, the young prince's life is threatened. The threat comes from Néron but is inspired by Narcisse, who alone seems to speak.

Continuing their conversation, Narcisse paints a glowing image of Néron imposing his love on Junie thereby pushing the unfortunate emperor to do so but before he can gain her fully, he must get rid of his wife, Octavie, and his evil spirit paves the way for him:

> Que tardez-vous, Seigneur, à la répudier?
> L'Empire, votre coeur, tout condamne Octavie.
> Auguste, votre aïeul soupirait pour Livie:
> Par un double divorce, ils s'unirent tous deux;
> Et vous devez l'Empire à ce divorce heureux.
> Tibère, que l'hymen plaça dans sa famille,
> Osa bien à ses yeux répudier sa fille.
> Vous seul, jusques ici contraire à vos désirs,
> N'osez par un divorce assurer vos plaisirs.
> (II.2)

By this same stroke, he destroys Néron's "trois ans de vertu" and sets the stage for the combat against Agrippine, and Burrhus. The latter tries to re-route his student's wandering footsteps in the path of virtue but Narcisse in a tone of glacial irony diverts the emperor once more. In one scene,

Act IV, Scene 4, he destroys Néron's restored friendship with his mother and Burrhus, and eggs him on to carry out his plan of poisoning Britannicus. When Néron hesitates and informs him that he has changed his mind, he tempts him and uses veiled threats: another Tartuffe, his means of gaining his ends are varied. Firstly, he appeals to that fear inherent in Néron: Britannicus may decide to avenge himself. Secondly, he calls up the emperor's jealousy: "Et l'hymen de Junie en est-il le lien "; next he touches on Néron's hatred for his mother: "Agrippine, Seigneur, se l'était bien promis:/ Elle a repris sur vous son souverain empire". Finally, and it is this last argument which decides Néron, Narcisse appeals to his vanity:

> Elle s'en est vantée assez publiquement.
> . . . . . .
> Qu'elle n'avait qu'à vous voir un moment.
> Qu'à tout ce grand éclat, qu'à ce courroux funeste
> On verrait succéder un silence modeste;

Narcisse's manner varies with his means; he is respectful and insinuating when he speaks of Britannicus, ironical when he touches on the question of Junie, and he becomes as disdainful as the proud empress when he comes to her. In a passionate and vehement tone, he scoffs at the emperor's respect for roman virtues; in this same manner he throws suspicion on Burrhus thereby exciting the anger of Néron whose vanity is now deeply hurt. Henceforth there is no turning back for him; Fatality, through Narcisse has won the day. Britannicus is poisoned, Junie withdraws from the world (she

is literally dead to the things of this world on becoming a Vestal) and Néron goes from crime to crime.

In two other tragedies, we find the same scheme in operation but on another plane. In Phèdre, a woman is the evil spirit. Oenone, Phèdre's confidante, performs this role. As an introduction to this character, I am impressed with Jean-Louis Barrault's description:

> Oenone apparaît. . . .Ses voiles, comme un oiseau qui bat des ailes, se cognent à droite et à gauche contre les cloisons du couloir lointain. Elle court. . .Théramène apercevant Oenone s'est arrêté net. Hippolyte remarquant l'arrêt de Théramène, s'est retourné. . .Oenone toujours en accourant a pris place au troisième plan. . .L'oiseau du malheur est devant eux.[8]

She is fatal to Phèdre, whom she professes to love dearly, as well as to Hippolyte. At the outset, Phèdre recognises the intentional snare set for her and she is ready to accept an honourable death at this moment so as not to divulge her dreadful secret, but the temptress tears it from her. Scarcely has Phèdre made the avowal to Oenone when the false news of Thésée's death is noised abroad. At once Oenone exlaims in Act 1, Scene 5:

> Thésée en expirant vient de rompre les noeuds
> Qui faisaient tout le crime et l'horreur de vos feux.

---

[8]Jean-Louis Barrault, Phèdre, Collection Mises en Scène (Paris: Editions du Seuil), p. 85.

Phèdre does not immediately accept this sort of logic but tempted by Oenone's: "Votre flamme devient une flamme ordinaire", and seduced by deceitful chance, she allows herself to be persuaded to live, since her orphan children need her now. She will do anything for them, even intercede with Hippolyte. Oenone successfully ensnares her in the toils of fatality for Thésée is not dead; he returns and behold he is a stone's throw from the palace. What remains for Phèdre to do except leave herself fully into Oenone's hands? So more and more, Oenone takes onto herself the attributes of the spirit of evil, first by her perfidious suggestion to Phèdre:

> Osez l'accuser la première,
> Du crime dont il peut vous charger aujourd'hui
> (III.3)

and then by actually pronouncing her calumny, of which she seems very proud when she says to Thésée:

> Moi seule à votre amour, j'ai su la conserver
> (IV.1)

hereby investing the king with her power of destruction. His anger bursts like a storm upon the head of the unfortunate Hippolyte deluging him with curses and condemnation into exile. There is no reprieve for him; he stands condemned.

The heroine is herself a force of destruction to the unfortunate youth who relays his conscious fears to Théramène:

> Cet heureux temps n'est plus. Tout a changé
> de face,
> Depuis que sur ces bords, les Dieux ont envoyé,
> La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé.
> (I.1)

We immediately associate her with unhappiness and sorrow. She is almost introduced as a metaphor of temporal blight. Since her arrival, the pleasant land of Troezen is covered with gloom and fear. "The very obliqueness of Hippolyte's reference shrouds her with a quality of uncanniness".[9] A person whose mother dared to couple with a bull will certainly bring destruction to those around her, for she herself must be tainted. Through Phèdre and Oenone, the wheel of Destiny for Hippolyte has been set in motion and nothing can henceforth stop it, until the victims together with the earthly instruments are swallowed up by death and disaster. The first to disappear is Oenone, condemned and driven away by Phèdre, who commits suicide after exculpating too late the innocent prince.

Narcisse and Oenone are birds of a feather; there is as usual, a slight difference in the plumage of the female bird. It lacks the deep-black lustre, for she is not as perfidious as he is. The one acts lucidly as the tool of fatality in order to gain his own ends, while the other, hoping to save her mistress, is used to destroy her. She acts through devotion and love. Nevertheless these two make the first move in one way or the other; our next character

---

[9]John Stone, Sophocles and Racine (Genève: Droz, 1964), p. 20.

has a fatal effect in a different way.

Atalide in Bajazet affects the hero fatally in a sort of passive manner. They both love each other but political conditions prevent the realisation of their love. Consequently, she acts as mediator between Bajazet and Roxane who loves him. In this role, she sheds a ray of destruction across her lover, since Roxane feels that she, Atalide, is playing a game, and reveals her suspicions to her:

> Je ne retrouvais point ce trouble, cette ardeur,
> Que m'avait tant promis un discours trop flatteur
> (I.3)

Little by little this suspicion translates itself into tangible form as Roxane watches their movements and becomes convinced of a mutual relationship between them. On the verge of seeking definite proof, she is apprised of the arrival of Orcan bearing this letter from Amurat:

> Je ne veux point douter de votre obéissance
> Et crois que maintenant Bajazet ne vit plus.
> . . . . . .
> Vous si vous avez soin de votre propre vie,
> Ne vous montrez à moi que sa tête à la main.
> (IV.3)

So she shows it to Atalide who herself has just received one from Bajazet re-affirming his fidelity to her. Surprised by the Sultana, Atalide hides this letter in her breast but when Roxane affirms that she will heed Amurat's orders, the poor girl faints thus delivering to Roxane the proof she was seeking for a long time. Forthwith the death sentence for Bajazet is decided upon.

Lest the foregoing paragraphs may be regarded as a hastily drawn conclusion on my part, I should like to show that Atalide is in total agreement. She too acknowledges her fatal effect on him, and avers it to Roxane:

> Ce jour même, des jours le plus infortuné,
> Lui reprochant l'espoir qu'il vous avait donné,
> Et de ma mort enfin le prenant à partie,
> Mon importune ardeur ne s'est point ralentie,
> Qu'arrachant, malgré lui, des gages de sa foi,
> Je ne sois parvenue à le perdre avec moi.
> (V.6)

And in the last scene she reasserts this fact, as she overwhelms herself with vituperations before committing suicide:

> . . .et par mes artifices,
> Mes injustes soupçons, mes funestes caprices,
> Je suis donc arrivée au douloureux moment
> Où je vois par mon crime expirer mon amant.
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Je ne pusse imputer sa mort qu'à mes fureurs?
> Oui, c'est moi, cher amant, qui t'arrache la vie:
> (V.12)

Words which provide an immortal testament to her fatal influence as well as a confirmation of fact; but let us note that one word "fureurs" suggests that there is some other force too besides herself, within her, which sends him to his death. This indestructible force Racine lodges in the very soul of his characters. It gives imperious orders which must be obeyed. This force, called Passion, will appear next on the stage of action.

CHAPTER III

INTERIOR FATALITY - THE PASSIONS

In Racinian tragedy, happiness rarely comes to fruition and virtuous desires take on different characteristics. Every mother cherishes high ambitions for her son but under Racine's pen, ambition is seen as a monstrous force; Love, too, is no longer that gentle virtue experienced by starry-eyed maidens. It assumes inhuman attributes. No longer is the lover ready to step down in order that the loved one may rise to great heights. Love demands all or sacrifices all. Like the Medusa, the pen of Racine changes these human aspirations into vicious desires.

Moving in gentle progression, let us trace the development of interior fatality through the passions from Ambition to Hatred passing by way of Love and Jealousy. Britannicus reveals the Empress, Agrippine, who is monstrously ambitious. She engineers the installation of Néron as Emperor for her own ends. Unlike the average mother, she entertains high hopes for her son to suit her depraved ambition. Of course, Racine throws into her characterization, one or twice, fleeting instances of tenderness but the sentiment which dominates her is her all-consuming ambition and fear.

Through Néron, she aspires to the command of the Roman

Empire; she is dissatisfied with being a sort of "Queen-mother" honoured by all--Senate, Army and civilians alike. Personal command of Rome is what she craves, and when Néron resists, she engenders intrigues against him; she blackmails him, by threatening to replace Britannicus in power. It is to her credit that she realises her true position: the lucid, ambitious Empress, meeting with foreign ambassadors, is a thing of the past. At present, she is only a woman who has lost her power and, blinded by her unwavering ambition, is on her way to disaster. She is aware of the signs portending her down-fall but she blames Burrhus for this. Her every word reveals the nature of her ambition--nostalgia for the supreme power: "Non, non", she complains to Albine,

> le temps n'est plus que Néron, jeune encore,
> Me renvoyait les voeux d'une cour qui l'adore,
> Lorsqu'il se reposait sur moi de tout l'Etat,
> Que mon ordre au palais assemblait le sénat,
> Et que derrière une voile, invisible et présente,
> J'étais de ce grand corps l'âme toute puissante.
> (I.1)

And later on, she reveals just where her hopes are placed:

> Il m'écarta du trône où je m'allais placer.
> (I.1)

In her meeting with Burrhus, her pride and egoism wrapped in her avid ambition prevent her from understanding this wise counsellor and later on, this same haughty ambition results in Néron's hatred towards her. In reality, the entire play has its axis on the struggle between two equally ambitious protagonists, Néron and his mother. Perhaps it is

not an overstatement to say that the action is one of the most violent and inhuman ever imagined by Racine. The spectators envisage with horror this frenzied fight between mother and son for power which leads only to destruction. Her shameless enumeration of dastardly deeds committed to put Néron and herself into the highest position in the Empire shows to what foul depths Ambition or love of power can reduce a person.

In some cases, ambition is closely linked with Love-Passion, since certain persons use the latter as a stepping-stone to gain coveted positions. Such was the case with Agrippine who professed love for Claudius in order to get him to dispossess Britannicus in favour of her son, thus giving her access to the Imperial power. Wherefore, it is quite legitimate to incorporate this passion in the study of Love-Passion and its attendant forces.

> Love is long-suffering, brave
> Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel;
> But O, too, Love is cruel,
> Cruel as the grave. (Hardy)

The last couplet of this quatrain typifies the sort of love exemplified in Racinian tragedy. The Fatality to which his characters are mostly subordinated is that of love. It is similar to a sort of cancer which cannot be cured and frequently reveals it presence under monstrous shapes: Oenone in fear speaks of this illness which is destroying her mistress:

La Reine touche presque à son terme fatal.
En vain à l'observer jour et nuit, je m'attache:
Elle meurt dans mes bras d'un mal qu'elle cache.
(I.2)

Hippolyte also suffers from this same disease but to a lesser degree, and he tries to hide it from his confidant, who nevertheless senses the cause of Hippolyte's trouble:

Chargés d'un feu secret, vos yeux s'appesantissent,
Il n'en faut point douter: vous aimez, vous brûlez:
Vous périssez d'un mal que vous dissimulez.
(I.1)

Love always appears as an inhuman force, most often as a disease which the characters try to hide. Phèdre resists this force for several years, whilst Hippolyte holds out six months before succumbing.

This passion assumes diabolical characteristics and tortures the afflicted physically as well as morally; Phèdre is the supreme example of a character racked by the fury of love:

Je le vis, je rougis, je pâlis à sa vue;
Un trouble s'éleva dans mon âme éperdue,
Mes yeux ne voyaient plus, je ne pouvais parler,
Je sentis tout mon corps et transir et brûler.
(I.3)

It even changes the victim into another being who hates himself.[1] Phèdre says to Hippolyte:

Je m'abhorre encore plus que tu ne me détestes.
(II.5)

---

[1] J. Hubert, Essai d'exégèse Racinienne (Paris: Nizet, 1956), p. 203.

The fatality of this passion is expressed in the very epithets used by Racine.[2] Phèdre speaks of "[s]a raison égarée", "[son] incurable amour"; and "[sa] flamme si noire"; other speeches abound in terms like "haine", odieux", "horreur", "horrible". The word "égarement" used quite often implies a fatal straying from one's rational self, provoked by irrational forces within man's own nature, and thereby leading him to destruction. Though the victim may have a will of iron, he cannot gainsay this force; besides, it is useless running away from it, because it is fate asserting its right through love, and if it is impossible to effect destruction through love, then the "green-eyed monster" steps in to continue where love leaves off. Deeply hurt by the fact that another woman has conquered the unyielding Hippolyte, Phèdre becomes intensely jealous. She had hoped that at least another woman would not be preferred above her. Now, she experiences "une douleur non encore éprouvée" (IV.6). She no longer ponders the moral implications; jealous, she stifles conscience, honesty and decency under her rage and like a trapped beast, she snarls:

> Ils s'aiment! Par quel charme ont-ils trompé
> mes yeux?
> Comment se sont-ils vus, en quel temps, dans

---

[2]Hubert, Essai d'exégèse Racinienne.

quel lieu?
Tu le savais. Pourquoi me laissais-tu
séduire?
De leur furtive ardeur ne pouvais-tu m'instruire?
(IV.6)

Beside herself with maniacal fury, she decides to pursue and destroy her rival; she even thinks of enlisting the aid of her husband in effecting the ruin of the last of this race which has prevented him from being cuckolded. Hers is the cry of a woman snubbed; jealous rage which demands full acceptance or entire destruction.

Such a shriek is also uttered by a famous general; Mithridate is pricked by jealousy when he returns to find his sons in the palace where Monime lives. His questions thrown at Arbate are indicative of the type of monster gnawing at his inside:

Mais tous deux en ces lieux que pouvaient-ils
attendre?
L'un et l'autre à la reine ont-ils osé prétendre?
(II.3)

and then thunders the threat which we feared:

Malheur au criminel qui vient me la ravir.
(II.3)

Old, almost broken, he suffers terribly and we fear for the ones who cause his suffering. By fair means or foul, he will ease his tortured conscience, and so he, too, is caught in the net of fatality. In satisfying his jealousy, he digs his own pit, for in Monime's heart he finds engraved, not Mithridate but Xipharès. At once his famous poisons are prepared, and even if he escapes death by the Romans,

Mithridate loses Monime forever. Held in the shackles of jealousy he appears as the pitiful victim of unfortunate love. At death's door he resignedly yields Monime to Xipharès since she will never belong to him, but he does not let go of her of his own accord, and thereby demonstrates the fatality of human passion.

La Rochefoucauld could have been thinking of Racine's passionate characters when he wrote: "Si l'on juge de l'amour par la plupart de ses effets, il ressemble plus à la haine qu'à l'amitié",[3] and Congreve's lines:

> Heaven hath no rage like love to hatred turned
> Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned.[4]

are quite applicable to them, since these women foam at the mouth and tear their despisers to pieces like animals at bay. Roxane and Hermione are not content with raving in jealousy about the unfaithfulness of the men they love. If they cannot have them, then no other woman will. From love, they pass to jealousy and finally to hatred which brings death in its wake.

All of Roxane's love is centred on Bajazet. This passion surpasses all other desires so much so that she does not hesitate to propose marriage to him. Deeply jealous,

---

[3]La Rochefoucauld, Oeuvres Complètes Maximes, no. 72, (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1950), p. 254.

[4]Congrève, The Mourning Bride, Act 3, Sc. 8.

she is ready to forgive even Bajazet's love for Atalide, provided the latter will disappear and leave Bajazet to her. Displaying no moral scruples, she portrays the ferocity of a tigress bent on satisfying a basic need. Realising that she has a rival she looks on Bajazet more as her prey than as her lover, and it seems to me that she gets a sort of voluptuous pleasure from the thought that she can either have him executed or crowned. With what sadistic pleasure and natural cruelty, she savours the prospect of seeing Atalide gazing at the corpse of her murdered lover:

> Ah! si pour son amant facile à s'attendrir,
> La peur de son trépas la fit presque mourir
> Quel surcroît de vengeance et de douceur nouvelle
> De le montrer bientôt pâle et mort devant elle,
> De voir sur cet objet ses regards arrêtés
> Me payer les plaisirs que je leur ai prêtés!
> (Bajazet IV.5)

It matters little to her whether Bajazet secretly abhors her or not; when she invites him to come and see Atalide put to death, her only desire is to give him a last chance of reprieve, by getting rid of her rival:

> Ma rivale est ici. Suis-moi sans différer.
> Dans les mains des muets viens la voir expirer.
> Et libre d'un amour à ta gloire funeste,
> Viens m'engager ta foi: le temps fera le reste.
> Ta grâce est à ce prix, si tu veux l'obtenir.
> (V.4)

Her excesses are a result of her passion; obsessed, she moves only in the narrow circle of her passionate wants. She listens to no one; she follows only her frenzied hatred, for she is at the point where her desire needs to be satiated and this can only be done by Bajazet. Suffering greatly and

and having realised that Bajazet is more attached to Atalide than to herself, she listens to no reason. To her, this is tantamount to a duel challenge. For this she is ready to fight to the death with any weapon:

> Je saurai le surprendre avec son Atalide;
> Et d'un même poignard les unissant tous deux,
> Les percer l'un et l'autre, et moi-même après eux.
> (IV.4)

Ruthless in love, and dominated by her fierce physical passion, she is full of hatred for any one who comes between her and the man. In this case, she hates even the man himself since she does not hesitate to pronounce the regal "Sortez"--Bajazet's death sentence.

Roxane, however, is more unfeeling that her passionate "sister", Hermione. She feels no remorse for Bajazet's death, whilst Hermione, as we shall see later on, does, in the event of Pyrrhus.

> Rien n'est si beau, dans Andromaque, qu'un cri d'Hermione du quatrième acte. Pyrrhus revenu à sa chère troyenne, tente auprès d'Hermione une visite de convenance; le maladroit ne prononce pas une parole qui n'atteigne en plein le coeur de sa victime.[5]

Her love scoffed at, her pride wounded, she is changed into a termagant who hisses:

> Quel plaisir de venger moi-même mon injure
> De retirer mon bras teint du sang du parjure.
> (IV.4)

---

[5]François Mauriac, La vie de Racine (Paris: Plon, 1928), p. 83.

But what opposition between the bloody vengeance of the last line quoted and the gentleness of the following:

> Ah! cours après Oreste; et dis-lui, ma Cléone
> Qu'il n'entreprenne rien sans revoir Hermione.
> (IV.4)

The climax of anger and hate is followed by a change of heart in favour of Pyrrhus who misunderstands her and pretends that he had done her "une injure mortelle" by his apology and remorse, for says he:

> Il faut se croire aimé pour se croire infidèle.
> (IV.5)

Hermione explodes; in this speech beginning:

> Je ne t'ai point aimé cruel? Qu'ai-je donc
> fait?

She shouts her love and grief on the rooftops. Here Racine displays more than ever before how fatal love can be, especially when it degenerates into hatred. In this moment of overwhelming passion, we see passionate love, grief, a ray of hope, spite, jealousy, vengeful anger and finally love turned to hatred. The movement is a crescendo of violence; she goes from ardent love to threatening malediction. But Pyrrhus is not listening to her and rousing herself from that calm into which she had moved, she explodes once more into jealous and threatening anger:

> Tu comptes les moments que tu perds avec moi!
> Ton coeur, impatient de revoir ta Troyenne,
> Ne souffre qu'à regret qu'un autre t'entretienne.
> Tu lui parles du coeur, tu la cherches des yeux.
> (IV.5)

She curses and chases him; threatens him with "la fureur des

dieux" who destroys perjurers. She accuses him of breach of promise, and even sacrilege. Then as the bitter indignity of her pride put aside, and the crying pain of her love disdained and thrown back at her, takes effect, Hermione hurls threats at Pyrrhus in renewed and deadlier hatred:

> Porte aux pieds des autels ce coeur qui
> m'abandonne.
> Va, cours. Mais crains encore d'y trouver Hermione.
> (IV.5)

and Pyrrhus walks out to meet Andromaque and death. But even at the eleventh hour, Hermione wavers between her love and hatred of Pyrrhus. In the last act of the play she is inclined toward saving him at the last moment. At this juncture, Cléone reports Pyrrhus' uninhibited joy and radiant bliss as he leads Andromaque to the altar and Hermione is all hate: It is more vivid to give a section of the dialogue:

> Hermione: Le perfide! Il mourra. Mais que
> t'a dit Oreste?
> Cléone: Oreste avec ses Grecs dans le temple
> est entré.
> Hermione: Hé bien! A me venger n'est-il pas
> préparé?
> Cléone: Je ne sais.
> Hermione: Tu ne sais? Quoi donc? Oreste encore,
> Oreste me trahit?
> (V.2)

Cléone reveals that Oreste is still hesitant, whereupon Hermione flies into another fury where the humiliation and despair of this proud woman whom both suitors have disappointed are powerfully described. Her hatred now pushes her to will to do the deed herself:

> Je ne choisirai point dans ce désordre extrême;
> Tout me sera Pyrrhus, fût-ce Oreste lui-même.
> Je mourrai; mais au moins ma mort me vengera:
> Je ne mourrai pas seule, et quelqu'un me
> suivra.
>
> (V.2)

Yet, when she realises that Pyrrhus is dead, her love for him comes rushing back and she turns on Orestes like a tigress, overwhelming him with irony and unreasoning hatred in her famous speech "Qui te l'a dit?", and afterwards taking her own life.

"The passions of love and ambition" states one critic, "are self-centred, and in Racine the stylization of passion implies total self-centredness".[6] Therefore, a character is unable to feel any sort of sympathy for any one. His thoughts are always attached to the problem of his passion, thus lending to the tragedies an atmosphere of terror. For, in a world where there is neither pity nor tenderness, cruelty appears in its true light, especially in the circumscribed world of passion. Inhabitants of such a world will be disaster-prone. Since passion annihilates reason and will-power in its victims, it goes without saying that any one living in its narrow confines will find himself loving those who do not love him, and chasing after an untenable object will have its issue in disaster.

---

[6] Odette de Mourgues, Racine or the Triumph of Relevance (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 51.

CHAPTER IV

THE FATALITY OF SIN

In his eight tragedies from La Thébaïde to Phèdre excepting Alexandre, Racine chooses his matter from societies which are in no respect Christian. Later, when he broke his twelve years' silence with Esther and Athalie, he forsook his former practice for a kind of drama reflecting his change of outlook. In his creative heyday, Racine avoided any drama with a specifically Christian flavour, and confined himself to a profane, pagan world in which heavenly and earthly fatality determine and dominate the action of certain characters. However, his religious plays put the accent on the fatality of sin and the working of the grace of God. Herein he comes the closest to writing Jansenist drama or more precisely the drama of predestination.

In Esther, Aman through his very character is predestined to destruction and tries to envelop Assuérus with him. Swollen with vain pride, he wishes to be second only to the king if not to be the king, and cannot tolerate the thought of being spurned by one man. Therefore by skilful manoeuvres, Aman leads the king to order the destruction of the Jews. However, his very nature decides against him, for he is not one of the elect, and even had he not engineered such a decree he would still be damned, since he entertains such an

exaggerated opinion of himself and his greatness seen especially when he speaks of Mardochée:

> L'insolent devant moi ne se courba jamais.
> En vain de la faveur du plus grand des
> monarques
> Tout révère à genoux les glorieuses marques;
> Lorsque d'un saint respect tous les Persans
> touchés
> N'osent lever leurs fronts à la terre attachés
> Lui. . . . . .
> Traite tous ces honneurs d'impiété servile,
> (II.1)

He is representative of the "damned" who "flourish as a green bay tree" without any remorse in the world but who at death will be judged by God who will avenge the innocent, and condemn the wicked to eternal death. In Aman, Racine portrays the sinner who reigns unmolested but whose day of reckoning comes as Esther shows:

> Misérable, le Dieu vengeur de l'innocence,
> Tout prêt à te juger, tient déjà sa balance.
> Bientôt son juste arrêt te sera prononcé.
> Tremble. Son jour approche, et ton règne est
> passé.
> (III.5)

In what way is Aman touched with the fatality of sin? He sins by vanity, self-love and pride exemplified in his advice to Assuérus on the form of the recompense fit for an unnamed recipient:

> Je voudrais donc, Seigneur, que ce mortel heureux
> De la pourpre aujourd'hui paré comme vous-même,
> Et pourtant sur le front le sacré diadème,
> Sur un de vos coursiers pompeusement orné,
> Aux yeux de vos sujets dans Suse fut mené;
> Que pour comble de gloire et de magnificence,
> Un seigneur éminent en richesse, en puissance,
> Enfin de votre Empire après vous le premier,
> Par la bride guidât son superbe coursier;
> Et lui-même, marchant en habits magnifiques,
> Criât à haute voix dans les places publiques:

> Mortels, prosternez-vous: c'est ainsi que le Roi
> Honore le mérite et couronne la foi.
> (III.5)

because Aman thinks that such honours would naturally come to him:

> C'est pour toi-même, Aman, que tu vas prononcer;
> Et quel autre que toi peut-on récompenser?
> (II.5)

Vain by nature, he is led to covet the attributes of kingly power, and in order to get them, he throws prudence to the wind. Aman's essential passions are hatred and pride, hence his violent feelings toward Mardochée, and hence too, his wish for revenge both upon the man and upon his people. He is completely selfish and concerned only with petty, personal matters. He represents all that is base in humanity; wherefore God will "renverse[r] l'audacieux" (I.5).

Though Aman will get his due, Assuérus through the medium of Esther will find not only the possibility of salvation from his sins and fierce nature but salvation itself. From the chorus we learn of his former nature:

> Vous avez vu quelle ardente colère
> Allumait de ce roi le visage sévère.
> Des éclairs de des yeux l'oeil était ébloui
> Et sa voix m'a paru comme un tonnerre horrible.
> (II.8)

but when the grace of God is accorded to him his entire sinful nature is changed and:

> Un moment a changé ce courage inflexible
> Le lion rugissant est un agneau paisible.

since:

> Dieu notre Dieu sans doute a versé dans son coeur
> Cet esprit de douceur.
> (II.8)

Assuérus is called and so escapes eternal damnation, whilst Esther, Mardochée and the chorus all form part of the "elect".

Mathan in Athalie is also one of the condemned, who sinks deeper in the mire of sin by turning away from the God of Israel to serve Baal in order to line his own pocket. Whereas Aman was the only one in Esther, visibly condemned, in Athalie, Mathan has Athalie for companion. Neither can escape the fatality of sin. Their very presence is enough to desecrate the Jewish temple and whosoever speaks with them. Joad is certain of this when he berates his wife Josabet for daring to speak with Mathan:

> Quoi, fille de David, vous parlez à ce traître?
> . . . .Et vous ne craignez pas
> Que du fond de l'abîme entr'ouvert sous ses pas
> Il ne sorte à l'instant des feux qui vous embrasent,
> Ou qu' en tombant sur lui ces murs ne vous écrasent?
> (III.5)

and turning on Mathan, the High Priest in clear tones informs him of his destiny:

> Dieu s'apprête à te joindre à la race parjure
> Abiron et Dathan, Doëg, Achitophel.
> (III.5)

There is no pardon for him, neither for Athalie whose sins are finding her out: her own words reveal her penchant for evil and her futile search for salvation:

> Lasse enfin des horreurs dont j'étais poursuivie,
> J'allais prier Baal de veiller sur ma vie,
> Et chercher du repos au pied de ses autels.
> (II.5)

With Baal powerless to help her she turns to Jehovah:

> Dans le temple des Juifs un instinct m'a
> poussée.
> (II.5)

However, since she is not one of the "elect" her search is

in vain for her day of judgement is come. She will atone for her sins; for her, there is no salvation; says Joad to her:

> Tes yeux cherchent en vain, tu ne peux échapper,
> Et Dieu de toutes parts a su t'envelopper.
> Ce Dieu que tu bravais, en nos mains ta livrée.
> Rends-lui compte du sang dont tu t'es enivrée.
> (V.5)

Athalie and her entourage have succeeded too long in their crimes; they now must face the avenging God who "l'emportes". In Esther and Athalie is seen the system of Predestination at work. Original sin is the starting point. The "unfaithful" receive the just but incomprehensible consequences of this fault; a few are redeemed not because they tried to win their salvation but because of the grace of God offered to them, whilst the "elect" are confirmed in the path of righteousness.

It is unthinkable to close this discussion without making mention of Phèdre whom some critics have seen as "un juste à qui la grâce a manqué". I shall borrow the words of M. Busson and say that

> . . .la grâce est l'application des mérites et de la mort du Christ, que seuls donc, les chrétiens en peuvent bénéficier, et que sous le règne de la loi mosaïque seuls quelques Juifs privilégiés ont pu, par une anticipation de ces mérites, recevoir la grâce et se sauver.[1]

Now, Phèdre is a well-known pagan character, who has no knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor of Moses' law. She cannot, therefore, have any part in the death of Christ nor the substitutes mentioned in the Old Testament. Besides

---

[1]Busson, La Religion des Classiques, p. 50.

it seems to me quite unavailing to suggest at one point that Phèdre is a Jansenist play and then at another to claim that it is an imitation of Euripides' Hippolytus with many passages directly transcribed from it especially those used to substantiate its jansenist flavour.

Whereupon, some will immediately pose this question: Why did Arnauld accept this play whilst condemning the others? One must go back to the Preface of Phèdre to find the answer. There Racine says of the play:

> Ce que je puis assurer, c'est que je n'en ai point fait où la vertu soit plus mise en jour que dans celle-ci. Les moindres fautes y sont sevèrement punies. La seule pensée du crime y est regardée avec autant d'horreur que le crime même. Les faiblesses de l'amour y passent pour de vraies faiblesses, les passions n'y sont présentées aux yeux que pour montrer tout le désordre dont elles sont cause; et le vice y est peint partout avec des couleurs qui en font connaître et haïr la difformité.

These, then, are the reasons why Arnauld looked kindly on Phèdre. To be more specific, the play lived up to the aim of tragedy as expressed by Aristotle---i.e. the purification of emotions by vicarious experience.

Besides, Phèdre can never be an expression of the doctrine of the Jansenists on Predestination, since according to the Jansenists, man is incapable of making a good decision. He has lost the power of doing good or refraining from evil. Now, we feel that if Phèdre wishes, she could make a supreme effort to dominate her passion; also she could make worthwhile decisions. She decided to banish Hippolyte accept him

as guardian for her young son, then to plead with Thésée for him, and finally to accept death rather than declare her love to anybody. Objecters will say, anyhow, that according to Jansenist doctrine, man has the illusion of being free, yet the same is true of fatalism in antiquity; thus one should not on this account opt for one instead of the other.[2] However, I tend toward the latter because of the fact that Phèdre showed twice that she is a free human being who can act of her own free will: she successfuly banished Hippolyte and did not go to Trézène until she was ordered to by Thésée; also she resolved to take her life and she did so. Wherefore, it is seen that Phèdre is free to do good or evil. No case therefore for those who see in her the theory of Predestination exemplified.

---

[2]Jean Cousin, "Phèdre n'est point Janseniste", Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, XXXVIII (1931), 391-392.

CONCLUSION

In retracing the history of Fatality from its origins in the Greek Theatre, we have attempted to show its portrayal from Aeschylus to Racine. Among the distinctive characteristics that the modern critic is accustomed to give to Greek tragedy, the one which always takes precedence is the intervention of Fatality in the action. To it, the tragic poets give a capital role. It is seen from the preceding pages that this sombre divinity reigns uncontested over the Athenian theatre. It establishes the order of events and determines catastrophes, sometimes acting directly and sometimes through the intermediary of heavenly and earthly forces.

Always on the scene of action, but most often invisible, fatality leads men and things towards a fixed destiny, and no matter what is done, there is no escape. Certain characters; at times, try to resist it but in vain. Its all powerful hand lays low the proud hearts and wills rebellious to its commands, all must fall under its blows. Yet it is just to say that this mysterious presence is not seen under the same guise in the works of the three great tragedians. Sophocles and Euripides who lived in the great era of Athenian democracy, and who wrote for a public elated with their glory and conscious of their liberty, gave some weight to man's will and passions. With Sophocles, moreso, even if he was broken

in the end, the heroes did put up some form of resistance to this force, whereas for Aeschylus, who wrote under different circumstances and influences, it can be firmly asserted that the principal character of his drama was fatality through the instrumentality of the Gods.

French writers of the sixteenth century, were influenced by the Greek theatre and though their dramas were not equivalent in style and form to those of the classical age, yet some form of fatality permeated their work. The w writers of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, were not all attracted to the Greek theatre, chiefly because they were not able to read the Greek. Nevertheless, a few of them did so, whilst others turned to the plays of Seneca modelled on those of the Ancients. Corneille, was not inclined to depict his heroes crushed by a supernatural force. There are a few instances[1] when it does pop up in his plays, but for the most part, his heroes were the masters of their own destiny. They were no longer submissive to a superior-divinity. If a god enters the picture, it is no longer to destroy the hero but to grant him grace.[2] The hero generally escapes disaster; quite often, he is plunged inspite of himself in a

---

[1]See Chapter II, part I, p. 5.

[2]See Corneille's Polyeucte.

tragic dilemma, whence he extricates himself by relying on his own strength, and comes forth triumphant.[3] The ending is therefore most often a happy one which inspires admiration rather than pity and terror advocated by Aristotle.

After Corneille, the French theatre turned its back on the idealistic themes of Corneille. Contemporaries like Boyer and Rotrou, especially, now turn their attention to the portrayal of the passions. The latter, in particular, introduces the Greeks to the French stage; in his tragedies, and certain portions of the tragi-comedies, he incarnates the grandeur and horror of the human destiny. Though he received the fatality of the Greeks, its tragic grandeur was not fully comprehended by the audience until Racine entered the ring accompanied by this adamantine force. It is an accepted fact that he was influenced by these masters, but it must be strongly stated that he differed from them in many respects. In the Aeschylean world, disaster brings the creation of a new order. After Oedipus' destruction, Thebes takes on a new lease on life and hopes for better fortunes. With Racine, nothing of the sort is seen. When the hero is destroyed, he is destroyed root and branch, denuded of his past glory and grandeur.[4] Most often, they destroy themselves instead of

---

[3] See Le Cid and Cinna.

[4] Mithridate is the only exception.

trying to direct their violence against the instruments of Fatality. In Shakespeare, for example, the Macbeths and the Lears merit their punishment, since the audience can see the crimes committed before their very eyes. Racinian tragedy disdains these petty consolations. When disaster strikes, it is irremediable, and not always understandable; there is no repentance nor forgiveness by the gods or God. The characters have not sinned on purpose. Theirs is a destruction beyond their control.

If they have committed the unpardonable sin, it is that they dared to love, and it matters little whether it is an innocent or guilty love. Even if they took the minutest care to avoid every fault, there is one thing they cannot avoid--they cannot stop themselves from living and therefore loving. It is quite natural. Their fault then, as seen in Racine, is to be born.

Racine gave more verve to that which he found. He puts no confidence in man or God. The Gods pursue man in all his dealings but more evident is the fact that man becomes his most dangerous enemy. Racine has not served the Greeks in a servile manner, ~~like André Chénier or even Leconte de Lisle.~~ True, he made use of the greek genius, names, anecdotes and even certain subjects, but he did not restore the Greek tragedians. They were used as sources from which he drew inspiration, but his genius was never subordinated to the orders of the Attic theatre. Neither was he an exponent of

Jansenism through drama as Nicole was in philosophy. Like other writers, Racine had a poetic vision; one of the aspects of which was to give back to tragedy the tragic heroes it first had. The gods were of great importance then and since they had lost their significance throughout the preceding centuries, Racine helps them to retrieve their sway over human life and destiny. In placing such emphasis on fatality, Racine restores the tragic conception of man falling prey to superior beings or powers. The fact that he gives more power to the interior forms of fatality shows that he was aware that the gods as persons were losing credibility on stage. This, however, did not dissuade him from giving some credence to their existence. In order to do so, he introduced into his plays the over-powering force of fatality. Wherefore he turned to legends of mythology, Roman and biblical history for subjects from which both forms of fatality could be extracted. He treated these subjects with such mastery that it is possible to say that with Racine, real tragic emotion was restored to the French theatre.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Source Material

AEschylus. Tragedies trans. by Rev. E. H. Plumptre. London: Isbister and Co. Ltd., 1891.

--------. Seven against Thebes. Trans. by Gilbert Murray. London, 1959.

Boyer, Claude. Clotilde, tragédie. Paris: Sercy, 1659.

Calvin, John. Institutes of the Christian Religion. Ed. by H. Beveridge. Edinburgh, 1845.

Corneille, Pierre. Théâtre Complet. Ed. by Pierre Lièvre. 2 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1950.

Du Ryer, Pierre. Saül, tragédie. Paris: Sommaville, 1642.

--------. Scévole, tragédie. Paris: Sommaville, 1647.

Euripides. Medea and other Plays. Penguins Classics, trans. by P. Vellacott, 1963.

Jansénius. Augustinus: "De Statu Naturae Lapsae", II, Pt. 1, trans. by J. Paquier.

La Rochefoucauld. Oeuvres Complètes. Maximes, no. 72. Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1950, p. 254.

Racine, Jean. Oeuvres. 8 vols. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée par Paul Mesnard. Paris: Hachette, 1923.

--------. Théâtre Complet. Ed. by Maurice Rat. Paris, 1950.

Rotrou, Jean. Oeuvres. 5 vols. Paris: Desoer, 1820.

--------. Cosroès, tragédie, 1649, Ed. critique publiée par J. Schérer. Paris: Didier, 1950.

Saint Augustine. On the Predestination of the Saints, the Anti-Pelagian Writings. Ed. by the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, vol. 5, trans. by Peter Holmes, and Rev. Robert E. Wallis. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1886-90.

Critical Works

Books:

Abercrombie, N. The Origins of Jansenism. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.

Adam, Antoine. Histoire de la littérature française au 17e Siècle. Paris: Domat, 1954.

Barrault, Jean-Louis. Phèdre, "Collection Mises en Scènes". Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1946.

Barthes, Roland. Sur Racine. Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1963.

Busson, Henri. La Religion des Classiques. Paris: P.U.F., 1948.

Butler, P. Classicisme et baroque dans l'oeuvre de Racine. Paris: Nizet, 1959.

Calvet, J. La Littérature religieuse de François de Sales à Fénelon. Paris: Del Duca, 1956.

Cambouliu, F. R. Essai sur la Fatalité dans le Théâtre Grec. Paris: Durand, 1855.

Cooper, Lane. The Greek Genius and its Influence. New York: Cornell University Press, 1952.

Dodds, E. R. The Greeks and the Irrational. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964.

Giraudoux, Jean. Racine. Paris: Grasset, 1930.

Goldmann, Lucien. Le Dieu Caché: étude sur la vision tragique dans les pensées de Pascal et dans le théâtre de Racine. Paris: N.R.F., 1955.

Greene, W. C. Moira, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought. Cambrige: Harvard Press, 1944.

Grube, G. M. A. The Drama of Euripides. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1941.

Hubert, J. D. Essai d'Exégèse racinienne. Paris: Nizet, 1956.

Knight, R. C. Racine et la Grèce. Paris: Boivin et Cie, 1950.

Lancaster, H. C. French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century. 9 vols. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1929-1942.

Lanson, Gustave. Esquisse d'une histoire de la tragédie française. Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honore Champion, 1954.

Lapp, J. C. Aspects of Racinian tragedy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955.

Lemaître, Jules. Jean Racine. Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1908.

Mauriac, François. La Vie de Jean Racine. Paris: Plon, 1928.

Mauron, Charles. L'Inconscient dans l'oeuvre et la vie de Racine. Paris, 1957.

Moreau, P. Racine, l'homme et l'oeuvre. Paris: Hatier, 1943.

Mourgues, Odette de. Racine, or the Triumph of Relevance. Cambridge: University Press, 1967.

Murray, Gilbert. Euripides and his Age. 2nd edition; London: Oxford University Press, 1946.

Nicole, P. Réflexions sur le traité de Sénéque: "De la brièveté de la vie". Paris, 1625, II.

Orcibal, Jean. Les Origines du Jansénisme. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1962, V.

Picard, R. La Carrière de Jean Racine. Paris: Gallimard, 1956.

Pommier, J. Aspects de Racine. Paris: Nizet, 1954.

Scherer, J. La Dramaturgie Classique. Paris: Nizet, 1954.

Stone, John A. Sophocles and Racine. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1964.

Tanquerey, E. J. Le Jansénisme dans les tragédies de Racine. Revue des Cours et de Conferences, Paris: Boivin et Cie, 1937-38.

Turnell, M. The Classical Moment. London: Hamilton, 1947.

Vinaver, Eugène. Racine et la poesie tragique. Paris:

Nizet, 1951.

Weinberg, B. The Art of Jean Racine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Whitman, C. Sophocles. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Articles:

Butler, P. F. "La Tragédie de Bérénice", French Studies (juillet 1949).

Cousin, J. "Phèdre n'est point Janséniste", Revue d'Histoire Litteraire de la France, XXXVIII (1932).

Lebègue, R. "Rotrou, dramaturge baroque", Revue d'Histoire Litteraire de la France (Oct.-Dec. 1950).