COURTLY LOVE IN THREE PLAYS OF JEAN RACINE

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF COURTLY LOVE IN THREE PLAYS OF JEAN RACINE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

During the years of my university study I have encountered the works of many great literary figures. Few, however, have moved me so deeply as the tragedies of the great French dramatist, Jean Racine. During my study of the Racinian characters I have become increasingly aware of the juxtaposition, in Racine's plays, of a tender, almost perfect love and a violent brutal passion. It is out of a desire to know Racine and his poetry better and, perhaps, to offer a possible explanation of the two types of love which I feel exist in Racine that this thesis has arisen.

In my study of Racine I have found that courtly love plays a great part in his tragedies. This system of social conduct, I found, not only aided me to further understand the love of the tender and gallant characters of Racine but also gave me a possible insight into the violent passions of some Racinian personages. As a result I would like to examine the theory and conventions of courtly love, to show their popularity in the seventeenth century and to examine their nature and function in three of the plays of Racine: Alexandre le Grand, Andromaque, Bérénice.

It is true that there are courtly traits in all of Racine's plays, but to attempt their study in the whole of Racinian theatre would be too ambitious an undertaking for a

master's thesis. I have, therefore, chosen to inspect these three plays for, I believe, they in particular exemplify the influence of courtly love and its conventions on Racine's tragedies.

Before beginning the thesis proper, I would like to indicate my appreciation of the helpful suggestions and profitable consultations of Mr. Charles Ernest Jose, Dr. Geoffrey Derek West, and Dr. Garrett Anthony Warner. And most important I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Arthur William Patrick, my thesis director, without whose patience and scholarly guidance this thesis would have been a more difficult undertaking.

CHAPTER I

COURTLY LOVE: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION

Courtly love is the flower of the twelfth century whose germination, blossoming, and lingering scents span almost two full centuries. Many scholars assert that the original basic principles of courtly love are to be found in the works of the Sulmonian poet, Ovid, but that these ideas were not developed or systematized fully until the twelfth century by such literary figures as Chrétien de Troyes and Andreas Capellanus. The concept of courtly love enjoyed such great popularity at this time that it became very much an integral part of man's amorous philosophy. The traces of its influence can still be witnessed in the relationships of men and women today, though one would hesitate to term such relationships courtly love. I propose, in this chapter, to examine the development of this rule of social conduct, to present a work which might be termed representative, to establish some of the conventions of courtly love, and to arrive at its definition.

The Italian poet, Ovid, as I have already indicated, presents the reader with many of the concepts and conventions of courtly love. The very titles of three of his works: The Art of Love (Ars Amatoria), The Cure of Love (Remedia Amoris), and The Loves (Amores) suggest a study of the ways

of becoming involved in love affairs and extricating oneself from them. In Ovid, one finds such basic themes as the servitude of the lover to the whims of the woman, the recourse to any action to please and win favour, the desirability of extra - conjugal affairs and the necessity of secrecy, the conceit of the lover as a soldier in the army of Love and hence the military imagery of love, and the conventions of paleness and loss of speech and of colour in the presence of the loved one. Many scholars contest the sincerity of Ovid, suggesting that he is providing men with a method "pour séduire les 'puellas' et les 'dominas'"[1] and thus contradicting the idealism found in courtly love. It is probable that the treatment of love in Ovid is intentionally cynical, and I do not suggest that love as portrayed by Ovid is precisely that twelfth century system of social conduct which Gaston Paris has called courtly love, but it is admitted that Ovid was widely read in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One may safely say that some of the early writers of romances of courtly love found many of the rules for their concept of love in Ovid.

Though Ovid was popular in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and his works do contain much courtly material, one cannot attribute courtly love and its conventions

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[1] F. B. Beardsmore, L'Idéal Courtois dans Trois Versions Françaises de la Légende de Tristan (McMaster University, 1963), p. 9.

entirely to a revitalized interest in his works. One may debate the importance of Ovid at great length, but it must be admitted that the political and social conditions of France at this time contributed much to making the Ovidian treatment of love more popular.

In the tenth century France can be said to be emerging from the Dark Ages and a period of turmoil dominated by civil wars: in short, from an era characterized by coarseness, crudeness, vulgarity, and brutality. When the Franks returned from the First Crusade at the end of the Eleventh Century, they introduced elegance and refinement to a society which was most happy to welcome them. The basic theories of love as presented by Ovid were injected with a new spirituality, sincerity and idealism. With the addition of these three Arabic characteristics one can easily conceive of courtly love as being ". . .la fusion heureuse de deux concepts de l'amour -- l'une d'origine latine et l'autre d'origine arabe"[2] and the function of courtly love as being to civilize and to purify the passions.

The need for civility, virtue and commendable action was reinforced by the social and political position of the women in twelfth century European society. For if she was the "maîtresse" of the suitor or lover in literature, she

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[2]Ibid., p. 12.

was more so in reality. The literature of the twelfth century drew much from the works of Ovid, but all of its conventions and rules are firmly entrenched in the social and political realities of the age.

A castle of the twelfth century was, as C. S. Lewis terms it, "a little island of comparative leisure and luxury".[3] The castle was populated by many men: lesser nobles, landless knights, squires, pages, and poets, all of whom paid homage to the lady of the castle and her damsels. Very often in the Middle Ages love played no role in a marriage. A marriage was made usually for political, social, or financial advantage and when the advantage was terminated so was the marriage. As a result it was not uncommon to find an unhappy woman married to a powerful feudal lord and, since marriage was not deemed particularly sacred, extra-conjugal relationships were not infrequent. The men of the castle owed the lady feudal allegiance and service, but, in view of the circumstances, what better way to seek advancement than to please and win the favour of the lady by praise of her beauty, by avowals of love, and by services in her name. What results from these relationships is the feudalization of love wherein the lover is refined, submissive and obedient to the will of the lady. All noble services, heroic actions, and virtues are said to spring

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[3]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 12.

from love since the lover endeavours to prove himself worthy of his mistress -- hence the conception that love ennobles.

This entire system of social, amorous conduct was given a voice by the rise of the troubadours. The troubadours originally were the messengers of feudal lords who spoke well, and with the passing of time, they became a band of wandering poets. These poets would travel from castle to castle seeking protection and favours by appealing in a "courtly" manner to the lady of the castle. In their poetry the troubadours used many of the Ovidian conceits already mentioned and they added others. It was common to speak of love as an irresistible force which compels the lover to do vassalage to the will of his lady, or to describe love as a flame, or to narrate how passion plunges the lover into endless contradictions, foolishness and madness. The themes of Ovid and those added by the troubadours were imitated repeatedly by successive troubadours until a large body of convention became connected with the conception of courtly love.

Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie of Champagne were examples of women who not only adhered to the code of courtly love but supported it actively. Eleanor introduced the ideas of courtly love, which up to this time were current predominantly in the south of France, to the North when she married Prince Louis, the future Louis VII

of France. In 1152, after her divorce from Prince Louis, she married Prince Henry, the future Henry II of England, and when the King made Eleanor's son, Duke of Aquitaine, his mother accompanied him to this region of France. She set up court at Poitiers, attracting men of refinement and letters and under her supervision the principles of courtly love were practised. Her daughter, the countess Marie, who inherited her mother's interest, helped Eleanor in establishing her court. When Marie's husband, Count Henry died, Marie, during the minority of her sons, imitated her mother's example by setting up a court at Troyes at which the courtly code of love reigned.

It is at the court of Marie that we find, near the end of the twelfth century, "the most pre-eminent poetic representative of chivalry",[4] Chrétien de Troyes. It is most certain that he was attending the court of Marie at the time that he wrote Roman de la Charrette (1180) for in his introduction he tells us that "my lady of Champagne" furnished him with the material (matière) and treatment (sens) of the work. The Charrette, prepared under the guidance of the Countess Marie, a great authority on

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[4]F. L. Mott, The System of Courtly Love (New York: Haskell House, 1965), p. 24.

courtly love,[5] provides us with the most complete literary example of the code of social conduct and for this reason we intend for our purposes to make of it a representative study.

The Charrette is the story of the perfect courtly lovers, Lancelot, a knight of King Arthur, and Guenevere, the Queen of Arthur. Meleagant, the son of the King of Gorre, bursts into the court of Arthur, promising to release his prisoners if a knight accompanied by the Queen, should defeat him in battle. The knight, of course, is defeated and Meleagant carries off his prize to the land of Gorre pursued by Arthur's knights Lancelot and Gawain.

When Lancelot's horse is killed in battle, a dwarf who is driving a cart offers him transportation and promises him news of the Queen. Lancelot hesitates to accept the offer of the dwarf since carts were used in those days as pillories to parade criminals and it would be a shameful means of transportation for a knight. But love forces him to ignore his better judgement and he accepts the dwarf's offer. Gawain, on the other hand, thought it foolish and dishonourable to exchange a horse for a cart.

There follows a long period of wandering during

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[5] In the 7th chapter of Book II of Andreas Capellanus' The Art of Courtly Love, one finds various decisions of the Countess Marie in love cases.

which Lancelot proves himself most "courteous" in the treatment of women and superior to all the dangers and opposition he encounters. On one occasion Lancelot is so intent in his meditation on the lady of his heart that, though a knight has warned him three times not to approach a ford, Lancelot is not aware of his presence until he has been thrown from his horse by the knight. Such is the trance-like power of love. Lancelot subsequently defeats the knight. On another occasion Lancelot, after having lifted a tombstone, which only the liberator of the captives of the land can accomplish, frees the Logres' captives. After many other exploits of valour, Lancelot learns of the Sword Bridge to Gorre and crosses it with great difficulty.

Once in this enchanted land, Lancelot meets Bademaguz, the King of Gorre, who recognizes Lancelot as the most valorous and honourable knight in the world. He arranges a battle with Meleagant, his son. Lancelot engages the prince in battle and, with gaze fixed on Guenevere, defeats him. When the Queen wishes a halt to be put to the fighting, Lancelot "obeissanz" and "amis antiers" withdraws from battle though Meleagant may kill him.

Lancelot, finally, after much toil and danger, has saved the queen, has proved himself worthy, and now, he expects that she will acknowledge him. But, no! she refuses to speak to him, feigns anger and Lancelot, "fin amant" that he is, submissively, unquestioningly departs.

It is only when rumours abound that the other is dead, that the lovers become reconciled, for both mourn, lose their power of speech, and desire death. On the return of Lancelot to Bademaguz' castle, the Queen forgives Lancelot his hesitation to mount the cart and recognizing his worth, grants him favours that night.

Lancelot confirms his perfection as a courtly lover on two final occasions in the story. During the three-day tournament, when ordered by Guenevere to "jouez au noauz" (to play the coward) he complies at the expense of his honour and only when ordered by his lady to do his best does he defeat all the contestants and win the hearts of all the ladies. The poem terminates with Lancelot's final victory over Meleagant and the Queen grants him her love.

The story of Lancelot and Guenevere most clearly and most completely embodies the whole of the principles of courtly love. Lancelot first and foremost is described as a courtly, refined knight. His language is always polite, proper and prudent; his actions are always honourable and valiant. Bademaguz, the King of Gorre, contrasts Lancelot with his son, acknowledging the Arthurian knight to be the most honourable and most valiant in the world. As a perfect knight he adheres most strictly to the law of obedience in love: "The man who is a perfect lover is always obedient and

quickly and gladly does his mistress' pleasure".[6] Lancelot's actions repeatedly exemplify this type of obedience even if it be at the expense of his life or honour. In his battle with Meleagant, when ordered by the Queen to stop fighting, he does so though Meleagant may do him great harm. But even more important are the assaults on his honour, the most cherished virtue of the courtly knight, by his obedience to love. In the three-day tournament, Lancelot, having been ordered to "jouez au oauz", complies in spite of the shame and disgrace involved.

The "cart" incident furnishes the reader with a deeper insight into the love of Lancelot. When the knight is offered transportation and news of the Queen, if he should climb into the cart, common sense and reason advise him to do nothing which will bring him shame and disgrace. ". . .but love is enclosed within his heart, bidding him and urging him to mount at once upon the cart. So he jumps in, since love will have it so, feeling no concern about the shame, since he is prompted by love's commands."[7] When Gawain is invited into the cart he refuses contemptuously. As a result of this incident one may conclude that Lancelot is, in a very real sense, the captive of love -- an irrepressible force which compels him to undertake all,

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[6]Chrétien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances, trans. W. W. Comfort (New York: Dutton, 1968), p. 318.

[7]Ibid., p. 274.

even if it should entail disgrace and shame and even if his better judgement counsels him to refrain from a certain action. Lancelot's helplessness before the dictates of love is effectively contrasted by the refusal of Gawain, who is not seized by love, to enter the cart. This love so occupies and controls the heart and mind of Lancelot that, in another incident, he is struck from his horse by a knight, while in a trance-like meditation upon his lady. This love not only enslaves but also dominates the faculties of the lover.

Lancelot's love is also a jealous one. "Jealousy does not arise only from the anxiety that another is or may be more highly favoured by the loved one, but also from the fear that one's love will not be returned, whether there are rivals or not. In this sense Lancelot is indeed jealous."[8] For this reason Lancelot constantly strives to prove his valour and merit and when he is denied by Guenevere and hears of her death, his suffering is immense. So great is the passion of the courtly lover that when he is refused any hope of winning favour he is plunged into the depths of despair, has contradictory emotions and desires, very often goes insane, or seeks escape in death. Both Guenevere and Lancelot on hearing the rumour of the

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[8]F. D. Kelly, Sens and Conjointure in the Chevalier de la Charrette (Paris: Mouton and Company, 1966), p. 47.

other's death refuse sustenance, lose the powers of speech, and desire death. Yvain, the courtly hero of Chrétien's subsequent romance, goes insane when refused the love of Landine and lives in a forest like a wild man.

Just as Lancelot presents the picture of the perfect courtly lover, so too is Guenevere the picture of the perfect courtly "maîtresse". Her role is constantly to put the refinement, valour, and obedience of Lancelot to the test. When he has proved himself she must yield her heart to him. Throughout the romance Guenevere,

> ". . .tout en l'aimant sincèrement, se montre avec lui capricieuse, souvent injuste, hautaine, dédaigneuse; elle lui fait sentir à chaque moment qu'il peut la perdre et qu'à la moindre faute contre le code de l'amour il la perdra.9

It is with this threat that Guenevere urges Lancelot to accomplish feats of prowess and to display excellence of character. It is for her that Lancelot undertakes the arduous and dangerous task of her liberation, for her the courtesies shown to damsels, for her the defeat of many knights, for her the disgrace of the cart and the cowardice at the tournament, and for her all his nobility of character and action. It is only when Lancelot has displayed this excellence that Guenevere yields herself to him.

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[9]Gasto Paris, quoted in F. L. Mott, The System of Courtly Love (New York: Haskell House, 1965), pp. 45-46.

The Charrette, then, is the complete exposition of courtly conduct between the "fin amant" and his lady. This type of love, which is all but conventionalized by the time of Chrétien de Troyes, is to be found in most of the Arthurian romances. It is, therefore, most fitting that Andreas Capellanus, who codifies the system of courtly love in his book, De Arte Honesti Amandi, has his young British knight carry off the rules of courtly love, which are to be made known to all lovers, from the Court of King Arthur.[10]

Little is known about Andreas Capellanus. It is established that he was a fellow courtier of Chrétien de Troyes in the court of Countess Marie of Champagne. His book, De Arte Honesti Amandi was written between 1184 and 1186, that is, after Chrétien's Charrette, and as a result one can be certain that he is familiar with all the conventions of courtly love as portrayed in the Charrette. John Jan Parry, the translator of Andreas, assures us that the Countess Marie and her associates most certainly had a hand in Andreas' exposition of courtly love, thus guaranteeing that every facet of the delicate system is revealed.[11] In fact, Neilson asserts that "the book of

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[10]Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 177-186.

[11]Ibid., p. 19.

Andreas gives us the theory of that system the practice of which is concretely presented in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes".[12]

Andreas discloses from the outset of his De Arte Honesti Amandi that his purpose is to teach his friend Walter the ways of love. In the course of this instruction Andreas examines what love is, its effect on men, the means of acquiring the love of women, the role women play, various problems in love, how to extricate oneself from an affair, the counsels of knowledgeable authorities, and finally, he outlines the rules of love. It is not our intention to examine the entire doctrine of courtly love as presented by Andreas, for such a study would prove too extensive for our purposes, but only to give a brief presentation of courtly love and its theory as systematized by Andreas.

Andreas begins his treatise on love with its definition: "Love, he says, is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the

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[12]W. A. Neilson, The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love (Boston: Harvard University, 1899), p. 17.

other's embrace".[13] The author suggests that a lover is struck by the beauty or excellence of a woman which causes desire to be born within him. At this moment the lover, in effect, becomes the captive of Love, for Andreas explains: "Love gets its name (Amor) from the word for hook (amus), which means to 'capture' or 'to be captured' for he who is in love is captured in the chain of desire and wishes to capture someone else with his hook".[14]

Love for the courtly lover is suffering in a very real sense. Until he feels his love is reciprocated he is plagued by the anxiety of failure. He is conscious of weakness whether it resides in his beauty, his suitability, or his merit. This type of anxiety can lead to jealousy, frustration, despair, and if hope of success is completely taken away, to contradictory emotions and desires, to insanity, and even to the death wish.

Love, as we have already agreed, is an "inborn" suffering in that the sight of or meditation upon a woman of excellence inspires a man with the flame of love. This flame causes a "desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace" for "he begins to plan how he might find favour with her . . .".[15] The best way to please

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[13]Capellanus, Courtly Love, p. 29.

[14]Ibid., p. 31..

[15]Ibid., p. 29.

a woman, according to the courtly doctrine, is to display excellence in character and in action. From this concept arises the ennobling quality of love. Such a lover is deemed to merit the love of his lady.

Unlike the man, the woman is given considerable freedom in her love. A lady is allowed to witness the merits of a suitor and then, if he proves himself worthy, she may yield her heart. From this love-merit relationship the woman derives her supremacy over the submissive lover. In most of the examples of conversation between lovers and their ladies, the lovers appeal for the love of their ladies on the grounds of nobility of birth, or of manner and deed.[16] If a woman is not convinced of the virtue of a suitor she may give him a probationary period during which she demands "Do good deeds before you seek the reward of good deeds".[17] However, it was considered a grave sin for a woman to refuse her love to a man who had merited it. When a worthy lover presents himself, the lady is subject to the same emotions as the lover.

Andreas terminates his first two books which deal with the definition of love and manners of acquiring it, with the rules of love. He tells the tale of a young

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[16] Ibid., Chapter VI, p. 33-141.

[17] Ibid., p. 87.

Briton, who, to prove his merit to his lady, endeavoured to bring back the victorious hawk of King Arthur's court. After overcoming various obstacles the youth manages to seize the hawk from his golden perch. In so doing he notices that attached to the perch by a golden chain is a parchment on which are written the rules of love. These rules in general advise virtue, excellence in character and nobility of action. There follow several rules which confirm our ideas:

> Being obedient in all things to the commandments of ladies, thou shalt ever strive to ally thyself to the service of love.
>
> Thou shalt be in all things polite and courteous.18
>
> He who is not jealous cannot love.
>
> Good character alone makes any man worthy of love.
>
> A man in love is always apprehensive.
>
> Every act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved.
>
> A true lover is constantly and without intermission possessed by the thought of his beloved.19

To sum up, then, in our study of courtly love we

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[18]The first two rules are to be found in an earlier presentation (Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, p. 81-82) but since their ideas are embodied in this list, I have added them here for convenience.

[19]Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, p. 184-186.

have found that many of the basic principles of what later became known as courtly love exist in the works of Ovid. These concepts, though present in previous literature, did not gain widespread popularity until the twelfth century. They became particularly predominant in France because of the social and political situation at the time. The main theme of this social conduct is the submission and devotion of the lover to his lady. The lover must be a man of refined character and of noble deeds who upon the sight of the excellence of a certain lady is seized by an irrepressible amorous force which compels him to amorous vassalage. The lover is completely preoccupied with this love and is tormented by fear of failure. A refusal of love can cause various contradictory impulses, loss of reason, and the death wish. The lady of the lover's heart constantly forces the lover to prove his merit and when he has sufficiently proved himself she yields her heart to him.

In the next chapter there is to be an examination of the survival of this system of social conduct in the seventeenth century and its influence on the works of Racine in particular.

CHAPTER II

COURTLY LOVE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AND IN RACINE

It is agreed by many critics and scholars that courtly love and its conventions formed a definite current of thought extending from the middle ages to the seventeenth century.[1] During the intervening centuries the theories of courtly love were slightly altered, confirmed, and in fact, revitalized by the Renaissance and by interest in the works of Plato and Plutarch.[2] The basic theory of the woman as "une maîtresse" who was to be feted by absolute obedience, exemplary character and heroic action was largely preserved by the aristocracy. The aristocrats deemed themselves a 'league of the blooded'. Each successive generation of the nobility was born into a system where honour and duty were cherished. Among the traditional characteristics of their conduct were the sacredness of an oath, a fraternal loyalty and honour in battle, chivalrous action, and the exaltation of and devotion to the lady loved. In this way the basic feudal traits survived the centuries with the result that ". . .dans la psychologie

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[1]Réné Bray, La Préciosité et Les Précieux (Paris: Albin Michel, 1948), p. 389.

[2]Paul Bénichou, Les Morales du Grand Siècle (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1948), p. 16.

des gentilshommes du XVII^{e} siècle persistent de vieilles idées d'héroïsme et de bravade, de magnanimité, de dévouement et d'amour idéal".[3] In effect the theories of social conduct which were still popular in the seventeenth century, particularly that of the lover as "serviteur" and the woman as "une maîtresse exigeante et dominatrice" can be traced back, as Butler agrees, to such twelfth century writers as Chrétien de Troyes.[4]

These courtly theories of social, amorous conduct were given a revitalized enthusiasm by the political and social conditions of the early seventeenth century. Once again, as in the twelfth century, France was emerging from a period of barbarity. The latter half of Sixteenth Century France was marred by the protracted religious wars between the Catholics and the Huguenots. During this turmoil the order, idealism, and refinement of courtly love were naturally replaced by disorder, destruction and instinct. It is needless to say that in war, during which time might alone rules, a woman becomes a helpless victim. A lady's power over men, which resides in the voluntary devotion and servitude of the lover, is the victim. The former "maîtresse" was subjected to every crudity and barbarity. Nor was courtly refinement restored

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[3] Ibid., p. 316.

[4] P. Butler, Classicisme et Baroque dans L'Oeuvre de Racine (Paris: Librarie Nizet, 1959), p. 61.

immediately after the war. Henry IV was not at all familiar with the previous system of social conduct. He did not appreciate the finesse of the court since he was accustomed to war camps. He preferred the coarser enjoyments of life: hunting, gambling, racing, physical exercise - all coloured with a hearty vulgarity. Literature, which is the mirror of the tastes and the conditions of a period, reflected this crudity by depicting debauchery, rape, incest, and various scandals involving even Louis XIII, himself.

It was not until Louis XIII handed over his authority to Cardinal Armand Richelieu in 1624 that one may say that peace, civility, and morality began to be restored. Under his tight rule society began to reorganize and to recivilize itself. But women throughout this period longed nostalgically for the idealistic adoration of courtly love. One such woman was la Marquise de Rambouillet. In 1608 she excused herself from court on the grounds of poor health and withdrew to her hôtel. She was disgusted by the vulgarity of the courts of Henry IV and of Louis XIII and she hoped, by receiving guests in her hôtel, to restore refinement to the life of the French aristocracy. In effect, she created, in her home, a court to her own taste, at which she and her lady companions presided. Her court and her superiority at

this court in many ways resembled the position of the noblewomen who dwelt in the twelfth century castles. Both were enclaves of luxury and refinement wherein the amorous vassalage of the lover to the "maîtresse" was practised. The nature of this love, though more idealized, closely resembled the twelfth century concept of love. The example of Mme de Rambouillet was followed by many women and in this way the courtly theories of social, amorous conduct of the middle ages were taken up with renewed enthusiasm and revitalized idealism. As a result one may conclude that the seventeenth century salon, in a very real sense, became "le vrai successeur des anciennes sociétés aristocratiques groupées autour d'une Eléonore d'Aquitaine".[5]

In the aristocratic salon great emphasis was placed on distinction of dress, language, manners, morals, and sentiment. But the topic which was reviewed most frequently was that of love. The concept of love held by these women was very similar to that of the twelfth century. The romance, L'Astrée, which was extremely popular in the first half of the seventeenth century and which perhaps best represents the precious and gallant literature espoused by the women of the salon, gives us a precise indication of the theory of love which was most

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[5]Bray, La Préciosité et Les Précieux, p. 104.

popular at the time. One finds that L'Astrée "développe tous les aspects de la doctrine courtoise avec une richesse et une variété d'arguments et de situations incroyables".[6]

L'Astrée is the pastoral romance of Céladon and Astrée. Céladon, the lover of Astrée, is falsely accused of infidelity. Astrée, in reaction, banishes him from her presence. Céladon, though wrongly dismissed, departs and this rejection plunges him so deeply into despair that a nymph must save him from committing suicide. When a war breaks out, Astrée is taken prisoner and Céladon by heroic exploits, succeeds in freeing his lady. Astrée, however, still does not grant him pardon. It is not until he marvellously proves his innocence that he finally obtains the love of his lady.

In this story the concepts of early seventeenth century love are found to be very similar to those of the twelfth century courtly tradition. In fact, the story in many ways resembles that of the Charrette. Here too, we have the absolute submission of the lover to his lady; here too, the liberation of the lady by heroic deeds; here too, the utter despair and attempt at suicide by the lover when hope of success in love is removed; and here too, the yielding of the heart when the lady is assured of the

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[6]Bénichou, Les Morales du Grand Siècle, p. 36.

merit and excellence of her lover.

In the first half of the seventeenth century this system of love was very popular. As the seventeenth century progressed it became more and more idealized and artificial. Various personages, who were not particularly familiar with the theory of the system, imitated it and, to be sure that they were fashionable, exaggerated it. This was particularly true of the provincials who blindly aped whatever was fashionable in Paris and by their mistakes or exaggeration of the trend made it appear ridiculous. By the middle of the century there was a reaction to the extreme artificial mimicry of courtly love and a great body of satire appeared. Some of the more notable satirical works are Scarron's Epitre Chagrin (1652), Saint-Evremond's Le Cercle (1656), and Molière's Les Précieuses Ridicules (1659).

This satirical trend in literature shows that the concept of love had become too idealized, too artificial. The idealist trend in literature is usually balanced by the realist. Whenever one trend exceeds reasonable limits the other reacts against it. It is for this reason that in the latter half of the seventeenth century realism becomes more popular. In order to counteract the superficiality of the idealism of courtly love the realists advocate a return to simplicity and to the natural

and plausible in love poetry. Racine, as a mirror of his times and as a very great writer, is able to represent in the portrayal of love in his tragedies both the idealistic and the realistic aspects of courtly love. The theories of courtly love which we have considered in the twelfth century works of Andreas Capellanus and of Chrétien de Troyes, though they are perhaps more idealistic and marvellous in the seventeenth century, are, as we have seen, very active, and indeed, flourishing in such popular works as L'Astrée. Racine makes a faithful representation of this type of love in most of his tragedies. But perhaps it is out of sympathy with the growing trend of realism that the great dramatist presents, in the same tragedies, characters whose love is more natural, more human, and often very violent. As a result, one comes to the conclusion that love in Racine is of a dual and conflicting nature, yet it can, at least in some of its aspects, be seen to spring from the twelfth century doctrine of courtly love.

That there exist in Racine two types of love: the "tendre" which is no more than the idealisation of the twelfth century courtly love code, and the "passion violente", is accepted by critics on all sides. Most notably Bénichou, who emphasizes the introduction of brutality and violence into Racinian passion concedes as

well that there is another, more refined and courtly side to passion in the tragedies of Racine:

> . . .Racine n'a pas toujours fait régner la brutalité de la nature sur les ruines du sublime; en bien des cas il s'est contenté d'adoucir, d'apprivoiser la gloire; il a humanisé l'héroïsme, affiné l'orgueil, attendri le bel amour. Partout où s'exprime chez lui un sentiment touchant, partout où se fait jour un caractère sympathique, partout où ne parle pas seulement la nature violente et obscure, c'est-à-dire dans une part très considérable de son oeuvre règne une noblesse élégante qui peut le caractériser tout autant que la violence de certaines peintures.7

Bénichou continues by pointing out that in the plays, Andromaque and Bérénice, there exists certain characters who uphold the old traditions of courtly love, which, for him, are best embodied in Alexandre.

But it is of primary importance that our dramatist himself acknowledges the duality of passion in his work. In his preface to Andromaque Racine responds to various critics who object to Pyrrhus' violence and his lack of voluntary submission to Andromaque, his "maîtresse". Racine argues that Pyrrhus was of a naturally violent nature and that ". . .tous les héros ne sont pas faits pour être des Céladons".[8] Céladon of L'Astrée, for Racine, clearly embodies the type of character who adheres

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[7] Ibid., p. 146.

[8] J. Racine, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil, 1962), p. 104.

fervently to the code of courtly love and by stating that not all of his characters are made to be such perfect lovers Racine indicates that there indeed is evidence in his plays of two types of love: the tender and the violent, both of whose basic principles, we would like to establish, reside in the courtly theory of the twelfth century. Let us consider these two trends in Racine.

Let us examine first the concept of love of those characters who can be said to be ". . .faits pour être des Céladons". The nature of their love bears a strong resemblance to that depicted in Honoré d'Urfé's L'Astrée which, in turn, we have seen, is little changed from the theory of social conduct presented in the twelfth century writers, Andreas Capellanus and Chrétien de Troyes. The lover is of the utmost refinement in character and in action and when struck by the excellence of the loved one he is made the captive of love. The lover shows complete obedience to the dictates of love, even if it should be at the expense of his happiness or his life. He is forced to perform amorous vassalage to his omnipotent lady as Hubert suggests:

> Les notions d'engagement et d'esclavage ne prennent tout leur sens que dans l'amour. Racine, fidèle aux conventions précieuses, fait de l'amant un captif et de la maîtresse un tyran dont les charmes victorieux ressemblent

à des armes meurtrières.[9]

In keeping with the retention of this particular concept one finds in Racine much of the military-love vocabulary which permeated the love poetry of the twelfth century: "conquête, blessure, triomphe, brûler, feu, flamme, victoire, violence, trahir, proie, péril". This type of idealized love (particularly in the three plays with which we shall be dealing) always attempts to show the Racinian hero or heroine the path towards perfection. It is usually the characteristic of the Racinian heroine to love perfection, glory, and virtue. For this reason she urges, no, she demands that a suitor display nobility in his character and in his actions and it is only when she has observed ample proof of the excellence of the suitor that she yields her heart. The perfect tender and gallant lovers of this type are characterized by superiority of virtue and by awareness. They realize that if they adhere to the rules of the courtly doctrine they will find success and happiness in love. For this reason, love of this type usually does not lead to the catastrophe of a tragedy. (Bérénice is an exception with which we shall deal later).

> With the clear spirits whose awareness invariably rises to the level of their fate - Andromaque, Bérénice, Titus - are contrasted those, less

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[9]J. D. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse Racinienne (Paris: Librarie Nizet, 1950), p. 67-68.

> transparent, whom anger, despair or passion lead astray - Hermione, Oreste....10

It is these latter characters, who because of their irrepressible, blinding, and often violent passions, most often cause the catastrophe of Racine's plays.

In the main, these characters appreciate and recognize the courtly code of social conduct in much the same way as the "tendre" characters. They too are made the captives of love. The men strive most desperately to be pleasing to their "maîtresse" whose excellence of beauty and character has inspired love in the heroes' hearts. The women, on the other hand, are compelled to recognize nobility of character and of action and to love accordingly. These personages, when stricken by love, are wholly preoccupied by it as we have seen that Lancelot was in the Charrette. In effect one finds that the scale of values and the maxims of love operative in these characters are very similar to those found in the twelfth century romances. The theory or system of love has not changed. Racine's originality lies in the very human, intense effects of this love on certain characters.

As Bénichou indicates, "Racine est le premier qui ait élaboré vraiment dans un sens plus naturel et plus moderne l'héritage romanesque".[11] Love, though springing from the

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[10] E. Vinaver, Racine and Poetic Tragedy, trans. P. Mansell Jones (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1957), p. 85.

[11] Bénichou, Les Morales du Grand Siècle, p. 147.

same fountains and operating under the same conditions as in the twelfth century, produces the most intensely human, brutal, and violent effects in the Racinian character. Love has become a painfully physical imperious demand for possession which, when refused, leads very often to a violent and tragic end. It cannot be determined with any certainty how this more realistic and more natural portrayal of the passions has arisen. Perhaps Racine is recognizing the growing realist trend of the latter half of the seventeenth century, or giving vent to a personal interest in excessive passion which he displayed while still at Uzès,[12] or merely drawing the character of his personages from antiquity as he suggests he has done with Pyrrhus in his preface to Andromaque.[13] At any rate one must readily admit that while the love of characters of this type functions, for the most part, in agreement with the code of courtly love, Racine has intensified and naturalized the portrayal of love. Let us examine its operation.

Those characters, whose love is of a violent, passionate nature, follow closely, as we have above indicated, the basic principles of courtly love. The difficulty for this type of character arises from his

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[12]G. Brereton, Jean Racine (Toronto: Cassel & Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 42.

[13]J. Racine, Racine, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 104.

consciousness of inferiority. The character is aware of what is usually a moral, heroic deficiency which prevents him from winning or meriting the heart of the one loved. Such an awareness, as we have seen in our study of Andreas' treatise on love, creates an anxiety of failure in the courtly lover. This anxiety or suffering is accentuated in the Racinian character by the portrayal of a hero who is infinitely superior and holds captive the heart of the lady beloved. The resultant suffering and jealousy of the inferior hero, then, drives him to desperate ends and he attempts to "capture" the lover by any means whatsoever. Lucidity is lost and very often the courtly doctrine is violated. For example in many plays the desperate hero attempts possession or capture of the woman loved by physical means rather than by means of a noble character and worthy action. In the works of Andreas and Chrétien de Troyes we saw that when a courtly lover is denied any hope of success in love he is plunged into absolute despair, there is a loss of reason, contradictory emotions and desires, and even a death wish. But, in the Racinian character the nature of the love described is much more intense, more human, more turbulent and, as a result, failure in love brings about a more violent end. Total frustration in Racine causes an oscillation between love and hate, a loss of reason, and very often a destructive violent passion. The

catastrophe of a play involves, for these characters, insanity, suicide, or murder.

This type of violent passion, then, can be seen as "la voie la plus sûre pour précipiter le malheur, comme le meilleur agent des catastrophes".[14] The tragic heroes, as described by Racine, are "ni tout à fait bons, ni tout à fait méchants" and they must have "une bonté médiocre, c'est-à-dire une vertu capable de faiblesse, et qu'ils tombent dans le malheur par quelque faute".[15] In this sense, then, the violent, destructive passion which springs from the twelfth century courtly love conception of intense suffering upon failure in love can be considered the "faute" of many of Racine's tragic heroes.

In our opinion courtly love, which, as we have seen, was still a very popular doctrine in the seventeenth century, permeates many of the love themes found in Racine's tragedies. It is most explicitly at work in the "tendre" and "galant" characters, but can be seen to have a very real and active part in the portrayal of the "passion violente" wherein lies much of Racine's originality. In the following chapters I would like to examine the role of courtly love, as it has been described in our first two

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[14]P. Moreau, Racine, L'Homme et L'Oeuvre (Paris: Boiven et Cie, 1943), p. 125.

[15]J. Racine, Racine, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 104.

chapters, in the three plays: Alexandre le Grand, Andromaque, and Bérénice.

CHAPTER III

ALEXANDRE LE GRAND

Alexandre le Grand was first presented on December fourth, 1665, by the troupe of Molière at the Palais-Royal. The play was received with great enthusiasm and achieved an immediate success. A possible explanation for this success is that the play's presentation of the social conduct of the courts of ancient times closely resembles that of Racine's own day. The concept of courtly love, as we have established in the previous chapter, was still very popular in the seventeenth century and a work which depicted that type of love was bound to be popular as well. Réné Jasinski, by drawing political and amorous parallels, asserts quite convincingly that Alexandre, the hero of the play, is meant to suggest Louis XIV.[1] Racine himself, in his dedication of the play to the king, makes a strong link between Alexandre and Louis. If Alexandre, then, is a conscious representation of the king, one may safely conclude that the other characters and particularly their social conduct resemble the characters and social conduct of Louis' court. Racine's audience was primarily made up of the social elite: men of letters, nobility, members of the royal court, and this audience may well have found Alexandre, as Auguste Bailly suggests, to

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[1] R. Jasinski, Vers le Vrai Racine, p. 102-121.

be a reflection of themselves:

> c'était devant des membres de cette élite que Racine en avait donné la lecture. C'étaient eux qui avaient créé autour d'elle cette atmosphère d'attente et d'admiration: c'étaient une image d'eux-mêmes, de leur vie, de leurs pensées, qu'ils y retrouvaient dans la généreuse rivalité d'Alexandre et de Porus, dans la fierté d'Axiane, dans l'amour de Cléofile.2

Racine, by portraying the manners and mores of his audience, which closely resembled those of the twelfth century, assured the play's success. At any rate one must admit the great success of Alexandre and that the twelfth-century code of courtly love can be seen to play an important role in the play. Let us examine Alexandre le Grand.

The central character of Alexandre le Grand is Alexandre himself, for though he does not appear until near the end of Act III, his presence is felt throughout. It is against this "foudre", this "torrent" that all resistance is prepared. Alexandre longs to push through India and to reach the shores of the Pacific Ocean as the "vainqueur du monde". The play begins with Alexandre's forces poised to strike the Indian defences led by the monarchs Taxile, Porus, and Axiane. They hesitate however, to do so. Cléofile, a young Indian princess, who was once the captive of Alexandre, has captured the hero's heart. She is sister to Taxile and fearing that harm may come to her brother she is against the

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[2]A. Bailly, Racine (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1949), p. 92-93.

war. Though Alexandre thirsts for military glory, he offers peace to the Indian monarchs in deference to the wishes of his mistress.

The question of surrender is little debated by the Indian monarchs. Taxile, a weak character who is characterized by his "mollesse", seeks at every opportunity to avoid a confrontation with Alexandre though Axiane, the Indian queen he loves, urges him to engage in honourable battle. On the other hand Axiane and Porus present a resolute and united front of proud opposition to Alexandre. Axiane proclaims that she loves glory above all else and that she can only look with favour upon the "vainqueur d'Alexandre". Porus, a valiant warrior whose reputation almost equals that of Alexandre, is inspired by his love for Axiane all the more with a firm and proud resistance to Alexandre and he eagerly awaits the coming conflict in which he hopes to prove his merit and thus win the love of Axiane. These two lovers, Taxile and Porus, and, indeed Alexandre himself admit themselves to be captives of love. They are directed by their love towards glory and the fulfillment of the courtly code and each, in varying degrees, obeys and fulfills the dictates of love.

Whenever war or surrender is considered Taxile is always ready to compromise, to concede using honour, prudence and political expediency as his motives. Porus,

however, constantly presents himself as the unshakeable defender against Alexandre. When Éphestion, the messenger of Alexandre, offers peace to Taxile and Porus, Taxile is quick to accept while Porus, shocked at the treachery of Taxile, unconditionally refuses. Axiane is incapable of persuading her cowardly suitor to take up arms and to her disgust and outrage she is imprisoned by Taxile in his camp during the battle. The captive Axiane reproaches him for the shameful tranquility of his camp while the rest of India is engaged in the furious defence of her country and honour. When Axiane learns of Porus' heroic efforts and of his defeat she declares her love for him, though she had refused to do so before the battle. Axiane holds up Porus to Taxile as an example of a valorous, gallant, and worthy lover.

It is only at this point that Alexandre appears on the stage. The young victor demonstrates his clemency by sparing Porus and offering to restore the crowns to the respective Indian monarchs. In his interview with Cléofile he reveals that when he first saw her, his thirst for "renommée", became love-inspired. Cléofile yields her heart to the Macedonian King's "éclat des vertus" on the condition that he guarantee her brother's happiness with Axiane. It is with this question that Alexandre preoccupies himself in the subsequent scene with the proud Indian queen.

Axiane, when presented with this possibility, disdainfully refuses for she considers Taxile a coward, a traitor and infinitely inferior to Porus who, though defeated and possibly dead, is "couvert de gloire". When Axiane meets Taxile she derides him, compares him most unfavourably to Porus, and tells him that he can only exonerate himself by emulating Porus. When threats prove futile, Taxile realizes that, if he is to please Axiane, he has no recourse but to do battle. Having just resolved to confront Alexandre, Taxile learns that Porus is still alive. Despairing of any success with Axiane while the superior Porus lives, he rushes to confront him and to die at his hand.

In the final scene of the play Porus and Axiane still refuse to acknowledge the superiority of Alexandre. Porus in particular, though twice defeated by Alexandre, still menaces him and proudly demands that he be treated "en roi". It is only when Alexandre, in order to achieve a perfect victory, both material and moral, displays supreme magnanimity in sparing Porus and Axiane that the unflinching Indian monarchs recognize Alexandre's superiority. Alexandre then offers "ma vertu tout entière" for the love of Cléofile and the play ends with the promise of a "tombeau superbe" to commemorate Cléofile's grief at the loss of her brother:

> Saint-Evremond n'avait pas tort, qui disait que les moeurs d'Alexandre étaient celles des chevaliers errants. Les sentiments en jeu sont uniquement ceux que suscite l'ancien idéal

chevaleresque.[3]

This statement is particularly true of Racine's treatment of Alexandre and Porus. There two heroes, in their desire for glory and in their relationships with their respective "maîtresses" Cléofile and Axiane, conduct themselves in a way which bears close resemblance to the courtly ideals as exemplified in the works of Chrétien de Troyes and Andreas Capellanus. Both Alexandre and Porus display excellence and nobility of character. The noble traits common to both of these characters include generosity, magnanimity, pride, invincibility, a desire to accomplish great deeds, a capacity for love, fidelity, and obedience to the lady loved. They do amorous vassalage to their ladies and, aware of the need for heroic action to prove one's merit to the lady loved, they seek glory in the name of love. The battle in the play, then, is of primary importance to the heroes for it provides them with "l'occasion d'acquérir gloire et renommée et de se distinguer aux yeux des dames".[4] As a result one may say that the emotions, motives, ". . .et toutes les prouesses de Porus et d'Alexandre, ces héros sans peur et sans reproche, dépendent de l'amour et de l'honneur précieux"[5] which, as we saw in the previous chapter, closely

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[3]P. Butler, Classicisme et Baroque, p. 119.

[4]Ibid., p. 117.

[5]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 53.

resemble the twelfth-century concepts of courtly love. Let us examine the relationship between Alexandre and Porus and their respective ladies in this light.

The relationship between Alexandre and Cléofile embodies many of the principles of twelfth-century courtly love. We learn in lines 885-86, that Alexandre, prior to meeting Cléofile, was preoccupied purely with the quest for glory. But during the Persian campaign Alexandre laid eyes upon Cléofile. Love, which as Andreas Capellanus tells us is "derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex", seized the heart of Alexandre and made of Cléofile its "maîtresse". Alexandre became the captive of love and his heart came under the power of Cléofile:

> Mais, hélas, que vos yeux, ces aimables tyrans,
> Ont produit sur mon coeur des effets différents!
> Ce grand nom de vainqueur n'est plus qu'il souhaite;
> Il vient avec plaisir avouer sa défaite.
> Heureux, si votre coeur se laissant émouvoir,
> Vos beaux yeux, à leur tour avouaient leur pouvoir![6]

Ironically Cléofile, who was at that time the physical captive of Alexandre, became through her beauty the conqueror of her captor's heart. Once stricken by love, Alexandre was aware that it is not by physical force that one captures the heart of the lady loved. He freed Cléofile realizing

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[6]J. Racine, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil, 1962), 895-900. All quotations from the plays of Racine will be taken from this text.

that to win her love he must please her, he must display the excellence of his character and perform heroic exploits. It is with this in mind that he undertook to conquer "Tout ce qui l'empêchait de s'approcher de vous". (380)

The fact that Alexandre adheres closely to the dictates of courtly love is strongly reinforced by Éphestion, Alexandre's messenger, in his conversation with Cléofile. He indicates explicitly that Alexandre's desire for glory, the desire to prove himself a valiant conqueror of the world and consequently a worthy lover is inspired by his love for Cléofile. Love, he suggests, is the real motivating force of Alexandre's glorious ambitions:

> Ah! Si vous l'aviez vu brûlant d'impatience,
> Compter les tristes jours d'une si longue absence,
> Vous sauriez que, l'amour précipitant ses pas,
> Il ne cherchait que vous courant aux combats.
> (373-6)

Though Alexandre has accomplished great feats in his march to India and has amply proved his heroism, Éphestion reveals that the mighty Macedonian King is still a "timide vainqueur" before his "maîtresse" Cléofile. Indeed, he has submissively sent Éphestion to learn from Cléofile what her wishes are:

> Faut-il mettre à vos pieds le reste de la terre?
> Faut-il donner la paix? faut-il faire la guerre?
> Prononcez: Alexandre est tout prêt d'y courir?
> (357-59)

Éphestion further attests to the submissiveness of his master, later in the same scene when, on learing that Cléofile is against a battle between Macedonia and India because of her

feelings for her compatriots and her fear of endangering her brother Taxile, he reveals that "vaincu du pouvoir de vos charmes; / Il suspend aujourd'hui la terreur de ses armes; / Il présente la paix à des rois aveuglés" (409-11). When this offer of peace is refused by Porus and the bulk of the Indian forces, Alexandre quickly defeats them. After his victory Alexandre sends Taxile to prepare Cléofile to receive both his victory and his heart (827-8). This last victory, as Hubert agrees,[7] is the crowning and culmination of all of Alexandre's victories. It represents the sum of his heroic career. In offering this victory and his heart to Cléofile, he is symbolically offering all of his heroic merit and love to her. Cléofile, in keeping with the courtly doctrine acknowledges him as a worthy lover and yields her heart to him:

> Non, je ne prétends pas que ce coeur inflexible
> Garde seul contre vous le titre d'invincible:
> Je rends ce que je dois à l'éclat des vertus.
> (865-7)

In the final scene of the play Alexandre proves himself to be a perfect example of the courtly lover, much like Lancelot of the Charrette, for his nobility and excellence in action are equalled by his nobility and excellence of character or virtue. When Axiane and Porus confront their conqueror proudly, disdainfully, fearlessly,

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[7] J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 55-56.

Alexandre pardons them for he wants a perfect victory:

> Je ne laisserai point ma victoire imparfaite,
> . . .
> Régnez toujours, Porus: je vous rends vos états.
> Avec mon amitié recevez Axiane:
> A des liens si doux tous deux je vous condamne.
> Vivez, régnez tous deux;
> (1502-07)

"S'il pardonne, c'est afin de rendre sa victoire parfaite, de rendre plus brillante que jamais auparavant son image de conquérant magnanime."[8] Alexandre justifies his pardoning of Axiane and Porus to Cléofile by arguing that if he should take vengeance upon a defeated, valiant, and unyielding enemy he would stain his image of an honourable hero. Cléofile would then esteem him less and Porus would die triumphant:

> Mais vous-même pourriez prendre pour une offense
> La mort d'un ennemi qui n'est plus en défense:
> Il en triompherait; et bravant ma rigueur,
> Porus dans le tombeau descendrait en vainqueur.
> (1513-16)

However, when Alexandre spares his enemies, everyone and especially Porus, concedes him a complete victory:

> Je me rends; je vous cède une pleine victoire:
> Vos vertus je l'avoue, égalent votre gloire.
> Allez, seigneur, rangez l'univers sous vos lois;
> Il me verra moi-même appuyer vos exploits.
> Je vous suis; et je crois devoir tout entreprendre
> Pour lui donner un maître aussi grand qu'Alexandre.
> (1533-38)

Alexandre's victory is both material and moral: in battle

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[8]Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 62.

he has successfully overcome Porus and in virtue he has proved himself superior by sparing Porus and Axiane. At the end of the play he has proved the superiority of his glory and his virtue and he offers it all to Cléofile for her love (1517-18).

The twelfth-century concepts of heroic action and of the love-merit relationship are given even fuller treatment in the characters Axiane and Porus. Axiane is a proud, demanding "maîtresse". The sentiments she expresses and the demands she makes might well be those of a twelfth-century Eleanore of Aquitaine or a Marie of Champagne. Like them she examines carefully the merit of a suitor, demands proof of his worth, and expects amorous vassalage. For this reason she esteems glory above all else and she requires heroic action as proof of merit:

> Il faut, s'il est vrai que l'on m'aime,
> Aimer la gloire autant que je l'aime moi-même,
> Ne m'expliquer ses voeux que par mille beaux faits,
> . . .
> Il faut marcher sans crainte au milieu des alarmes
> Il faut combattre, vaincre, ou périr sous les armes.
> (1169-74)

A suitor's love for her must inevitably lead him to heroic action and to the path of glory.

The action of Porus is characterized by a clear lucidity. Much like a hero of an Arthurian romance, he realizes full well the requirements and attitudes of a courtly lover and accepts them. Early in the play Porus admits his love for Axiane and the power this love gives

her over him:

> Ah, madame, arrêtez, et connaissez ma flamme,
> Ordonnez de mes jours, disposez de mon âme:
> . . .
> . . . Parlez en souveraine
> Mon coeur met à vos pieds et sa gloire et sa haine.
> (321-2, 329-30)

As a result of this sort of lucidity Porus realizes that Axiane loves glory and that she will accept as a lover only a heroic defender against Alexandre. Aware of this Porus is prepared to do what is necessary to merit the love of Axiane - to engage in honourable battle against Alexandre. He hopes by his victory over Alexandre to attach glory so closely to his person that he will satisfy her desire for a glorious lover:

> Je connais mieux madame
> Le beau feu que la gloire allume dans votre âme:
> C'est vous, je m'en souviens, dont les puissants appas
> Excitaient tous nos rois, les traînaient aux combats;
> Et de qui la fierté, refusant de se rendre,
> Ne voulaient pour amant qu'un vainqueur d'Alexandre
> Il faut vaincre, et j'y cours, bien moins pour éviter
> Le titre de captif, que pour le mériter.
> Oui, madame, je vais dans l'ardeur qui m'entraîne,
> Victorieux ou mort, mériter votre chaîne;
> Et puisque mes soupirs s'expliquaient vainement
> A ce coeur que la gloire occupe seulement,
> Je m'en vais, par l'éclat qu'une victoire donne,
> Attacher de si près la gloire à ma personne,
> Que je pourrai peut-être amener votre coeur
> De l'amour de la gloire à l'amour du vainqueur.
> (641-56)

Because of this consciousness of what must be done to win Axiane, Porus never wavers in his quest for glory. Right from his initial appearance in the play he declares himself against Alexandre who for him is an aggressor, a

tyrant, offering not "amitié" but "une indigne paix" and "esclavage". Throughout the play, then Porus' objective is the attainment of glory. He readily admits that this thirst for glory, this desire to prove his merit in battle against Alexandre, is inspired by his love for Axiane:

> Hé bien! Je l'avouerai que ma juste colère
> Aime la guerre autant que la paix vous est chère;
> J'avouerai que, brûlant d'une noble chaleur,
> Je vais contre Alexandre éprouver ma valeur.
> (233-6)

As a result, whenever Porus appears on stage, he confirms his heroic valour and his resolution to confront Alexandre, yet when he asks Axiane to give an indication of her feelings for him at the end of Act II, Scene V she refuses. It is only when she has the ultimate, concrete proof of his excellence in character and in action that she admits her love. Only on learning of Porus' heroic opposition to the invincible Alexandre does she admit her love for the Indian prince (764). It is then that she recognizes the heroic and glorious quality of Porus' merit. She reveals that she had previously forcibly repressed her desire to reveal her love for Porus because she had not yet fully tested his merit (977-81). But now she is assured of his glorious heroism; her love of glory and her love of Porus coincide. Though she previously believed that she loved glory alone she realizes now that she has come to appreciate and know glory through Porus' exploits:

> J'expliquais mes soupirs en faveur de la gloire,
> Je croyais n'aimer qu'elle. Ah! pardonne, grand roi;
> Je sens bien aujourd'hui que je n'aimais que toi.
> J'avouerai que la gloire eut sur moi quelque empire;
> Je te l'ai dit cent fois. Mais je devais te dire
> Que toi seul, en effet, m'engageas sous ses lois.
> J'appris à la connaître en voyant tes exploits.
> (982-8)

Porus then has succeeded, as he had hoped to (650-5), in making glory so closely associated with his person through heroic action that Axiane must love him.

> On dirait que Porus et la gloire sont devenus si semblables qu'Axiane elle-même ait eu du mal à les distinguer l'un de l'autre....Axiane passe de l'amour de la gloire à l'amour non pas du vainqueur mais d'un vaincu glorieux.9

In the final scene of the play, both Porus and Axiane continue to prove their heroic mettle and to appreciate virtue and valour according to the code of courtly love. Porus, though twice defeated and surrounded by the bodies of his fallen men, continues the attack. When Taxile confronts him, he, in spite of the obstacles, kills the unfortunate Taxile. Before the conquering Alexandre neither Porus nor Axiane shows any weakness. Porus, in particular, though he is a helpless captive of Alexandre, addresses him disdainfully, asks for no quarter and even threatens the Macedonian King:

> Crains Porus; crains encore cette main désarmée
> Qui venge sa défaite au milieu d'une armée.
> (1485-6)

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[9]Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 71.

> Mais quand son vainqueur, malgré les insultes, le tutoiement et les menaces, le traite effectivement en roi et en égal, force lui est de connaître la supériorité du Macédonien qui le dépasse par cette qualité éminemment royale: la générosité.10

Only when Alexandre by his pardon has proved his magnanimity, his virtue to be of a superior nature, does the attitude of the two defiant Indian monarchs change. Porus, who in the course of the play has proved himself a capable and knowledgeable courtly lover, appreciates fully the material and moral merits of Alexandre. He acknowledges the Macedonian king's superiority in heroic exploits and in virtue and concedes him an absolute victory in lines 1533-8 as we have noted in connection with Alexandre.

In our study of Alexandre and Porus, then, we have found that these two characters follow closely the traditions of courtly love. A third character, however, whose role initially appears minor and unimportant in a play which is dedicated to the praise of glory and love, holds a particular significance for the student of Racine's treatment of human love. Taxile, I feel, marks a very exciting and very engaging innovation in the portrayal of love in the seventeenth-century theatre. I believe that it is in Taxile that one finds the first indications of Racine's originality in his portrayal of love. Unlike

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[10]Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 61.

Bénichou, who believes that certain characters of Andromaque mark Racine's introduction of "naturalism"[11] and "violence",[12] I feel that the love of Taxile has already symptoms of that violent and noxious passion which will bring many of Racine's later characters to catastrophe.

Racine arrives at this innovation by a very slight deviation from the code of courtly love; in fact the innovation seems to me to be the result of the intensification and humanization of certain aspects of this very code. Taxile's character and actions, it must be agreed, are still modelled on the example of twelfth-century social conduct as presented by Chrétien de Troyes and Andreas Capellanus. However, unlike Alexandre and Porus, Taxile is not a completely courtly lover. He is morally inferior to Porus and Alexandre and, like the twelfth-century courtly lovers who are conscious of a weakness which stains their merit and thus renders them less pleasing to the woman loved, Taxile suffers jealousy and anxiety which cause him to break the rules of courtly love, and ultimately to lose all hope and to suffer a tragic death. With the arrival of Taxile on the Racinian stage then, we find that in the main the system or theory of love has not changed; but, by the

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[11] "Naturalism" for Bénichou and myself is the portrayal of the aggressive and destructive instincts in certain Racinian personages.

[12] P. Bénichou, Les Morales, p. 135.

intensification and humanization of certain aspects of this code some slight but very significant modification is evident. The Racinian characters continue to imitate the actions, emotions, and reactions of the courtly heroes and heroines of the twelfth century. The originality of Racine's portrayal of love lies in the intense and often violent and destructive effects of this irrepressible and blinding passion on some unfortunate and tragic personages. It is the portrayal of this essentially courtly but more natural and more human love with its possibility of brutal and fatal effects which announces the violence, murder, suicide, and insanity which terminate many of Racine's later plays.

In Taxile we find many of the courtly principles which were operative in the actions and emotions of Alexandre and Porus. Most significantly we learn in the first scene of the play that Taxile, too, is a captive of love. In response to his sister's plea that he accept the "amitié" of Alexandre, Taxile explains that he must obey his "maîtresse" who is a resolute and proud enemy of Alexandre:

> Mais comme vous, ma soeur, j'ai mon amour à suivre.
> Les beaux yeux d'Axiane, ennemis de la paix,
> Contre votre Alexandre arment tous leurs attraits;
> . . .
> Il faut servir, ma soeur, son illustre colère;
> (66-8, 73)

However, unlike Porus and Alexandre, whose noble heroism is unquestionable, Taxile is lacking in heroism. This crucial

flaw in his moral character is clearly defined by Axiane as cowardice:

> Sais-je pas que Taxile est une âme incertaine,
> Que l'amour le retient quand la crainte l'entraîne?
> Sais-je pas que, sans moi, sa timide valeur
> Succomberait bientôt aux ruses de sa soeur?
> (289-92)

In these lines we learn that the uniformity of Taxile's character is being disrupted by his love for a woman, who we have seen can accept as a suitor only a "vainqueur d'Alexandre". Taxile, weak and uncertain, would be most ready to capitulate to the Macedonian army were it not for his love for Axiane. As with most courtly lovers his is an ennobling love which points the way to glorious deeds. Taxile, however, because of his weakness, hesitates to fulfill the dictates of love and as a result there is a struggle between his love and his "mollesse."

Taxile displays this moral inferiority in his first confrontation with Porus. While the two Indian kings debate a war with Alexandre it becomes clear that Taxile is attempting to avoid a battle at all costs. Under the guise of prudence and a healthy respect for Alexandre, Taxile suggests that they shower him with every courtesy and "vain homage" in order to retain their crowns. Porus, however, in striking contrast to Taxile, asserts his resolution to fight Alexandre for he can not jeopardize his own glory. The scene reaches a climax when Porus contends that the plans and deeds which bring glory are pleasing to kings and in

particular to queens (226). This line suggests that glorious action alone can render one pleasing to the Indian Queen Axiane. A few lines later (233-6) Porus explicitly states that, inspired by love for Axiane, he intends to prove his worth in battle against Axiane, and thus merit her love. It is at this moment that Taxile recognizes completely the moral inferiority which prevents him from meriting the love of Axiane. He realizes full well that unlike Porus he is incapable of heroic action and as a result he can not find favour with Axiane, a woman who unconditionally demands a suitor who is "couvert de gloire". As a result when Axiane approaches them at the end of the scene Taxile withdraws, conscious of his shameful weakness -- a weakness which he knows would offend the proud Axiane:

> La reine vient. Adieu. Vantez-lui votre zèle;
> Découvrez cet orgueuil qui vous rend digne d'elle.
> Pour moi, je troublerais un si noble entretien,
> Et vos coeurs rougiraient des faiblesses du mien.
> (253-6)

Taxile confirms his weakness again in a later scene when he meekly and quickly accepts the Éphestion's offer of peace. Porus, however, in contrast to Taxile, refuses a shameful "amitié" and prepares for battle. Axiane, on learning of the treacherous decision of Taxile, urges him to follow the noble example of Porus and to take up arms (614). Throughout the play Porus is held up to Taxile as the heroic and noble example of proper action (614, 757, 1175-6). Taxile, already aware of his inferiority, much like the

courtly lovers described by Andreas Capellanus, suffers from anxiety or the fear of failure in love. The constant comparison of himself to the morally and heroically superior Porus serves to accentuate the suffering, fear, and despair of the unfortunate suitor. When Taxile feels he is to be further eclipsed by Porus' heroic opposition to Alexandre, he is driven to desperate ends. In his despair Taxile loses all lucidity and violates the courtly code. Unlike Alexandre who lucidly freed Cléofile and then won her heart by the display of his excellence of character, unlike Porus who tries to capture by heroic exploits the heart of his proud and demanding mistress, Taxile ignobly holds Axiane physically confined in his camp. In doing so he has committed a crucial error:

> il a désobéi à sa maîtresse tout en continuant à l'adorer; et il a enchaîné cette maîtresse livrant son rival. Or le code précieux exige au contraire la tyrannie de la maîtresse, l'emprisonnement de l'amant. Et Axiane prend plaisir à lui faire comprendre toute l'étendue de son erreur et de son crime, en lui démontrant que toutes ses ruses n'ont servi qu'à le rendre méprisable et indigne de son amour.12

By his refusal to engage in honourable battle and by his imprisonment of Axiane, Taxile has clearly proved himself inferior to the other two kings and as a result Axiane declares that he can indeed hold captive her person, but never her heart:

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[12]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 71.

> Et déjà son amour, lassé de ma rigueur,
> Captive ma personne au défaut de mon coeur!
> (683-4)

As long as a Racinian hero has not displayed the excellence of his character by proper and noble action he can not even entertain thoughts of a successful love with a Racinian heroine. Taxile's material advantages over Axiane do not aid him at all in securing her heart. Her physical capture only further alientates her. Alexandre's support, too, proves to be of no avail:

> Alexandre aura beau multiplier les démarches en faveur de son protégé, -- lui donner les couronnes de Porus et d'Axiane et même plaider sa cause auprès de cette princesse, tout cet effort ne lui sera d'aucune utilité, d'aucun profit. Le seul don qu'Alexandre ne puisse pas lui faire, c'est celui de la générosité sans laquelle il ne pourra jamais réussir auprès d'Axiane.13

It is only when Axiane, herself, clearly and forcibly reveals in Act IV, Scene III "par quels secrets on peut toucher mon âme" that Taxile accepts the necessity of shouldering the burden of heroic action to merit her love. In lines which we have already noted in connection with Axiane (1169-74) the Indian queen urges Taxile to pursue glory, to hate Alexandre, and to engage in honourable battle against the Macedonian tyrant. In the same speech Axiane brings to a climax the theme of Porus as an example of heroic action which Taxile should follow. She compares

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[13] J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 59.

Taxile and Porus, recognizing the greatness of the latter. She admits her love for Porus and believing that he is dead she treatens to make of Taxile the eternal witness of Porus' glory and of her love for him:

> Jette, jette les yeux sur Porus et sur toi,
> Et juge qui des deux était digne de moi.
> . . .
> Je l'aimai; je l'adore: et puisqu'un sort jaloux
> Lui défend de jouir d'un spectacle si doux,
> C'est toi que je choisis pour témoin de sa gloire,
> Mes pleurs feront toujours revivre sa mémoire,
> Toujours tu me verras, au fort de mon ennui,
> Mettre tout mon plaisir à te parler de lui.
> (1175-6, 79-84)

Taxile, now, is struck by the fear that he may never succeed in supplanting the glorious and magnanimous image of Porus in Axiane's heart:

> Ainsi je brûle en vain pour une âme glacée:
> L'image de Porus n'en peut être effacée.
> (1185-6)

Axiane quells this fear for the moment by urging Taxile once more to take up the path of glory, to prove himself by heroic action and thus to redeem himself and to recover her esteem (1189-90). Taxile, still hesitant to take up the burden of heroic action, tries to intimidate Axiane and to "parler en maître". When this proves futile and when Axiane, defiant and disgusted, departs with the name of Porus on her lips, Taxile realizes that he has no recourse but to act heroically to win the love of the Indian queen.

In the following scene Taxile reveals to his sister

that he is incapable of suppressing his love for Axiane and that he must serve her and merit her love even if it leads him into battle against Alexandre:

> Non, ma soeur, je la veux adorer.
> Je l'aime; et quand les voeux que je pousse pour elle
> N'en obtiendraient jamais qu'une haine immortelle
> Malgré tous ses mépris, malgré tous vos discours
> Malgré moi-même, il faut que je l'aime toujours.
> . . .
> Non, je ne puis plus vivre accablé de sa haine,
> Il faut que je me jette aux pieds de l'inhumaine.
> J'y cours: je vais m'offrir à servir son courroux,
> Même contre Alexandre, et même contre vous.
> (1224-8, 1237-40)

Taxile at this point has reached the depths of despair. He finds life intolerable without the love of Axiane and he is ready to risk everything to win her love:

> Il faut que tout périsse, ou que je sois heureux.
> (1244)

It is at this point, when Taxile is finally resigned to heroic action, that he learns that Porus still lives. This is an unbearable blow for Taxile. Porus, the man who has been constantly held up to him as an example of proper and heroic action, the hero whose superiority in character and action he can never equal, the rival for whom Axiane wept and declared her love though he was supposedly dead, the lover whom he could never hope to replace still lives! All hope of success in love is suddenly completely removed. Taxile's reaction, like that of the twelfth-century courtly lover who has been refused, is desperate and drastic. The twelfth-century knights would suffer insanity, desire

death or feel contradictory emotions such as love and hatred. The genius of Racine, however, forces Taxile to go beyond these reactions. The type of love Racine has portrayed for the first time in the personage of Taxile is of a very intense human nature. It produces in such a Racinian character a turbulent, violent, and brutal passion. For this reason Taxile, on realizing the hopelessness of his situation, is seized by a violent, insane and destructive passion which he directs against Porus who has become for him the symbol of the superior and unassailable courtly lover. Tormented by his inferiority, suffering most cruelly from an intense love, he rushes half mad to his death at the hands of the morally and heroically superior Porus.

In our study of Taxile, then, we have found that for the most part he adheres very closely to the dictates of courtly love. In the main his motives, emotions, and reactions can be seen closely parallel to those described in the works of many twelfth century courtly writers. Of particular note are the consciousness of inferiority which causes jealousy and anxiety of failure in love and the reaction to the fact that all hope of success has been removed. Racine's genius has intensified and made more human the portrayal of this love which leads to more violent, more brutal, and destructive effects. As a result, one must

conclude that the naturalism which Racine has introduced into his portrayal of love, contrary to what Benichou believes,[14] contravenes very little, if at all, the traditions of courtly love.

In the final analysis the play Alexandre Le Grand can be seen to resemble closely that system of social conduct which is known as "courtly love". All of the characters, Alexandre, Cléofile, Porus, Axiane, and Taxile experience motives, emotions, and reactions which are typical of a twelfth-century courtly lover and it is from these motives, emotions, and reactions that the intrigue arises. With the intensification and humanization of love and of its effects on Taxile, Racine introduces a new and turbulent naturalism into the portrayal of love whose basis still remains the courtly doctrine. In this early play the young dramatist discovers that the social and emotional conduct of courtly love contains within itself potentially tragic material. In Andromaque Racine will explore its violent, emotional and destructive power, in Bérénice its touching, subtle and sublime tragic potentiality.

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[14] P. Bénichou, Morales, p. 136.

CHAPTER IV

ANDROMAQUE

Andromaque, the third play of Jean Racine, was first presented on the nineteenth of November, 1667, at the royal palace. It was received with great enthusiasm and was soon acclaimed a masterpiece -- an opinion shared by many critics through the centuries to modern times. It is important for us to note that the intrigue and the emotions, motives, and reactions of the characters of this masterpiece, as Hubert agrees,[1] closely resemble the intrigue and the emotions, motives, and reactions of the characters of Alexandre le Grand which we have established to be clearly modelled on the courtly code of social conduct of the twelfth century. As in Alexandre one of the primary interests of the characters is happiness in love. Those characters (Alexandre, Cléophile, Porus, Axiane) who, because of their moral superiority and their understanding of the courtly code, were successful in love can be said to be represented in Racine's third play by Andromaque and her relationship with her husband Hector. Taxile, who announced Racine's originality in his portrayal of love, foreshadows by his moral inferiority, failure and destructive passion

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[1] J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, pp. 53-54, p. 72.

three personages of Andromaque (Pyrrhus, Hermione, Oreste). In Andromaque, then, as in Alexandre le Grand courtly love can be seen to play an important and active role.

The play, Andromaque, opens with the arrival of Oreste at the palace of Pyrrhus. Prior to his arrival the love plot was static. Hermione, the daughter of Helen who was betrothed to marry Pyrrhus, the son of Achille, the conqueror of Troy and Hector, was waiting impatiently for Pyrrhus to fulfill his promise of marriage. Pyrrhus, on the other hand, was making no progress in securing the heart of his beloved Andromaque whom he had taken prisoner during the siege of Troy. The Trojan princess can not return the love of Pyrrhus for she loves her dead husband who has become for her an ideal. She remains faithful to the memory of Hector and through him she cherishes Astyanax and the memory of Troy. Finally, Hermione, motivated by injured pride and jealousy breaks the immobility of the suspended action by informing the Greeks of the existence of the son of Hector.

Oreste is sent by them to demand seizure of the boy. But Oreste does not come to the isle of Épire with an untroubled heart. Under the guise of fulfilling his embassy he seeks to confront Hermione once more with his love. With the arrival of Oreste the scheme is such that none of the principal characters (save Andromaque whose husband is dead) is loved by the person he or she loves. All of the principal

characters are wholly captivated by their love and, for three of them (Pyrrhus, Hermione, Oreste) the love is so intense that when a possibility of refusal arises mixed emotions of love and hate result which ultimately may lead to violence.

Oreste's arrival and his demand for the life of Astyanax, however, set the play in motion. Pyrrhus will use the son as an instrument to the heart of the mother, promising to protect the child if she should marry him. Andromaque is then presented with a dilemma: she must remain faithful to the memory of Hector and she must save his son. When she is presented with this choice she becomes the pivotal character of the play for her decision directly or indirectly will affect all of the principal characters. If she marries Pyrrhus, Hermione will be denied and Oreste will marry Hermione. If she refuses Pyrrhus Astyanax dies, Pyrrhus marries Hermione and Oreste is denied. Such is the effect of the arrival of Oreste and his demand for the life of Astyanax.

Oreste, in the first scene of the play, is reunited with his old friend Pylade. After telling him of his recent wanderings Oreste reveals that he has come to Épire under the guise of an embassy to either carry off Hermione or do die. Oreste takes hope when he learns that Pyrrhus, still unsuccessful with Andromaque, spurns Hermione. It is with anticipation, then, that Oreste approaches Pyrrhus and

and in the name of the Greeks demands the son of Hector. Pyrrhus haughtily refuses the ignoble demand of an entire nation for the life of a helpless child and sends Oreste to see Hermione in the hope that he will carry her off and free him from his burdensome promise of marriage.

In the last scene of the first act Andromaque finally appears on stage. She is on her way to see her son when she meets Pyrrhus who reveals to her that the Greeks are demanding the child's life. Pyrrhus offers his services and his protection in order to please her and in the hope that Andromaque will look upon him with "un regard moins sévère". Andromaque, however, refuses her love saying that the grief he has caused her and her people forbids it, but she argues that he must protect a helpless widow and her child as it is the proper action for a noble and magnanimous son of Achille. Pyrrhus realizes that his past action prevents Andromaque's love for him but he begs her to forget. He promises to protect her son, to be a father to him, and even to instruct him how to avenge Troy. Pyrrhus says he cannot return to Hermione for, since Andromaque's arrival in Épire, she alone holds sway over his heart. Andromaque, however, cannot respond to his appeal for love. She is completely captivated by her memory of Hector, and when Pyrrhus, who must either love "avec transport" or hate "avec fureur", threatens to hand over

Astyanax to the Greeks, she resigns herself to her son's death and her own. At the end of the act Pyrrhus sends her to see her son in the hope that the sight of him might persuade her to change her mind.

In Act II Scene 1, Hermione, before meeting Oreste, reveals to Cléone that she is embarassed by the presence of Oreste for she, who has refused him, is now herself denied by Pyrrhus. Hermione is still very much in love with Pyrrhus and the primary cause of this love, as she admits, is the glorious exploits he performed in the Trojan War on behalf of Greece and her family. Though the hope that this love may one day be reciprocated keeps her in Épire, Hermione reveals that, if finally refused, she will have loved Pyrrhus too much not to take violent and hateful action. With reluctance, however, she agrees to meet Oreste.

As soon as Oreste lays eyes on Hermione he proclaims that it is his destiny to love her and that her rejection of his love would mean death to him. Though Hermione pretends to love him, Oreste soon realizes that for Hermione "le coeur est pour Pyrrhus et les voeux pour Oreste". He, then, mocks her inability to inspire love in Pyrrhus. Hermione, on the defence, explains that duty has brought her to Épire and duty keeps her there. Only the word of her father or that of Pyrrhus can release her from her duty. She promises to leave with Oreste if Pyrrhus makes a final choice and she is rejected.

Oreste, now full of hope, hurries to meet Pyrrhus only to have his hopes shattered. Pyrrhus, under the guise of duty to his country, his father and himself, agrees to yield Astyanax to Oreste and invites him to witness his immediate marriage to Hermione. In the following scene Pyrrhus reveals that he has not ceased to be "le jouet d'une flamme servile", for, although Phoenix congratulates him on his victory over his love and attempts to keep him from thinking of Andromaque, Pyrrhus' thoughts are still only of her. He considers how much he was prepared to sacrifice for a woman who repeatedly rejects him. He recounts the extent of Andromaque's love for Hector and how she sees in her son the image of her husband. He wonders what are her sentiments now, will she be jealous of Hermione if he marries her. He realizes that a great hatred separates the son of Achille and the widow of Hector, but he wishes to speak to her again, to develop more fully his arguments. When Phoenix accuses him of still loving Andromaque, Pyrrhus comes to his senses. He is to realize that he had been ready to sacrifice everything for a slave. He then decides to abandon Andromaque's son and cruelly relishes the sorrow he will cause her.

At the beginning of Act III we meet Oreste who is tormented by the imminent marriage of Hermione to Pyrrhus. He abandons his innocence and his reason, giving himself over to his rage and his destiny. He threatens to merit

the wrath of the gods and he plans to carry off Hermione. Hermione, whom he meets in the next scene, is pitiless. She offers her dejected and unfortunate lover no consolation. She selfishly rejoices at the glorious deeds of her future husband. Nor does she show any compassion for the unfortunate Andromaque who seeks her aid. She dismisses her cooly and ironically sends her to consult Pyrrhus.

When Andromaque confronts Pyrrhus she seeks his protection in the name of all the grief that he and his race have caused Troy, in the name of Achille who once respected the request of Priam concerning his son, and finally in the name of honour and magnanimity. In reply Pyrrhus says that he appreciates the sorrow he has caused Troy, that he understands the hatred and enmity he will create for himself if he undertakes her protection, but he is ready to risk everything for her love. He issues once more his ultimatum: marry Pyrrhus or lose Astyanax. The decision is Andromaque's. At the beginning of the following scene Andromaque is firm in her former decision. She cannot marry Pyrrhus, who for her is a "roi barbare", and she cannot break faith with Hector - her son must die. She reviews with horror and disgust the night of fire, blood and carnage when Pyrrhus committed his shameful crimes. But, then, another dearer memory comes to her. She remembers Hector's last farewell and how he entrusted Astyanax's safety to her as a pledge of her love for him. She decides

then that she cannot, like Pyrrhus, spill precious blood and that Astyanax must be saved. Still uncertain she goes to Hector's tomb to consult her husband where she learns of an "innocent stratagème". She will marry Pyrrhus in order to guarantee the safety of Astyanax and then she will commit suicide. Thus she will fulfill her duty to Pyrrhus, to her son, to her husband, and to herself.

When Hermione learns of Pyrrhus' new plans to marry Andromaque she is thrown into a violent rage. She bluntly demands to know if Oreste loves her, and, if he does, she orders him to kill Pyrrhus. Oreste, however, never rises out of his mediocrity. Though he is promised the heart of the woman he loves should he perform a single act, he hesitates, he offers alternatives, he argues against it. He is incapable of decisive action. In this scene one feels the frustration of the daughter of Helen of Troy. Helen had been capable by her beauty and love to launch a thousand ships while her daughter Hermione is incapable of commanding the love of one man. She demands that he return to her covered in blood and thus merit her heart. But it is not until Hermione says that she will perform the act herself and then commit suicide that Oreste finally agrees to act.

Hermione, however, does not lose all hope of success in love, until the end of the play. When she sees Pyrrhus approaching her, she sends Cléone to stay Oreste's hand lest

Pyrrhus is about to return to her. But this is not the case. Pyrrhus admits his breach of promise to Hermione but says that love compels him to marry Andromaque. Hermione argues that he is sacrificing Greece to Troy, that he is renouncing all of his exploits, and that he is abandoning her who spurned other princes, who has come to his provinces to marry him, who still waits for him in spite of her disgrace and who still loves him. But, then, she realizes that she is wasting her time for he is not even listening to her.

At the beginning of Act V Hermione's heart is in complete turmoil. She is tormented first by hatred, then by love. Pride and the indifference of Pyrrhus force her to want Pyrrhus' death. But then her love for him argues against violence. When Cléone enters she is indeed ready to stop Oreste from accomplishing his mission. But when she learns of Pyrrhus' pride, of his joy in his coming marriage to Andromaque and of his indifference to her, she once more desires the death of Pyrrhus. But Hermione changes her mind again when Oreste announces the successful assassination of Pyrrhus. She tells Oreste that he should never have listened to "une amante insensée". She completely rejects all responsibility for the act and places the entire burden of responsibility on Oreste's shoulders. She argues that if Pyrrhus were still alive she still might have hope as he might have have returned to her. She renounces

Greece, Sparta, her family, and most of all Oreste himself. She then, withdraws in total despair, to commit suicide over the body of Pyrrhus.

In the following scene Oreste is completely bewildered. He has violated all his principles, performed an act he detests, he has merited the titles of assassin, traitor, and profaner -- all to no avail. He has sinned for love, yet he does not gain love's reward. Oreste, however, resolves to stay in Épire to try to expiate his crime. But in the next scene he learns from Pylade that Hermione has committed suicide and his reason is taxed beyond its limits and he goes mad.

At the end of the play Andromaque, who alone was not "le jouet d'une flamme servile", is the only principal character to remain and reign.

Let us now turn to an examination of the effect which the courtly code of love can be seen to have on the principle characters and their relationships in the play Andromaque.

Andromaque, who we have seen is the pivotal character of the play, espouses the same courtly sentiments as did Eleanore of Aquitaine and Marie of Champagne in the twelfth-century. Like them she esteems glory, perfection, and excellence in character and in action. Similarly a perfect courtly lover commands her complete and undivided devotion. Andromaque is totally captivated by her love for Hector who during his life has won her by his courtly

virtues. Upon his death the love of Andromaque for her husband is such that she comes to idealize him and his memory. Her obsession with his memory is so great that the son of Hector, Astyanax, serves only to remind her of Hector and of her devotion to him. Right from her initial appearance on stage she speaks of Astyanax in terms of Hector:

> Le seul bien qui me reste et d'Hector et de Troie.
> (262)

When Pyrrhus threatens to hand Astyanax over to the Greeks if she does not consent to marry him "it is the living memory of Hector that makes it impossible for her to marry Pyrrhus".[2] The comparison of the ideal Hector to the morally inferior Pyrrhus makes the latter entirely unacceptable as a suitor. As Hubert remarks:

> Dans les yeux d'Andromaque s'éternise la furie irrémédiable de Pyrrhus, image indélébile qui lui paraît moins affreuse si la Troyenne ne lui rappelait continuellement la supériorité d'Hector, qui, loin de massacrer rageusement femmes, enfants, et vieillards, ne s'attaquait qu'à des guerriers armés jusqu'aux dents.3

And again

> La valeur essentiellement morale d'Hector représente un idéal auquel Pyrrhus de par sa nature même ne pourrait jamais atteindre, mais

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[2]Vera Orgel, A New View of the Plays of Racine (London: MacMillan & Co., 1948), p. 32.

[3]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 85.

> qu'il lui faudrait réaliser afin d'obtenir le respect sinon l'amour d'Andromaque. Et la Troyenne, par conséquent, ne pourra jamais l'aimer, elle qui a connu la perfection d'Hector, avant de subir la fureur sanguinaire d'Achille et de Pyrrhus.4

No, Andromaque could never accept Pyrrhus as a successor to the noble Hector. As a result the play with its crucial decision concerning marriage to Pyrrhus and the life of Astyanax comes to depend upon the unshakeable courtly devotion of Andromaque to Hector who for her is the embodiment of the perfect courtly lover.

Andromaque realizes that marrige to Pyrrhus is out of the question as a means to save her son. But in accord with the principles of courtly love, she attempts to make use of the "charmes puissants" a courtly "maîtresse" has over a lover and she urges Pyrrhus to defend her, an unfortunate and helpless widow, and her son out of sheer nobility of heart. When Pyrrhus asserts that his love for her is so intense that if she spurns him he will have no recourse but to take vengeance upon Astyanax, Andromaque, who is totally devoted to Hector and can in no way break faith with his memory, resigns herself to the death of her son: "Hélas! Il mourra donc. . ." (373).

At the end of the same scene Pyrrhus makes a serious miscalculation. He sends Andromaque to see her son,

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[4] Ibid., p. 78.

advising her that "en le voyant, votre amour plus timide/ Ne prendra pas toujours sa colère pour guide" (382-3) and that she will think of saving him by marrying Pyrrhus. But seeing Astyanax has the reverse effect on Andromaque. Far from thinking of marriage with Pyrrhus she rejoices in the memory of Hector for she does not see in Astyanax a son in danger but rather a reminder of her idealized husband:

> C'est Hector, disait-elle en l'embrassant toujours;
> Voilà ses yeux, sa bouche, et déjà son audace;
> C'est lui-même, c'est toi, cher époux que j'embrasse.
> (652-4)

By sending Andromaque to Astyanax Pyrrhus has in effect sent her to an image of Hector which reminds her of his superior nature and in this way Pyrrhus has further alienated Andromaque from himself.

In the second interview between Andromaque and Pyrrhus she is still unprepared to compromise her love for Hector by accepting the inferior Pyrrhus. She even hesitates to plead for her son until Pyrrhus says: "Allons aux Grecs livrer le fils d'Hector" (900). Andromaque, tormented with grief, relates all the misfortune which has befallen Troy, Priam, Hector, Astyanax and herself at the hands of Pyrrhus and the Greeks. She appeals to Pyrrhus as her father once successfully appealed to his father on behalf of a son. She then upbraids him for his lack of magnanimity in not defending the hopeless and unfortunate -- but to no avail.

Pyrrhus' reply is a repetition of his ultimatum: "Il faut ou périr, ou régner" (968). But the cry "Il ne me restait plus qu'à condamner mon fils" (980) shows how far Andromaque is from yielding to Pyrrhus. The vivid picture she paints of the brutality of Pyrrhus and of the horrid crimes he committed on the night of the fall of Troy portrays the qualities of Pyrrhus which prevent her, a woman whose esteem and love are in keeping with the courtly tradition, from ever accepting him as a successor to the ideally valorous and courtly Hector:

> Dois-je oublier mon père à mes pieds renversé,
> Ensanglant l'autel qu'il tenait embrassé?
> Songe, songe, Céphise, à cette nuit cruelle
> Qui fut pour tout un peuple une nuit éternelle;
> Figure-toi Pyrrhus, les yeux étincelants,
> Entrant à la lueur de nos palais brûlants,
> Sur tous mes frères morts se faisant un passage,
> Et de sang tout couvert, échauffant le carnage;
> Songe aux cris des vainqueurs, songe aux cris des
> mourants,
> Dans la flamme étouffés, sous le fer expirants;
> Peins-toi dans ces horreurs Andromaque éperdue
> Voilà par quels exploits il sut se couronner;
> Enfin, voilà l'époux que tu me veux donner.
> (995-1008)

Up to this point in the play Andromaque has never faltered in her decision to sacrifice Astyanax to the memory of Hector. But the words of Cephise "Hé bien, allons donc voir expirer votre fils" (1012) conjure up a dearer memory for Andromaque. She remembers the fateful day on which Hector bade farewell to his wife and son before going to meet Achille in single combat. More explicitly she remembers how Hector entrusted the safety of Astyanax to her as a

proof of her love for him:

> Chère épouse, dit-il en essuyant mes larmes,
> J'ignore quel succès le sort garde à mes armes;
> Je te laisse mon fils pour gage de ma foi:
> S'il me perd, je prétends qu'il me retrouve en toi.
> Si d'un heureux hymen la mémoire t'est chère
> Montre au fils à quel point tu chérissais le père.
> (1021-6)

The necessity of safeguarding Astyanax and the desire to remain faithful to the memory of Hector have now merged. She decides immediately that she cannot sacrifice "un sang si précieux". She is about to send Céphise to tell Pyrrhus that she is prepared to marry him to save her son when she suddenly appreciates the full meaning of her dilemma: to remain faithful to Hector she must ensure the safety of Astyanax and not marry. To realize both of these conditions is incompatible with the ultimatum of Pyrrhus. Uncertain as to what she should do she goes "sur son tombeau consulter mon époux".

As a result of the consultation at her husband's tomb she arrives at a "innocent stratagème" (1097-8) whereby she might extricate herself from her dilemma. She is to enlist the support of Pyrrhus to Astyanax by marrying him but she is to avoid the marriage bed by committing suicide. By this "stratagème" she performs her duty to all parties: by marrying Pyrrhus she satisfies his desire for marriage, by preserving her virtue and by saving Astyanax she fulfills her duty to Hector, to Astyanax, and most important to

herself in that she preserves her fidelity to Hector:

> Je vais donc, puisqu'il faut que je me sacrifie,
> Assurer à Pyrrhus le reste de ma vie;
> Je vais en recevant sa foi sur les autels,
> L'engager à mon fils par des noeuds immortels.
> Mais aussitôt ma main, à moi seule funeste,
> D'une infidèle vie abrégera le reste;
> Et, sauvant ma vertu, rendra ce que je doi
> A Pyrrhus, à mon fils, à mon epoux, à moi.
> (1089-96)

But Andromaque, the sole living character of the play who fully comprehends and successfully conforms to the code of courtly love, is spared death. Her suicide becomes unnecessary when Pyrrhus is assassinated at the altar by Oreste and his men. With the death of Pyrrhus she can render to him "les devoirs d'une veuve fidèle" and reign in Épire for the purpose of her "stratagème" has been fulfilled. She has married Pyrrhus, avoided the marriage bed, saved Astyanax, and most important she has not broken faith with Hector. Her love for and duty to Hector have not been compromised. As a result at the end of the play "seule Andromaque, lucide et sans faiblesse, atteint les buts qu'elle s'était assignés".[5]

Andromaque and Hector, then, can be said to be an ideal courtly couple. The love, the sense of duty, and the relationship between them bear a strong ressemblance to those existing between Alexandre and Cléofile, and Porus and

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[5] R. Jasinski, Vers le Vrai Racine (Paris: Librarie Armand Colin, 1958), p. 191.

Axiane of the previous play who we saw were similar to twelfth-century courtly lovers. The other principal characters of Andromaque, too, adhere very closely to the dictates of courtly love. But Pyrrhus, Hermione and Oreste are unfortunate courtly lovers in that they are very similar to Taxile. Like him, they are aflame with intense passion, but their inferior nature prevents them from winning their respective lovers. Failure in love kindles in these characters a mad, destructive passion which causes them to participate in the catastrophe of the play. Let us consider Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste.

Like traditional courtly lovers, Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste are captives of their respective loves. Pyrrhus, whose prowess at Troy is renowned, whose power in Épire is absolute, is subservient to Andromaque, his captive, as a result of his love for her. Her power over him is almost total:

> Si les yeux d'Andromaque ne possèdent pas l'autorité d'un général ou d'un consul romain, autorité qui devait sans doute caractériser le regard d'Hector, ils disposent néanmoins d'une force spirituelle capable de subjuguer Pyrrhus en lui inspirant l'amour.6

Pyrrhus himself admits that though Hermione has come to Épire to become queen it is indeed Andromaque who reigns and Hermione who is captive:

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[6]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 86.

> Je sais que pour régner elle vint dans l'Épire,
> Le sort vous y voulut l'une et l'autre amener;
> Vous, pour porter des fers, elle, pour en donner.
> Cependant ai-je pris quelque soin de lui plaire?
> Et ne dirait-on pas, en voyant au contraire
> Vos charmes tout puissants, et les siens dédaignés,
> Qu'elle est ici captive, et que vous y régnez?
> (346-52)

In a later scene Pyrrhus, when Andromaque has refused him, considers all he was ready to sacrifice for her:

> Considère, Phoenix, les troubles que j'évite,
> Quelle foule de maux l'amour traîne à sa suite,
> Que d'amis, de devoirs, j'allais sacrifier!
> Quels périls . . .un regard m'eût tout fait oublier:
> Tous les Grecs conjurés fondaient sur une rebelle,
> Je trouvais du plaisir à me perdre pour elle.
> (637-42)

The proud Hermione, too, is captivated by her love. Though she is insulted and disgraced by Pyrrhus who puts off their promised wedding because of his love for Andromaque, Hermione patiently waits in the hope that Pyrrhus will return to his duty. Oreste is so dominated by his love that he considers it his destiny to love Hermione:

> Tel est de mon amour l'aveuglement funeste,
> Vous le savez, madame; et le destin d'Oreste
> Est de venir sans cesse adorer vos attraits.
> (481-3)

Like Taxile these characters are destined to be unsuccessful in love for their natures are in some way inferior. Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste are lacking in either moral or heroic worth and such a deficiency, as Andreas Capellanus indicates, renders a courtly lover unacceptable to his loved one. Pyrrhus, right from the beginning of the play, realizes that the cruelty, fury, and

savagery he displayed in the Trojan war are a stain on his moral merit. In the second scene of the play Pyrrhus tries to explain the reason for his excessive violence and brutality on the night of the fall of Troy:

> Tout était juste alors: la vieillesse et l'enfance
> En vain sur leur faiblesse appuyaient leur défense;
> La victoire et la nuit, plus cruelles que nous,
> Nous excitaient au meurtre, et confondaient nos coups.
> Mon courroux aux vaincus ne fut que trop sévère.
> (208-13)

> Dans ce passage Pyrrhus va jusqu'à admettre sa cruauté et son aveuglement pendant cette horrible nuit; il qualifie même les exploits des Grecs à ce moment de meurtres. Il faut remarquer aussi qu'il essaie vainement de se disculper en attribuant les efforts de sa rage à des forces en grande partie imaginaires: la victoire et la nuit.7

Pyrrhus, then, is fully aware that his deeds on that night may be interpreted by the Greeks as exploits but to a Trojan they are "crimes". These excessive "crimes" for Andromaque are an example of Pyrrhus' moral inferiority and his unsuitability as a lover. As a result Andromaque, as a "maîtresse" who esteem and love are in keeping with the courtly tradition, "holds him at bay . . .by full acknowledgement of his power and sets the great deeds that exalted him at her expense between them".[8] Later in the play when Pyrrhus reveals the threat to Astyanax's

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[7]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 84.

[8]V. Orgel, A New View, p. 14.

life he offers, as a twelfth-century courtly lover would, his services for her love:

> Je vous offre mon bras. Puis-je espérer encore
> Que vous accepterez un coeur qui vous adore?
> En combattant pour vous, me sera-t-il permis
> De ne vous point compter parmi mes ennemis?
> (293-6)

When Andromaque refuses him Pyrrhus reveals once more that he realizes that it is primarily his action at Troy which prevents Andromaque from accepting him:

> Je souffre tous les maux que j'ai faits devant Troie:
> Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets consumé,
> Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumais.
> (318-20)

"Le cri prétendu précieux de Pyrrhus:"

> Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai, exprime non pas une flamme banale, mais les regrets cuisants qui torturent le fils d'Achille et le dégout qu'il éprouve pour son passé 'glorieux'. Ces feux qui le brûlent trouvent leur origine et même leur cause dans les incendies de Troie qui avait éclairé ses crimes, source de ses remords présents: ils se rapportent donc à un passé réel dont ils révèlent même le moral.[9]

Pyrrhus can only beg Andromaque to forget the past and promise her the future. He offers to take the place of Hector: to be a father to Astyanax, to take vengeance upon Greece, and even to rebuild Troy. He promises to do anything for her love:

> Madame, dites-moi seulement que j'espère,
> Je vous rends votre fils, et je lui sers de père;

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[9]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, pp. 87-88.

> Je l'instruirai moi-même à venger les Troyens;
> J'irai punir les Grecs de vous maux et des miens.
> Animé d'un regard, je puis tout entreprendre:
> Votre Ilion encore peut sortir de sa cendre;
> Je puis, en moins de temps que les Grecs ne l'ont pris,
> Dans ses murs relevés couronner votre fils.
> (325-32)

Andromaque's vivid memory of the blood-thirsty Pyrrhus and his crimes, which we have already examined in our study of Andromaque, force her to reject him as a successor to the ideal Hector.

Hermione and Oreste, too, are inferior to the requirements of their respective lovers. Pyrrhus is attracted to Andromaque who as a result of her relationship with Hector, represents an ideal:

> Hector représente un idéal, un idéal qui donne à la tristesse d'Andromaque cette beauté transcendente qu'Hermione malgré sa jeunesse ne pourra jamais égaler.10

Hermione, far from being able to equal the beauty and moral worth of Andromaque, which attract Pyrrhus, indeed proves herself to be vastly inferior to Andromaque. When Hermione coldly dismisses Andromaque who has come to seek her aid (III,iv), she reveals "sa vraie nature: cruelle, méprisante, vindicative, elle se montre nettement inférieure à la noble Troyenne".[11] This inferior nature renders her unattractive

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[10] Ibid., p. 90.

[11] Ibid., p. 94.

to Pyrrhus. "Et un peu plus bas encore nous trouvons Oreste, trop conscient de son infériorité et son insuffisance".[12] This statement by Hubert adequately indicates the nature and plight of Oreste. The son of the mighty Agamemnon is never capable of decisive action. It is only with great difficulty that the woman he loves persuades him to take action against Pyrrhus and when Pyrrhus is assassinated it is still not by his hand. At the end of the play Racine does not even give Oreste the strength to commit suicide: he lapses into madness. Oreste's repeated failure of courage and his inability to take decisive action render him inferior in the eyes of Hermione.

The consciousness of this inferiority causes these characters to be anxious and jealous. But their suffering and despair is further accentuated by the presence of an infinitely superior rival who holds captivated the beloved. Pyrrhus' superior rival, as we have already seen, is the slain Hector. Andromaque idealizes the living memory of her perfect, courtly husband and she can in no way accept the ignoble Pyrrhus as his successor. Pyrrhus strives in vain to supplant Hector in the heart of Andromaque.

Hermione, too, struggles vainly to replace a

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[12] Ibid., p. 95.

superior rival in the heart of her beloved. Andromaque, as we have seen, totally preoccupies the heart and mind of Pyrrhus. She is fully aware that she is morally inferior to the widow of Hector and thus can never divert Pyrrhus' attention from her. It is only a futile and blind hope that keeps her in Épire waiting for Pyrrhus to marry her. Hermione's suffering as the result of superior rivalry is double. She not only tries to replace the superior Andromaque in the heart of Pyrrhus but also to match the courtly power of her mother. The proud Hermione is intensely aware that her mother, Helen, by her beauty and love armed the whole nation of Greece against Troy. Hermione is horribly tormented by her inability to inspire love in Pyrrhus and she dreads a shameful return to Sparta from Épire. Hermione's frustration as a courtly "maîtresse" is clearly displayed in Act IV Scene iii. Unable to inspire love in Pyrrhus she seeks to prevent his marriage to Andromaque. She summons Oreste who has declared that it is his destiny to love and adore her. Hermione then attempts to make full use of her courtly power as a "maîtresse" by demanding that if Oreste loves her he must slay Pyrrhus:

> Je veux savoir, seigneur, si vous m'aimez
> . . .
> Vengez moi, je crois tout.
> (1152, 1147)

To Hermione's surprise and disgust Oreste does not rush off

sword in hand. He speaks rather of leaving Épire, he voices arguments against the assassination of a respected king, and promises instead a just conquest and vengeance. Hermione wants immediate vengeance and she repeats once more her demand of Pyrrhus' life in exchange for her love:

> Revenez tout couvert du sang de l'infidèle,
> Allez: en cet état soyez sûr de mon coeur.
> (1230-31)

But still Oreste hesitates and Hermione, disgusted, explains that Oreste is letting slip his opportunity of meriting her love in the manner of a twelfth-century courtly lover:

> 'J'ai voulu vous donner les moyens de me plaire,
> Rendre Oreste content; mais enfin je vois bien
> Qu'il veut toujours se plaindre, et ne mériter rien.
> (1234-6)

It is only when Hermione threatens suicide that Oreste is finally persuaded. Hermione, herself, expresses her frustration as a courtly "maîtresse":

> Quoi! sans qu'elle employât une seule prière,
> Ma mère en sa faveur arma la Grece entière;
> Ses yeux pour leur querelle, en dix ans de combats,
> Virent périr vingt rois qu'ils ne connaissaient pas:
> Et moi, je ne prétends que la mort d'un parjure,
> Et je charge un amant du soin de mon injure;
> Il peut me conquérir à ce prix, sans danger;
> Je me livre moi-même, et ne puis me venger!
> (1477-84)

Hermione's suffering, anxiety, and jealousy, then, are accentuated not only by her consciousness of inferiority in comparison to her rival in love, Andromaque, but also by the consciousness of her powerlessness as a courtly "maîtresse" in comparison to her mother -- Helen.

Oreste's superior rival in love is Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus' military reputation greatly overshadows that of the mediocre Oreste. Pyrrhus and his father Achille had distinguished themselves in the Trojan war for their valour and prowess. Oreste, himself, on his arrival in Épire admiringly acknowledges the exploits of Pyrrhus and concedes that he is worthy to be the son of Achille:

> . . .je montre quelque joie
> De voir le fils d'Achille et le vainqueur de Troie.
> Oui, comme ses exploits nous admirons vos coups.
> Hector tomba sous lui, Troie expira sous vous;
> Et vous avez montré par une heureuse audace,
> Que le fils seul d'Achille a pu remplir sa place.
> (145-50)

He, who is a criminal to Andromaque, is a hero to all of Greece. Hermione, the daughter of Hélen, whom Pyrrhus rescued at Troy, reveals that her love for him arises out of admiration for his exploits and glory:

> Tu t'en souviens encore, tout conspirait pour lui:
> Ma famille vengée,et les Grecs dans la joie,
> 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,
> Mon coeur . . .toi-même enfin de sa gloire éblouie.
> (464-9)

Hermione's heart is completely overwhelmed by Pyrrhus' glory. The mediocre and inferior Oreste suffers all the more knowing that Pyrrhus, an unassailable rival, holds captivated the heart of the woman he loves.

Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste are good examples of the originality of Racine's portrayal of love. The intensity of their love accentuated as it is by the fear of

losing their respective lovers to superior rivals arouses in them turbulent and potentially violent passions. Like twelfth-century courtly lovers who fear failure in love they are tormented by contradictory emotions. These characters are at one and the same time aflame with a passion for their loved ones, and when faced with the possibility of refusal, they burn with a potentially violent and destructive hatred. When Pyrrhus offers amorous vassalage to Andromaque and is refused, he warns Andromaque that his love for her is so intense that a violent hatred will take its place if he is rejected:

> Songez-y bien: il faut désormais que mon coeur,
> S'il n'aime avec transport, haïsse avec fureur.
> Je n'épargnerai rien dans ma juste colère:
> Le fils me répondra des mépris de la mère;
> (367-70)

Pyrrhus gives evidence of these two passions in Act II, Scene v. Pyrrhus has just announced his intentions of marrying Hermione and yet in this scene his thoughts are only of Andromaque. He considers all he was prepared to sacrifice for Andromaque, her idealization of Hector, the hatred that exists between them as a result of his deeds in the Trojan war, and then he expresses a desire to see her once more. This reflection upon Andromaque when he is about to marry another woman betrays his continuing love for her. And yet at the end of the scene when he recalls his inability to win her heart, his cruel hatred discloses itself. He relishes the thought of being the cause of

Andromaque's sorrow and perhaps even her death by yielding Astyanax to Oreste:

> Non, non je l'ai juré, ma vengeance est certaine;
> Il faut bien une fois justifier sa haine
> J'abandonne son fils. Que de pleurs vont couler!
> De quel nom sa douleur me va-t-elle appeler!
> Quel spectacle pour elle aujourd'hui se dispose!
> Elle en mourra, Phoenix, et j'en serai la cause:
> C'est lui mettre moi-même un poignard dans le sein.
> (693-99)

Like Pyrrhus, Hermione reveals the first time she appears on stage that her emotions are mingled with love and hatred. Though she loves Pyrrhus deeply she explains to Cléone that, if betrayed, she will hate him:

> Lui qui me fut si cher, et qui m'a pu trahir!
> Ah, je l'ai trop aimé, pour ne le point haïr!
> (415-16)

Hermione, in a later scene, discloses how the two passions, love and hatred, disrupt her thinking. After Pyrrhus has rejected her personally and she has sent Oreste to assassinate Pyrrhus, Hermione still does not know "si j'aime ou si je hais?" (1396). Initially she tries to convince herself that her hatred and desire for Pyrrhus' death are justified as a result of his indifference and his refusal of her. And yet at the end of the scene Hermione, herself, cannot believe that "sa mort sera l'effet de l'amour d'Hermione" (1422). She recalls his exploits, her betrothal to him, and she is ready to stay the hand of Oreste. Her hatred gives way to her love for Pyrrhus.

Oreste, too, is plagued by love and hatred. Though

he admits that it is his destiny to love Hermione, when he learns of her imminent marriage to Pyrrhus, Oreste plans to carry her off so that she might cruelly suffer like him:

> Non, non: à mes tourments je veux l'associer:
> C'est trop gémir tout seul. Je suis las qu'on me plaigne.
> Je prétends qu'à mon tour l'inhumaine me craigne,
> Et que ses yeux cruels, à pleurer condamnés,
> Me rendent tous les noms que je leur ai donnés.
> (760-4)

These potentially destructive passions can lead these characters to actions which are not in their best interests. Suffering from anxiety and jealousy and from the fear of losing the beloved, they are driven to desperate ends and often break the code of courtly love, thus even further alienating their respective lovers. Pyrrhus, fearing that he will never succeed in securing the heart of Andromaque, when the opportunity arises uses Astyanax as an instrument to the heart of the mother. The use of threats serves only to show even more clearly the inferiority of Pyrrhus and to render him even less acceptable to Andromaque. Similarly Hermione is driven to desperate and drastic ends when she learns of Pyrrhus' intentions to marry Andromaque. Fearing the loss of her lover and possessed by an intense and turbulent passion she succumbs to her jealousy, rage and destructive hatred. She demands that Oreste, if he loves her, assassinate Pyrrhus. But when Oreste announces that his mission is completed the shocked Hermione suddenly realizes that "she had not wanted Pyrrhus

dead, she had wanted the moment of killing him for having forgotten her but not the moment which must follow, which comes to her now".[13] She then reproaches Oreste for having listened to "une amante insensée" who was overcome by her fury and jealousy and who did not really want the end of "une si belle vie":

> Ah! Fallait-il en croire une amante insensée?
> Ne devais-tu pas lire au fond de ma pensée?
> Et ne voyais-tu pas, dans mes emportements,
> Que mon coeur démentait ma bouche à tous moments?
> (1548-8)

In anger and grief she refuses to leave Épire with Oreste and dismisses him.

Oreste, because of his love and fear of failure in love, on two occasions is driven to desperate ends which involve the breaking of the courtly code. Much like Taxile of Alexandre le Grand who, when he feared to be further eclipsed by the glorious exploits of Porus, made Axiane his captive, so Oreste, on learning that Pyrrhus and Hermione were to be wed, abandons his reason and decides to carry her off:

> Non, tes conseils ne sont plus de saison,
> Pylade, je suis las d'écouter la raison.
> C'est traîner trop longtemps ma vie et mon supplice,
> Il faut que je l'enlève, ou bien que je périsse.
> (712-14)

Like Taxile, Oreste would have further alienated Hermione

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[13] V. Orgel, A New View, p. 41.

from himself if he had carried out this plan in that instead of captivating the heart of his lady by the display of excellence in character and in action he would have made his "maîtresse" his physical captive. Oreste errs similarly in agreeing to and in the accomplishment of his assassination of Pyrrhus. When Hermione demands the murder of Pyrrhus, Oreste replies, in line with the courtly tradition, that he cannot resort to an insidious assassination but he must rather slay him by "une juste conquête". He also voices the traditional respect for and duty to "un front couronné". Hermione, however, threatens suicide and he yields to her demands:

> L'assassinat où se ressout finalement Oreste est le péché sans remission, une félonnerie accomplie qui l'exclut pour toujours de la communauté de ses pairs.14

As a result when Oreste is rejected by Hermione he regrets that he has not heeded his reason and has broken faith with the rules of courtly loyalty and duty:

> Quoi! J'étouffe en mon coeur la raison qui m'éclaire;
> J'assassine à regret un roi que je révère,
> Je viole en un jour les droits des souverains;
> Ceux des ambassadeurs, et tous ceux des humains,
> Ceux même des autels où ma fureur l'assiège;
> Je deviens parricide, assassin, sacrilège!
> (1569-74)

Oreste, then, twice breaks the courtly code and demonstrates him inferiority as a courtly lover.

Throughout the play the violently passionate

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[14] P. Butler, Classicisme et Baroque, p. 146.

characters merely threaten and do not resort to violence as long as there is hope. But once all hope of success in love is removed the aggressive and destructive passions take command. Pyrrhus, though possessed by a potentially violent passion is never subject to a total despair as a result of the "stratagème" and therefore does not resort to violence. Hermione, however, as we have seen, despairs of hope when she believes Pyrrhus is to marry Andromaque and forces Oreste to assassinate Pyrrhus. But Hermione does not really want the death of Pyrrhus for, as she explains to Oreste, as long as Pyrrhus is alive she has hope, slim and futile as it might be: "Il m'aimerait peut-être, il le feindrait au moins" (1560). But now with Pyrrhus dead she is plunged into total despair and like courtly lovers of the twelfth century who have failed in love, she commits suicide. Similarly Oreste hopes until the last moment. Though he has been repeatedly rejected by Hermione he still hopes and remains in Épire. It is only when Hermione has committed suicide that he accepts the fact that there is no hope. Oreste, when he believes all hope of success in love is lost, like the twelfth-century Yvain of Chrétien de Troyes, goes insane. Thus at the end of the play all of the characters who are captivated by a violent passion which demands satisfaction even if their inferior natures render them unacceptable to their respective lovers, are either dead or insane.

Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste, as Racine portrays them, can be seen to adhere very closely to the principles of twelfth-century courtly love. Racine's originality in the portrayal of their love lies, as it did in the case of Taxile, in the intensification and humanization of the characters very natural passions. These characters attempt to attract their beloved in accordance with the courtly tradition, but they are fated to failure as a result of an inferior nature which displeases the loved one. Unable to accept refusal because of their intense and blinding love an aggressive and destructive passion is aroused within them. This passion very often causes them to act in such a way as to further alienate their beloved. When all hope of success in love is lost they meet a tragic end. With Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste, Racine has successfully and effectively exploited the destructive and tragic potential he found in the code of courtly love as he drew upon it in his treatment of Taxile in Alexandre le Grand. At the end of Andromaque all the "violent" characters of the play have succumbed either to death or to insanity. It is only Andromaque, who is portrayed by Racine as fully appreciating and successfully following the code of courtly love, who survives.

CHAPTER V

BÉRÉNICE

Bérénice was first performed on the twenty-first of November, 1670, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Bérénice was for Racine a very important play:

> It was three years since Andromaque had suddenly earned him a name as the most promising of the dramatists. Since then neither Les Plaideurs nor Britannicus seemed to have fulfilled that promise. Could he repeat his early triumph? Bérénice was designed to convince the public that he could.1

For this reason Racine appealed to the sentiments and fashions which were popular at the time. We have established in our second chapter that "la préciosité" or "la galanterie" which closely resembled twelfth-century courtly love, were popular not only in the salons and in the court, but also in literature. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that its mood and principles pervade Bérénice.

But there is another reason for the courtly treatment of the subject of the play, Bérénice, by Racine. Many critics see in the principal characters a close resemblance

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[1] G. Brereton, Jean Racine (Toronto: Cassel & Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 139.

to Louis XIV and his relationship with Marie Mancini.[2] René Jasinski suggests that in this relationship King Louis" . . .offrait le modèle suprême de la galanterie".[3] Racine, then, aware of the popularity of "la galanterie" in the royal court, whose members made up the majority of his audience, included its influence in his work to assure the play's immediate success. As a result, in Bérénice, a work which René Jasinski suggests is based upon "l'idéal galant de l'époque",[4] one finds the principles, refinements, and subtleties of "la galanterie" or courtly love.

Let us examine the play. Bérénice opens with the assumption, by almost all of the characters (Arsace 1.15, Antiochus 1.27-29, Bérénice herself 1.173-77) that Bérénice will soon become the empress of Rome. It is for this reason that Antiochus demands a final interview with her. He reveals that he has loved her for five years but that she has imposed on him "un éternel silence" because of her love for Titus. He has remained by her side in the

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[2] Ibid., p. 135.
R. Picard, La Carrière de Jean Racine (Paris: Librarie Gallimard, 1956), p. 155.
A. Bailly, Racine (Paris: Librarie, Arthème Fayard, 1949), p. 84.
R. Jasinski, Vers le Vrai Racine (Paris: Librarie Armand Colin, 1958), p. 385-411.

[3] Ibid., p. 396.

[4] Ibid., p. 394.

hope that one day his love will be returned. But now that Titus, the new emperor of Rome, has ended an eight day mourning period for his father Vespasien, the expectation of everyone is that Titus will marry Bérénice and Antiochus, in despair, is preparing to leave Rome.

In the interview between Bérénice and Antiochus Bérénice appears to us to be totally involved in her love for Titus. She expresses concern over Titus's long mourning period and over their suspended love. She tells us that Titus's "coeur" and "vertu" have won her heart and she looks forward to marriage with him. When Antiochus states at this point that he is leaving Rome, Bérénice, whose intense love has made her oblivious to all else, wonders why. Antiochus then reminds her that it was he who was the first to fall in love with her and to seek her hand in marriage. But Titus "vint, vous vit, et vous plut". And it was at this time that she imposed on him the ultimatum of either silence or exile. Antiochus relates that he then accompanied his rival into battle in the hope that he might distinguish himself by his exploits. Titus's virtue and valour, however, surpassed his own and now he, himself, must respect Titus. Now that Titus is emperor and there appears to be no obstacle to their imminent marriage, Antiochus, though he loves Bérénice, must leave her. Bérénice simply accepts his farewell.

In the whole of the first Act, Phénice is the only

character who sheds any doubt on the marriage of Titus and Bérénice. She alone realizes that Rome cannot accept as its empress an alien queen. Bérénice, however, who has the tendency to rationalize and to overstate matters in her favour, dismisses Phénice's doubts. She argues that Titus loves her and as emperor of Rome his will is law. The first Act closes with Bérénice's spellbound description of the power, splendour and glory of Titus' Rome.

It is not until the beginning of Act II that we meet the new emperor of Rome who has come to consult Paulin who reveals to him "la voix publique". Titus does not concern himself with the idolatrous and flattering court. He wants to know the public opinion of Rome concerning his possible marriage to Bérénice. Titus's confident clearly and forcefully states that since the reign of the Tarquin kings Rome cannot accept anyone as emperor or empress who has royal or alien blood. This strict tradition has not been violated even by the most powerful and vile of Roman emperors and Rome expects Titus to abide by it. Titus then laments that now, when his love for Bérénice is most ardent, when a marriage can accomplish in one day what he has longed for for five years, he must, because of his duty, separate himself from her.

Titus, then, reveals that he had already made his decision to reject Bérénice. He says that previously he

was free and master of his own destiny but on his father's death he, as the new emperor, felt the heavy burden of duty come down on his shoulders. It was then that he decided that he must "renoncer à moi-même" and "nous séparer". Titus' decision has been made: Bérénice will leave Rome with Antiochus tomorrow. The most difficult and painful task remains: the announcement of this renunciation to Bérénice.

Paulin praises Titus' action as that of a noble and worthy hero. Titus, however, claims it is a vile recompense for Bérénice who has put him on the path of glory and virtue. Before meeting Bérénice, Titus "suivait du plaisir la pente trop aisée" (508) at the court of Nero. It was Bérénice who brought about a change in him. Inspired by love for her he took up the conquest of Judea and the display of his virtue so as to prove himself worthy of her love. Now Bérénice's reward for making of Titus an honourable man and a good emperor is her own rejection. Titus grieves that he must hurt Bérénice, but he must fulfill his duty.

In the following scene Bérénice confronts Titus. She asks why he does not come to see her, why she knows nothing of their marriage plans, and why he offers her additional provinces when it is only him that she wants. She is then astonished by his coolness and his silence. She

interprets this as the sign of his continuing mourning for his father. She ironically reminds him of his duty to Rome and to his glory in an attempt to rouse him from his sorrow. Titus, however, is incapable of speaking and leaves Bérénice having been able to say only:"Hélas . . . Rome . . .l'empire".

Bérénice then searches for the causes of Titus' actions. She wonders if she has offended him by dismissing the states he offered her or by disapproving of his grief for his father. She then wonders if Rome is the cause of his fears. No, she argues, he has often assured her that Rome will pose no problems to their love. She finally concludes that Titus has learned that Antiochus is a rival for her love and that he is in fact jealous. She, then, asserts that a rival would have to tarnish his glory and have a great deal to offer in order to replace him in her heart. At the end of the act Bérénice is assured that "Si Titus est jaloux, Titus est amoureux" (666).

In Act III, Titus, unable to inform Bérénice of his decision enlists the aid of Antiochus for this purpose. He wants Antiochus to speak to the queen for him so that he may avoid another painful confrontation with her. Titus tells him that though he is master of the universe he is not master of his own heart. Rome cannot accept the foreign queen as its empress and for this reason she must leave with

Antiochus tomorrow. He asks him to comfort her, to explain to her his predicament, and to take her away from Rome. Finally, Titus asks him to bear witness to the sorrow of the two lovers and to the fact that "Mon règne ne sera qu'un long banissement!" (754).

As a result of this turn of events Antiochus hopes that once Bérénice is far from the grandeur of Titus and of Rome she will find him more suitable. Arsace argues that once he has returned to the Orient everything will favour him. Antiochus, however, is hesitant about his delicate situation in that Bérénice will learn from Titus' rival of the emperor's rejection of her and perhaps earn for himself "une haine immortelle". For this reason Antiochus is reluctant to reveal Titus' message to her in the following scene. It is only when Bérénice imperiously demands that he speak and threatens him with an eternal hatred if he remains silent that Antiochus is persuaded to speak. When Bérénice learns that she and Titus must part because Rome finds her unacceptable she becomes angry. She does not believe Antiochus; she is convinced that he is treacherous and she banishes him from her sight. She then leaves the stage in search of Titus.

At the beginning of Act IV we find Bérénice "en ce désordre extrême" awaiting Titus. Titus, however, is hesitant to confront her. He knows he must preserve his glory and the honour of the state, but he wonders if he will

remember his duty when in the presence of her charms. Titus, sincerely reluctant to wound the heart he loves, fancifully wonders if he is not acting too quickly and if Rome might yet accept her. But with the words "Titus ouvre les yeux!" (1013) he returns to his senses. He knows the severity of the tradition and the sentiment of Rome. He then decides he must either ignobly withdraw from Rome or he must preserve his honour by continuing as emperor. At the end of the scene he is resolved to do what honour demands.

It is with this resolve that he meets Bérénice in the following scene. Titus appeals to her as the one who has always directed him towards his glory and duty. She must, as she has done before, help him overcome his weakness and obey the dictates of reason and glory which demand their separation. Bérénice, on the contrary, complains of the untimeliness of Titus' decision. She argues that earlier she was aware of all the obstacles to their love and she would have understood their separation then. But, now, when his father is dead, when Rome is silent, and when the universe is at his feet, it is he whom she must fear, it is he who sends her away. Titus replies that before his father's death he was master of his own destiny and he could hope for the impossible. But, now, as the emperor, he has a new conception of glory and duty. He can no longer concern himself with matters of his private life; he must

govern. Bérénice, convinced of Titus' determination to part, bids him farewell and she is then struck by the horror of an eternal separation from him. When Titus assures her he will suffer equally she begs him to allow her only to stay in Rome. Titus argues against this out of fear of his weakness. It is at this point that Bérénice asks if Rome is ready to revolt as a result of the violation of one of its unjust laws which limits the rights of the emperor. Titus replies that he must not justify his decisions by spilling Roman blood, that when he became emperor he became the defender of its laws, and most important, that in parting with Bérénice he passes on the traditional austerity of the Roman emperor to posterity. When all of her arguments have been refuted, Bérénice resigns herself to death. She leaves the stage naming her spilled blood and Titus' heart as her avengers.

Bérénice's threat to commit suicide leaves Titus completely shaken. He is ready to run to her and save her for he feels he cannot survive her death. Paulin tries to strengthen Titus by telling him of the praise and glory Rome is bestowing on him. It is at this point that Antiochus and Rutile bring Titus to a final, climactic decision. Antiochus, moved by the plight of Bérénice, begs Titus to go to her side, while Rutile announces that the tribunes, consuls, and senate await him in his appartment. Titus interprets Rutile's message as a sign

from the gods and he withdraws into his appartment.

At the beginning of Act V Arsace reveals to Antiochus that Bérénice has decided to leave Rome as a result of spite and anger. Titus, on the other hand, has further strengthened his resolve to part with Bérénice as a result of the approval of the people. It is at this point, when Antiochus is beginning to take hope, that Titus comes to see Bérénice.

The Bérénice of Act V Scene V is a bitter and uncomprehending woman. She is deeply offended by the decision of Titus and she does not yet understand its necessity. She tells Titus that she has decided to leave immediately because of the Romans who are hostile to her and because everything in Rome reminds her of their love. She then sardonically sends him back to the senate which lavishes on him glory and praise because of his cruelty to her. When Titus tries to assure her that his love for her was never more ardent than it is now she asks why is he sending her away.

In the following scene, when Titus has learned that Bérénice's departure is a "cruel stratagème" to conceal her intentions to commit suicide, he draws on all his powers of elucidation so that Bérénice may come to comprehend the necessity of their separation and may tragically resign herself to it as he has done. He discloses to her the torment he suffers as a result of his uncertainty, his

anxiety, his regret in hurting her, and his feelings of duty to Rome as its emperor. He says that he has come to her "sans savoir mon dessein". But, now, upon learning of her plans to commit suicide, he knows the only solution to his problem. Their marriage is still an impossibility for it is incompatible with his glory. He argues that if he abdicated she herself would be ashamed of his conduct and he would thus render himself unworthy of her love. No, if she persists in her decision to commit suicide, he too will die on the sword. She is now responsible for both of their lives. Bérénice's "Hélas" at the end of the scene indicates that she now fully comprehends the situation.

In the final scene of the play Antiochus reveals to Titus that he is his rival for Bérénice's love. He says that, since Bérénice and Titus are to marry, he will extinguish his love for her by committing suicide. The conclusion or climactic decision of the play now rests on Bérénice and she rises to the tragic situation with a magnificent lucidity. She realizes that Titus still loves her, she assures him of her love, and she resigns herself to their tragic and heroic separation and to a life, which is for both of them, worse than death. She then cautions Antiochus not to make any advances to her when she leaves Rome. She urges him to make "un effort généreux" like theirs so that all three may serve as examples to the universe of tragic lovers and thus she forces him to partake in the

final resolution of the play.

Let us now turn to an examination of the relationship between Titus and Bérénice and assess the influence of courtly love on their emotions, motives, and decisions.

The birth of love in Titus and Bérénice can be seen to be typical of twelfth-century courtly lovers. Before meeting her, Titus practises the intemperance of the court of Nero. But, the sight of Bérénice inspires love in him, and from this moment Titus fulfills the dictates of courtly love as codified by Andreas Capellanus. He becomes a captive of his love and attempts to please his lady by the display of his excellence in action and in character. For her love the young Roman undertakes the subjugation of Judea and, so that his virtue might equal his valour, he shows clemency and beneficence to the conquered for he realizes that both valour and virtue are essential to the conduct of the successful courtly lover. Titus himself reveals to us how this love has affected him and inspired him to heroism and virtue:

> Ma jeunesse, nourrie à la cour de Néron,
> S'égarait, cher Paulin, par l'exemple abusée,
> Et suivait du plaisir la pente trop aisée.
> Bérénice me plut. Que ne fait point un coeur
> Pour plaire à ce qu'il aime, et gagner son vainqueur!
> Je prodiguai mon sang; tout fit place à mes armes:
> Je revins triomphant. Mais le sang et les larmes
> Ne me suffisaient pas pour mériter ses voeux.
> J'entrepris le bonheur de mille malheureux:
> On vit de toutes parts mes bontés se répandre:
> Heureux, et plus heureux que tu ne peux comprendre
> Quand je pouvais paraître à ses yeux satisfaits
> Chargé de mille coeurs conquis par mes bienfaits!
> (506-18)

By this heroic action and virtuous display he proves himself to be a superior courtly lover and even his rival, Antiochus, must acknowledge his superior courtly qualities:

> La valeur de Titus surpassait ma fureur.
> Il faut qu'à sa vertu mon estime réponde.
> (217-18)

The result of Titus' courtly display is inevitable: "Titus . . .vint, vous vit, en vous plut" (194). One may conclude then that Titus assumption of the courtly qualities or, if you will, the path of glory and virtue is the result of the ennobling love of Bérénice, for she yields her love to him only when he has proven his worth. In effect, the birth of love in Titus and Bérénice can in many ways be compared to that in the ideal courtly lovers, Lancelot and Guenevere.

This courtly love of Titus and Bérénice prospers and remains legitimate for five years. During this time he, as the son of the emperor Vespasien, is not bound by political responsibilities and is master of his own destiny and his own heart:

> J'aimais, je soupirais dans une paix profonde:
> Un autre était chargé de l'empire du monde.
> Maître de mon destin, libre dans mes soupirs,
> Je ne rendais qu'à moi compte de mes désirs.
> (455-58)

But with the death of his father, the political position and responsibilities of Titus undergo a drastic change. As the new emperor he feels the burden of political duty weigh heavy on his shoulders. He realizes that he must no longer

preoccupy himself with personal matters. His primary concern must be the empire and its government:

> Mais à peine le ciel eut rappelé mon père,
> Dès que ma triste main eut fermé sa paupière,
> De mon aimable erreur je fus désabusé:
> Je sentis le fardeau qui m'était imposé;
> Je connus que bientôt loin d'être à ce que j'aime,
> Il fallait, cher Paulin, renoncer à moi-même;
> Et que le choix des dieux, contraire à mes amours,
> Livrait à l'univers le reste de mes jours.
> (459-67)

And as the new emperor, Titus must uphold all of the laws of Rome. Paulin reminds Titus of one of these laws in particular. In 11, 2, Paulin acts as the mouthpiece of Rome when he states unequivocally that Rome since the time of the Tarquins can not accept as emperor or empress anyone of royal or foreign blood and for this reason Titus can not marry Bérénice:

> Rome, par une loi qui ne se peut changer,
> N'admet avec son sang aucun sang étranger,
> Et ne reconnaît point les fruits illégitimes
> Qui naissent d'un hymen contraire à ses maximes.
> D'ailleurs, vous le savez, en banissant ses rois,
> Rome à ce nom si noble et si saint autre fois,
> Attacha pour jamais une haine puissante;
> (377-83)

Titus, as emperor, must maintain this tradition, for, as Paulin points out, even the most powerful and most vile emperors have not dared to contravene it (387-465) and Rome expects him to comply:

> Il est clair en effet, que Titus et Bérénice sont entourés par un cercle de regards. Bérénice l'ignore; mais Titus le sait. L'opinion publique,

> la loi romaine, Rome, le Sénat, Paulin qui les représente, surveillent les amants et attendent la rupture.5

One of the ironies of the play then is that Titus, though he is the emperor of Rome and hence the master of the world, is not the master of his own heart:

> Maître de l'univers, je règle sa fortune,
> Je puis faire les rois, je puis les déposer;
> Cependant de mon coeur je ne puis disposer.
> (721-3)

It would appear then that Titus must make a choice between love and politics, between Bérénice and Rome. But, in effect, Titus as a courtly lover has no choice. Throughout the most part of the play he is the only ". . .tragic character who is fully aware of reality, of its problems and demands and of the impossibility of reconciling them".[6] Initially he alone fully appreciates the twelfth-century concept that glory must above all be retained, that duties must be fulfilled at any cost, so that one may remain worthy of love. Titus realizes that the only way, as Hubert agrees,[7] that he can maintain "son élan vers la perfection" and not debase himself in the eyes of Bérénice is to fulfill his duty as emperor and part with

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[5]C. Mauron, L'Inconscient dans L'Oeuvre et La Vie de Racine (France: Louis Jean, 1957), p. 84.

[6]L. Goldman, The Hidden God (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), p. 341.

[7]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 126.

her. Titus understands that if he should succumb to the demands of his heart and ignobly abdicate, if he should disobey the dictates of courtly love and abandon his glory for love, Bérénice, herself, would be ashamed of his action and would consider him unworthy of her love:

> Ma gloire inexorable à toute heure me suit;
> Sans cesse elle présente à mon âme étonnée
> L'empire incompatible avec votre hyménée,
> Me dit qu'après l'éclat et les pas que j'ai faits
> Je dois vous épouser encor moins que jamais.
> Oui, madame, et je dois moins encore vous dire
> Que je suis prêt pour vous d'abandonner l'Empire
> De vous suivre, et d'aller, trop content de mes fers,
> Soupirer avec vous au bout de l'univers.
> Vous-même rougiriez de ma lâche conduite:
> Vous verriez à regret marcher à votre suite
> Un indigne empereur sans empire, sans cour,
> Vil spectacle aux humains des faiblesses d'amour.
> (1394-406)

Titus comprehends fully the consequences involved. If he does separate himself from Bérénice and thus remain worthy of her love he is not only giving up the presence of his loved one but he is exchanging his life, his love for political responsibilities:

> Je sais tous les tourments où ce dessein me livre:
> Je sens bien que sans vous je ne saurais plus vivre,
> Que mon coeur de moi-même est prêt à s'éloigner;
> Mais il ne s'agit plus de vivre, il faut régner.
> (1099-1102)

In an ironic sense, then, Titus is sacrificing his love to his love. Because of his comprehension of the code of courtly love and of his realization that a courtly lover must maintain a perfect and honourable image before his lady, he has arrived at a definite conclusion: he must preserve

his glorious image for Bérénice could not accept him otherwise. Titus, therefore, has no alternative but to separate himself from Bérénice and remain emperor so as to be worthy of her love. As a result the tragedy of the play and its crucial decisions spring from the comprehension of and the discharging of one of the most important concepts of courtly love: the courtly lover must be worthy of the love of his lady.

Because of Titus' understanding of this courtly concept he has decided upon the necessity of the renunciation of Bérénice right from the moment his father died and he became emperor. He has even before the beginning of the play attempted to prepare her for their separation:

> Resolu d'accomplir ce cruel sacrifice,
> J'y voulus préparer la triste Bérénice;
> (471-2)

Throughout the play Titus' resolve to separate, though sometimes shaken, is never broken and the final renunciation is inevitable. His task, then, is not to make a decision on whether or not they must separate, but rather to reveal to Bérénice the reason for the necessity of their separation and to influence her to accept it. He attempts to disclose to her that by rejecting her and by remaining emperor he is clinging to the path of glory and virtue on which, as we saw in lines 506-18, her ennobling love has put him:

> Or s'il abondonnait l'empire pour suivre sa maîtresse en Palestine, il ne ferait que retomber dans les égarements de sa jeunesse, réduisant à néant

> toute l'influence de Bérénice et toute la valeur morale de leur amour! Titus, pour rester complètement fidèle à Bérénice, doit donc l'exiler....8

Titus admits that the renunciation of love is vile payment to Bérénice who, by the influence of her love, has inspired virtue and greatness in him:

> Je lui dois tout, Paulin. Récompense cruelle!
> Tout ce que je lui dois va retomber sur elle.
> Pour prix de tant de gloire et de tant de vertus,
> Je lui dirai: Partez, et ne me voyez plus.
> (519-22)

But, just as he is being true to his nature so she must be true to hers - she who always reminded him of his duty and virtue must now help him to overcome the weaknesses of his love for her and to follow the dictates of duty, virtue, and glory:

> Rappelez bien plutôt ce coeur qui, tant de fois,
> M'a fait de mon devoir reconnaître la voix;
> Il en est temps. Forcez votre amour à se taire;
> Et d'un oeil que la gloire et la raison éclaire
> Contemplez mon devoir dans toute sa rigueur.
> Vous-même, contre vous, fortifiez votre coeur,
> Aidez-moi, s'il se peut, à vaincre ma faiblesse,
> A retenir des pleurs qui m'échappent sans cesse;
> Ou, si nous ne pouvons commander à nos pleurs,
> Que la gloire du moins soutienne nos douleurs;
> Et que tout l'univers reconnaisse sans peine
> Les pleurs d'un empereur et les pleurs d'une reine.
> Car enfin, ma princesse, il faut nous séparer.
> (1049-61)

Ironically Bérénice must, because of her love for Titus and the code of courtly love which requires a lover to remain worthy of his lady's love, help Titus to separate

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[8] Ibid., p. 125.

from her.

Titus then has even before the beginning of the play decided upon his separation from Bérénice. But his intense love for her and his resultant hesitancy to hurt her make the task of revealing his decision very difficult. He reveals to us in Act II scene ii that all of his attempts to approach Bérénice up to that time have been unsuccessful:

> Mais par où commencer? Vingt fois, depuis huit jours,
> J'ai voulu devant elle en ouvrir le discours;
> Et, dès le premier mot, ma langue embarrassée
> Dans ma bouche vingt fois a demeuré glacée.
> (473-6)

The inability of Titus to hurt Bérénice by the disclosure of his decision is most apparent in his first confrontation with her. Though he tries to explain, the only thing he can say is "Hélas! . .Rome . . .l'empire . . ." (623). Titus' inability to speak to Bérénice does not indicate that his resolve is broken. In the following scene he enlists Antiochus's services and the unfortunate "roi de Comagène" reveals his rival's decision.

The result of Titus' inability to reveal to Bérénice his decision and the reason for it is that she does not suspect anything nor does she fully appreciate the situation until late in the play. Though Titus has attempted to reveal to her through his grief and his absence that something is amiss she attributes his behavior to his mourning:

> J'espérais que du moins mon trouble et ma douleur
> Lui feraient pressentir notre commun malheur;
> Mais, sans me soupçonner, sensible à mes alarmes,
> Elle m'offre sa main pour essuyer mes larmes,
> (477-80)

Bérénice believes that "Titus m'aime, il peut tout" (278). She is convinced that he loves her and now that he has become emperor of Rome there can be no obstacles to their love and to their marriage. For this reason whenever doubt is cast upon either her marriage to him or his love for her, she is quick to explain away or overstate matters in her favour. For example when Phénice suggests that Bérénice, as a queen and a foreigner, may be an unacceptable empress for Rome, she insists upon Titus' love and argues that as emperor he has the power to overcome any obstancle to their marriage. Again when Titus displays "froideur" and an inability to speak to her in Act III scene iv, she attributes his behavior to jealousy of Antiochus about whose rivalry Bérénice believes Titus has learned. This final example occurs in Act III, scene iii. When Antiochus reveals to her Titus' intention to part with her, she flatly refuses to believe him and she accuses him of treachery. But, Bérénice does not attain full comprehension of the situation even when Titus reveals to her that "il faut nous séparer". Bérénice interprets this renunciation as a loss of love for her, ". . .Hélas! Je me suis crue aimée"! (1063). Though she has learned of Titus' decision

she does not yet understand it.

Bérénice's inability, until late in the fifth Act, to fully comprehend Titus' reason for the necessity of their separation does not indicate that she is not a courtly "maîtresse" or that she does not fully grasp the courtly code. On the contrary she proves in many ways to be a true courtly "maîtresse". Like a twelfth-century lady Bérénice inspires in her lovers an ennobling love. Titus, as we have seen in lines 505-18, before meeting Bérénice, ". . .suivait du plaisir la pente trop aisée". However, as soon as he falls in love with her he undertakes the path of glory and virtue so as to win her love. It was for her love that he attempted to prove his merit in battle and for her the display of his virtue in his clement treatment of the vanquished. Antiochus, Titus' rival, too, attempts by displaying his valour in battle to reveal that he is worthy of her love:

> De mon heureux rival j'accompagnai les armes;
> J'espérai de verser mon sang après mes larmes,
> Ou qu'au moins, jusqu'à vous porté par mille exploits,
> Mon nom pourrait parler, au défaut de ma voix.
> (211-14)

Bérénice's love for a suitor then, like that of a twelfth-century Eleanor of Aquitaine, is founded upon merit. She esteems her lovers in accordance with the courtly tradition. She displays this love - merit relationship with Titus in Act II scene v. At this time Bérénice believes that Titus has been cold towards her because of his jealousy of

Antiochus. She, then, asserts that a rival, in order to supplant him in her heart, would have to destroy Titus' glorious image. He would have to offer her more empires and more sceptres, which are the concrete symbols of a suitor's glory and virtue, than Titus. Indeed, she believes no one can equal Titus and for this reason his love is all the more precious to her. Her sentiments are precisely those of a courtly "maîtresse":

> Titus: Ah! plût au ciel que, sans blesser ta gloire,
> Un rival plus puissant voulût tenter ma foi,
> Et pût mettre à mes pieds plus d'empires que toi;
> Que de sceptres sans nombres il pût payer ma flamme,
> Que ton amour n'eût rien à donner que ton âme!
> C'est alors, cher Titus, qu'aimé, victorieux,
> Tu verrais de quel prix ton coeur est à mes yeux.
> (656-62)

Bérénice, again, proves herself to be a knowledgeable courtly "maîtresse" when she shows that she is aware of her power over a suitor. She, like a twelfth-century courtly lady, is prepared to use her love as a means to obtain certain ends. She can, by the promise of love or by the threat of eternally refusing it, force a suitor to comply with her wishes. This is precisely what she does with Antiochus. When he is hesitant to reveal to her the decision of Titus she attempts to persuade him to speak in the name of love for her. When he is still reluctant to speak she, surprised at his disobedience, threatens him with an eternal hatred. It is then that Antiochus is forced to speak:

Bérénice: Seigneur, si mon repos vous est si précieux,
Si moi-même jamais je fus chère à vos yeux,
Eclaircissez le trouble où vous voyez mon âme:
Que vous à dit Titus.

Antiochus: Au nom des dieux madame . . .

Bérénice: Quoi! Vous craignez si peu de me désobéir!

Antiochus: Je n'ai qu'à vous parler pour me faire haïr.

Bérénice: Je veux que vous parliez.

Antiochus: Dieux! Quelle violence!
Madame, encore un coup, vous louerez mon silence.

Bérénice: Prince, dès ce moment contentez mes souhaits,
Ou soyez de ma haine assuré pour jamais.
(876-887)

But it is in the final scenes of the play that Bérénice reveals most clearly that she lucidly appreciates her role as a courtly "maîtresse". As late as Act V scene vi Bérénice has not fully appreciated the sacrifice in which Titus is asking her to share. Throughout she has believed that their separation could only result from Titus's no longer loving her. But, in this scene she comes to understand that if he should abdicate he would render himself unworthy of her love and therefore he must part with her so as to preserve his glory (1394-1406). But just as his love for her prevents him from marrying, so his love will prevent him from surviving her if she should commit suicide:

Si vos pleurs plus longtemps viennent frapper ma vue,
Si toujours à mourir je vous vois resolue,
S'il faut qu'à tout moment je tremble pour vos jours,
Si vous ne m'en jurez d'en respecter le cours,
Madame, à d'autres pleurs vous devez vous attendre.
En l'état où je suis je puis tout entreprendre:
Et je ne réponds pas que ma main à vos yeux

N'ensanglante à la fin nos funestes adieux.
(1415-22)

It is at this point that Bérénice realizes that Titus still loves her, that the cause of their separation is his courtly desire to remain worthy of her love, that he is, in effect sacrificing his love to her for her love. Her sorrowful "Hélas!" in line 1423 indicates her total comprehension of the courtly implications of his dilemma and she as a true, lucid courtly "maîtresse" is prepared to resign herself to his honourable decision:

> Aussitôt qu'elle comprend les motifs de son exil, son attitude passionée disparaît, car il faut avant tout que l'homme qu'elle aime reste digne de l'admiration universelle; et bien entendu il faut aussi qu'elle se montre digne de lui.9

In the final scene of the play Bérénice, as a courtly "maîtresse", reveals that she fully understands the tragic dilemma which faces her and Titus and she heroically accepts it. She realizes that Titus still loves her but, because of his political responsibility to Rome he cannot marry her. Similarly because of his courtly responsibility to her, that is that he preserve his glory and thus remain worthy of her love, she comprehends that he cannot abdicate and follow her to the Orient. Because of her total awareness of the situation she accepts a life without Titus so that he may fulfill his duties to Rome and to her.

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[9]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 129.

Je connais mon erreur. Vous m'aimez toujours.
. . .
Je crois depuis cinq ans jusqu'à ce jour,
Vous avoir rassuré d'un véritable amour.
Ce n'est pas tout: je veux en ce moment funeste,
Par un dernier effort couronner tout le reste:
Je vivrai, je suivrai vos ordres absolus.
Adieu, seigneur, régnez: je ne vous verrai plus.
(1482, 1489-94)

It is important to note that the final decision of the play, true to the courtly tradition, belongs to the woman. Titus's threat to commit suicide if Bérénice should fulfill her "cruel stratagème" serves a double purpose. First it indicates clearly that Titus does love Bérénice and that life for him, if she were dead, would be insufferable. But, secondly, and even more important, it places the burden of decision squarely on the shoulders of Bérénice. She becomes responsible for Titus' life and for their actions:

Non, il n'est rien dont je ne sois capable.
Vous voilà de mes jours maintenant responsable.
(1423-4)

Titus, it is true, has brought Bérénice to the point of comprehension but she is the one who finally accepts the renunciation and so both partake in the tragic catastrophe of the play. At the end she, like Titus, appears lucid, majestic, honourable and glorious, as two courtly lovers who deserve one another should.

The end of the play Bérénice is very tragic:

C'est le renoncement surtout qui apparaît comme tragique, car les personnages ne renoncent pas

> à l'amour humain pour leur salut, mais uniquement pour perpétuer l'image glorieuse de leur moi.10

Though the catastrophe of the play does not involve physical death or the spilling of blood one is nevertheless intensely moved by the very bloodlessness of the ending. "La tristesse majestueuse"[11] which Racine considers to be one of the essentials of tragedy, is most certainly aroused by the sight of two admirable lovers who by adhering to the dictum of courtly love, by preserving their perfect image as courtly lovers for one another renounce one another. Bérénice and Titus are unlike certain characters of previous writers who through great personal sacrifice establish for themselves images of perfection. Upon achieving this perfection these characters experience feelings of triumph and joy. Racine's portrayal of his characters, as we have stated previously, is much more human and more natural. There are no feelings of exaltation in Bérénice and Titus at the end of the play - only intense feelings of loss and sorrow. In effect the spiritual death of Bérénice and Titus at the end of the play is far more effective than their physical death could have been. These two characters, because of their love for one another, die to one another.

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[10] Ibid., p. 120.

[11] J. Racine, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil, 1962), p. 165.

Titus is aware even before the beginning of the play of his situation, and sacrifices his personal life and happiness in order to fulfill his duties: "il ne s'agit plus de vivre, il faut régner" (1102). It is not until late in the play that "Bérénice accepte de vivre comme on accepte de mourir, dans un mouvement d'abnegation qui est un acte de pur amour . . ."[12]. The pathos of this eternal and fatal solitude is expressed for both characters by Bérénice:

> . . .et, pour jamais adieu . . .
> Pour jamais! Ah! seigneur! songez-vous en vous-même
> Combien ce mot cruel est affreux quand on aime?
> Dans un mois, dans un an, comment souffrirons-nous,
> Seigneur, que tant de mers me séparent de vous;
> Que le jour recommence, et que le jour finisse,
> Sans que jamais Titus puisse voir Bérénice,
> Sans que, de tout le jour, je puisse voir Titus?
> (1110-17)

Herein lies the "tristesse majestueuse" or tragedy of Bérénice.

The play, Bérénice, then exploits all the tragic subtlety of courtly love. It offers "le spectacle d'un héros et d'une héroïne admirables, voués à un malheur irrémédiable uniquement à cause de leurs vertus".[13] It depicts two characters who conform closely to the code of courtly love and who are faced with a dilemma. This very dilemma arises from a most important concept of the code of courtly love: that is that the lover must remain worthy of

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[12] J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 241.

[13] Ibid., p. 119.

his lady. Titus, who because of his love for Bérénice has taken up the path of glory and virtue, appreciates fully, from the outset, the dilemma of their situation. He realizes that Rome will not accept Bérénice as empress because of her royal and foreign blood and that he cannot abdicate for such an action would disgrace him and thus render his unworthy of her love. Throughout the play Titus attempts to reveal to Bérénice the full meaning of his dilemma and the necessity of their separation:

> Et l'on peut dire que si Bérénice a entraîné Titus dans la voie de l'honneur et de la perfection c'est Titus finalement qui mène sa maîtresse jusqu'au sommet de la gloire et du renoncement.14

At the end of the play, when Bérénice has arrived at a total comprehension of the situation, she and Titus as a result of their virtue and their mutual desire to maintain their perfect image as courtly lovers, sacrifice their happiness, their love to one another. In so doing they precipitate a bloodless tragedy, but a tragedy which for me is the most moving and effective in Racinian theatre. It is this courtly sacrifice of the two lovers which I believe prompts various critics to term Bérénice a "model

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[14] Ibid., p. 119.

tragedy",[15] "the truest tragedy of Racine"[16] and "la perfection tragique".[17]

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[15]G. Brereton, Jean Racine (Toronto: Cassel & Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 137.

[16]E. Vinaver, Racine and Poetic Tragedy, trans. P. Mansell Jones (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1957), p. 139.

[17]J. Hubert, Essai d'Exégèse, p. 119.

CONCLUSION

In the course of my study, I have examined the theory and conventions of courtly love as presented in Chrétien de Troyes and in Andreas Capellanus, two men who are considered to be the pre-eminent representatives of chivalry. As we have seen, the ideal courtly lover is seized by an irrepressible amorous force and becomes a captive of this love. He attempts to please his lady by the display of his excellence in character and in action. The suitor is obedient to the demands of his "maîtresse" and embarks on any adventure or task to prove that he is worthy of her love. As a result of this love-merit relationship the woman has a position of advantage over her suitors and yields her love only when the suitor has proved his merit. While the courtly lover is attempting to demonstrate his suitability he is tormented by anxiety and the fear that his love will not be reciprocated. He is always conscious of some weakness which might render him unacceptable to his "maîtresse". If a suitor is, indeed, rejected by his lady he experiences contradictory emotions and desires, often loses his senses, or even experiences a desire for death. This twelfth-century system of social conduct, having undergone minor changes through the centuries, I believe, can be seen to be operative in the "tendre" and in the "violent" characters of the seventeenth-century tragedian

Jean Racine.

It was then established that love in Racinian theatre is of a dual and conflicting nature, but that both aspects of Racinian love, the "tendre" and the "violent", can be seen to be directly derived from twelfth-century courtly love. The "tendre" or "galant" characters of Racine, once they have been struck by love, conform to the conventions and dictates of courtly love even if it may jeopardize their lives or their personal happiness. They are forced to perform amorous vassalage to their "maîtresse" and to follow the path of glory, virtue, and perfection for it is precisely these qualities that the Racinian heroine esteems. These characters are lucid in that they realize that if they fulfill the requirements of the code of courtly love they will merit the love of the beloved.

Those personages of Racine, who are characterized by "une passion violente", also appreciate and recognize the courtly code of social conduct. With them the basic theory or system of courtly love has not changed. Racine, however, by the intensification and humanization of certain aspects of this code is able to introduce into his theatre a violent, brutal and destructive passion. Racine's originality lies in the manner of showing the effects of this love on certain unfortunate characters.

These characters, as we have indicated, follow closely

the principles of the courtly code. Difficulties arise for them because they, unlike the "tendre" characters, are not perfect courtly lovers. They, like many twelfth-century suitors, are conscious of some inferiority, usually moral or heroic, which prevents them from meriting their beloved. They are, as a result, tormented by anxiety or the fear of failure in love. These sentiments are further accentuated by the presence of a rival who is infinitely superior and who holds the heart of the loved one captivated. This situation often causes the unfortunate lovers to lose their lucidity, to break the code of courtly love and thus further alienate the loved one. It was learned in the literature of Chrétien de Troyes and of Andreas Capellanus that a courtly lover, when faced with the complete disapproval of the loved one, is given over to contradictory emotions, insanity, or even suicide. The portrayal of love by Racine, however, is much more intense and when a Racinian personage has lost all hope for success in love the effects are much more intense, more turbulent, and more violent. The resultant effects on these characters are sentiments of love and hate, insanity, and very often a violent and destructive passion. Herein lies the originality and inventiveness of Racine. By giving a more natural and intense portrayal of love and its effects on certain characters, the seventeenth-century dramatist, while

remaining true to the theory and conventions of courtly love, introduces a violent and brutal passion into his portrayal of love.

The nature and effects of both the "tendre" and the "violent" loves have been examined in three of Racine's plays. The "tendre" characters were seen to conform almost in every aspect of the twelfth-century code of courtly conduct. In Alexandre le Grand the courtly relationship between two couples: Alexandre and Cléofile, Porus and Axiane, was observed. In both cases the submissive suitors attempted to please their respective "maîtresses" by the display of their virtue and valour. In Andromaque the reader is confronted with the courtly devotion and love of Andromaque for her slain and idealized husband, Hector. The entire dilemma of the play arises from Andromaque's refusal to compromise her fidelity to the memory of her perfect husband and to accept the advances of an inferior suitor. In Bérénice Racine once again uses the concepts of the courtly doctrine to involve his principal characters in a difficult situation. Titus, because of his political responsibilities and the courtly concept which requires a suitor to preserve his glory and thus to remain worthy of his lady's love, is forced to reject Bérénice and to remain emperor. As a result of this particular courtly concept the reader witnesses the tragic sacrifice of love to love.

In these same plays one meets the unfortunate Racinian

personages who are dominated by "une passion violente". I believe that in Alexandre le Grand it is Taxile who marks the introduction of naturalism and violence into Racine's portrayal of love. Taxile does not break from the established concepts of the code of courtly love but because of a moral, heroic deficiency and an intensification of the effects of this love he is gripped by a violent and destructive passion. The potentially violent and tragic aspects of courtly love, which Racine has discovered in his treatment of Taxile, are fully exploited in Andromaque by the characters Pyrrhus, Hermione, and Oreste - all of whom meet a tragic end. The aggressively violent passion of certain characters of Alexandre le Grand and of Andromaque is, as we have seen, in contrast with the sublime resignation of the characters of Bérénice.

As a result of my study, then, I am convinced that the principles of the code of courtly love are very much evident in the works of Racine and particularly in the three plays with which I have dealt. Courtly love has been seen not only to have an important influence on the temperament and actions of Racine's characters but also to affect their tragic destiny.

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