

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report
of
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Agnes Keefe for the degree of Master of Arts. They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Gust. H. van Roosbroeck

Chairman

E. F. Vacker

C. A. Moore

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report
of
Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given **Agnes Keefe** final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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316017

Supplementary Notes on the Life and Works of Louis de Boissy.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of Minnesota

by

Agnes Keefe

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the

Master of Arts Degree

June

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Supplementary Notes on the Life and Works of Louis De Boissy.

The following table shows Mr. Zeek's treatment of "L'Élève de Terpsicore," "Le Français à Londres," "Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt," "Melpomène Vengée," "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi," and "Pamela en France, L'Élève de Terpsicore, date, publication, résumée, meaning of work, no mention of Voltaire.

Zeek Table de matiere p. 262.

"Le Français à Londres, C'est peut-etre la plus connue des pièces de Boissy, - Jugement de M. Léon. -

Allusion faite par M. Lanson à La piece -

L'Intérêt augmenté par la présence à Londres de Voltaire - Popularité de cette comédie en dépit de sa sévérité envers les Français. -

Sujet et Analyse de la pièce - Les préjugés du Marquis à Londres. -

Observations superficielles mais souvent justes sur l'Angleterre et sur les Anglais. - Leur taciturnité, leur négligence des femmes

Le sentiment de l'amour en France, et en Angleterre, selon Eliante. -

Le jeune Lord Houzey: le bon et mauvais côté de ce caractère,

Jacques Rosbif: le type du riche bourgeois Anglais, lourd et inélegant. - Celui - ci est mis aux prises avec le Marquis. Le jugement

de Lord Craff - Comparaison des caractères français et Anglais -

Conclusion de la pièce

I have added to the foregoing, the author's own criticism of his play taken from the Dictionnaire Néologique, notes on the genre which followed this play, naming one play that it was supposed to have directly inspired and have given more complete information regarding the various editions of the work.

Le Triomphe de l'intérêt.

Examen de la pièce,- L'affaire Dulis-Pelissier et l'affaire Duclos-Duchemin - Conclusion immorale de la pièce,- Conséquences funestes
Manque de'unités d'action. The object of my work in treating this play was to indicate the sources of Le Triomphe de L'interet, to identify all the personages of the play, to bring out their importance in the society of the author's day and to add some interesting information obtained from the chansonnier Historique du XVIIIe Siècle.

Melpomène Vengée, Date, résumé; sources information obtained from Desboulmiers Histoire du Théâtre Italien. He hasn't seen manuscript of play which exists in Bibliothèque Nationale.

Le Je Ne Sais Quoi - Jouée par Beancolelli et Sylvia - Encore un pièce reposant sur l'esprit seul,- Sujet et analyse, Le regim^{ent} de la Calotte.- Compte rendu du Mercure sur la pièce. Dans la définition des Je Ne Sais Quoi, Boissy a devancé Marivaux.

I have added a discussion of the role of Arlequin, and stated that in this play Boissy was a precursor of Rousseau.

Pamela en France. Date, résumé; Boissy's Pamela is taken directly from Prevost's translation of the novel. Criticism of play, its failure, parody on it by Dancourt. I have added to this, a comparison of Boissy's Pamela with the English play by James Dance on the same subject. Have discussed névelle de la Channee's play Pamela and have given a criticism taken from the Année Littéraire, concerning the play. I have corrected Zeek's statement regarding the inspiration of Boissy's play.

Introduction.

In 1914 there appeared for the Doctorat d'Université, a thesis on Louis de Boissy, which has sufficiently stressed the literary merit and the historical importance of his works. This thesis, however, has given some of Boissy's works only a superficial treatment, while the documentation underlying others is incomplete. (1)

To point to his most important shortcoming, Mr. Zeek considers as lost, twelve unpublished manuscripts of Boissy which exist in the Bibliothèque Nationale. His treatment of these lost plays is based exclusively on some fragmentary information in Desboulmier's "Histoire Anecdotique et raisonnée du Théâtre Italien", Paris, 1769, 7 volumes. His statements are therefore incomplete and erroneous in some respects. Besides, Mr. Zeek does not mention in his bibliography and does not seem to have consulted some of the most important bibliographical and informational works on the 18th century, such as the "Catalogue Soleinne", "Mémoires Secrets de Bacheaumont", "Année Littéraire", Tome 1, 1759, which contains a biography and criticism of Boissy's works. This was no doubt a source from which most of the later commentators drew their information, because, if not the first,

it was one of the first criticisms of the author's work, as it appeared a year after his death.

The object of my work is to rectify these oversights, to give more complete information on some of the manuscripts of the unpublished works of Boissy, to treat more thoroughly his first work, "L'Élève de Terpsicore", to point out some unassembled biographical details, and to complete the identification in plays already discussed by Mr. Zeek and to add to the bibliography certain other works. (2)

I want to thank Mr. Van Roosbroeck for putting at my disposal one copy of an unpublished manuscript of Boissy in the Bibliothèque Nationale as well as some rare editions from his own collection which he wishes to publish later in extenso.

(1) "Louis de Boissy, auteur Comique", (1694-1758) par Charles Franklyn Zeek, Jr. - Grenoble, Allier Frères, 1914, 265 pages.

(2) Especially worthy of comment are Voltaire's works, Moland edition, and the "Dictionnaire Néologique" by Abbé Desfontaines, 1731.

Supplementary Biographical Details.

Boissy's life has already been studied, as is indicated above. His biographers have neglected a few incidents of interest, which are presented here.

The following poem gives an interesting detail on Boissy's life. It is the first documentary information we have on the author. It appeared in 1716, before Boissy had made his debut in the literary world with his satirical work "L'Élève de Terpsicore". It throws a bit of light on the writer's position and shows the popularity he enjoyed as a poet of occasional verse before he began his career as a playwright.

"Tandis qu'un pauvre auteur épuisé par l'étude
 Sans habits, sans argent dans cette saison rude
 Souvent est prêt d'aller n'ayant ni feu ni lieu
 Prendre pour dernier gîte un lit à l'hôtel dieu
 Boissy, sans aller loin, avec tout son mérite
 N'estant pas plus aisé pour les vers qu'il débite
 Par le vent, par la pluie, à pied, de tout costé.
 N'est toujours dans cet art qu'un poète croté.
 Pourtant, il écrit bien, il fait des vers sans peine
 Et fournit à qui veut en donner pour étrennes
 Le premier jour de l'an je vois mille laquais

Chez les belles couris les porter en paquets
 Et comme des soleils ici toutes les dames
 Brillent dans ses rondeaux et dans ses épigrammes
 Mais Jasmin et La Fleur qui n'ont pas son talent
 Partout on les envoie un généreux gallant
 Présenter une sonnet qui flatte, qui cajolle
 Ce matin plusieurs fois ont reçu Lapistolle
 Il vaut mieux être le valet confident
 D'un charmant officier ou d'un surintendant
 Que l'amy d'apollon et vestir dans la Craffe.

The foregoing verses are taken from a "Recueil de Poésies" in manuscript form dated 1716. In addition to establishing Boissy's position as a poet it very well brings out that pathetic struggle for mere existence which filled the greater part of his early life.

The next time we hear of the author is in 1717. This time he is in relation with Voltaire as we learn from Vol. 1, p. 300, of the latter's works, Moland edition. This informs us that Boissy was in correspondance with Voltaire. It is significant, because in 1718, one year later, Boissy writes his first work which was largely in defense of this friend.

Boissy was received at the academy August 27th, 1754. It was the custom for a member newly received to write in prose a speech in praise of the deceased academician whose place he was taking. Boissy, however, did not conform to this regulation but abandoned the precedent and wrote his éloge of Destouches in verse. ^{which he does not quote} The following verses are an extract from the ode. They are taken from the "Tableau historique de L'esprit et du caractère des littérateurs français", 1785, vol. lll, p. 22.

"Je frémiss; où va mon audace?
 Quel est le péril que je cours?
 Le grand-Homme que je remplace
 Est le Térence de nos jours.
 J'ose marcher dans sa carrière;
 Mon's Destouches est près de Molière;
 Autant que je suis loin de lui;
 Ami riant de sa sagesse,
 Il sut divertir sans bassesse,
 Et nous instruire sans ennui.
 Il ne borna point son génie
 Dans les limites de L'Auteur;
 Il fut pour servir sa patrie,
 Utile négociateur;
 Il sut, comme un plan dramatique,

"Conduire un projet politique;
 D'Adisson il suivit les pas;
 Et contre l'aveugle ignorance
 Prouva qu'un écrivain qui pense
 A l'esprit de tous les états."

I am inserting another anecdote on Boissy's life in the chapter called "Le Français à Londres". This is of unusual interest, for here we have from the author's own lips a criticism of his most popular work.

not mentioned by Zerk

In "Le XVIIIe Siècle Littéraire", Vol. IV, there appears another incident from Boissy's life less significant in character depicting a silly affair, in which the author figured and was arrested. These few additional biographical notes serve as an introduction to a study of his real work. His first production of importance was "L'Élève de Terpsicore" which appeared in 1718.

L'Élève de Terpsicore.

"L'Élève de Terpsicore ou Le Nourrison de La Satyre", a two volume satirical work by Boissy, was published in 1718. In the first pages are two petitions, one addressed to his Highness, the Duke of Orleans, the other to Duke Albert, in which the author begs indulgence on the part of his readers and expresses the hope that his book will see the light.

In "L'Élève de Terpsicore", Boissy disguises himself under the name of Lysandre, a young man who loves passionately "les belles Lettres". He has retired to the country, where he intends to write verses but fails to find inspiration, and refuses to follow the example of most of the cold, uninspired poets of his day.

Lysandre is not at all in sympathy with the Moderns. He considers them rhymers with poor taste and false models. Lysandre decides to take a trip to mont Parnasse and there court Terpsicore, the muse of music and dancing, who is said by Boissy also to be the Muse of satiric poetry. The poet, angry because Terpsicore doesn't come to his aid, makes a satire against her. When he finishes his ode, he finds himself in the domain of Terpsicore. He sees Horace, Juvenal, Régnier and Boileau, pursuing the simpletons, the moderns. Lysandre then goes toward the

Fountain, where he sees Marot, who is lecturing to a troop of young drinkers. Then follows "le Sermon de Marot", in which Marot urges his listeners to follow the footsteps of the Ancients and to abandon the Moderns. The attack against the Moderns is continued in verse and prose. There is, within the satire, a satire called "Telisciliade", which is directed against a certain Telescle, a friend of Mlle. de Scudery, who gathered in her salon a coterie of the Moderns. Here false models, bad verse and wretched versifiers flourished. Here one met the Abbé du Jarri, who successfully competed with Voltaire for a prize in poetry in 1713. Boissy was on friendly terms with Voltaire; a small amount of this work is given to the great 18th century wit. (1) Among the dramatic poets severely criticised are L'abbé Pellegrin, La Grange, Roi, Crebillon, Nadal, Dancourt, du Freny, Mericault, Destouches.

La Motte and Fontenelle are given special attention. They are considered the leaders of the modern school. The Houdarists were bad because they followed bad models. Boissy maintains that the Ancients complained of the imperfect interpretation given of their works by the Moderns. There is a part of the satire called the "Fulmination de La Motte" and the Apotheose of Me. Arouet. It consists of a series of insults directed against La Motte for preaching his heretical doctrines. Here he is called "blasphemer of Homer". Boissy's liking for Voltaire is again shown in this part of the work when he says:

"C'est Arrouet, dit le Fils de Latone,
 Si beau grimpeur je n'ai vu de long-tems.
 Oh! Oh! gagner le sommet à vingt ans
 Sans s'écarter, bien a trouvé la piste:
 Je crois, mignon, qu'êtes bon Homeriste;" etc.

(2) page 44.

The first volume also contains odes of La Motte. These have been transposed into prose to show that they are essentially prosaic. These may have been taken from Gacon directly; they may be an imitation of his work. (3) The second volume opens with two tables, one devoted to books that could be made use of as examples of good verse, and another which could serve as a model for bad poets. On the list of authors of bad verse occur especially the names of Ronsard, Chapelain, La Motte, Fontenelle, Perrault, Crébillon, Dancourt and Scarron. On the table listing good verse-writers appear such names as Marot, who during the 18th century was generally considered as one of the most noteworthy writers of the 16th century, Corneille, La Fontaine, Malherbe, Voiture, Boileau and Fenelon. Then Boissy goes on to subdivide his good and bad verses tables into several categories such as "Modeles de vers Empoulez", "Modeles de Vers Simples et Sublimes", "Modeles de Vers Grands et Nobles", etc.

In conclusion it may be well said that this book was written in defense, both of J.B. Rousseau and of Voltaire. As to

Boissy's relations with Voltaire, there is a statement in volume 1, page 300, of Voltaire's works, Moland edition, to the effect that the two men were corresponding with each other. As has been said, Boissy took Voltaire's part against l'abbé du Jarri, when in 1713, the latter was successful in a poetical contest at Voltaire's expense. Although Boissy admired Voltaire much, his esteem for J.B. Rousseau was even greater. This we know from the text itself, page 85, vol. 1:

"Eh bien, levez vous reprit Terpsicore, je vous pardonne, j'excuse la légèreté si naturelle aux personnes de votre âge et de votre nation; d'autant mieux que vous m'êtes nécessaires. Arrouet, le plus cher de mes nourrissons après Rousseau ne plus faire tête aux Modernes; je viens d'apprendre sa disgrâce avec douleur. Mettes vous en état de supléer à son défaut, et ne laissez profiter les Lamotists du malheur de mes élèves."

Although "L'Élève de Terpsicore" has for its purpose the exaltation of Voltaire and Rousseau on the one hand, and the attack on the Modernists and La Motte on the other hand, back of both of these we can see the author's defense of himself and of his work in the field of satire.

Since Boissy was in relation with Voltaire in 1717, this book was written during Voltaire's imprisonment. He was released in 1718.

- Note (1) Abbé du Jarri wrote an ode on Louis XIII, which won the Academy prize.
- Note (2) "L'Élève de Terpsicore", page 44.
- Note (3) Querard has been consulted but gives no information on this point *La France Littéraire*

- (1) Lanson. Histoire de la littérature française,
p. 711.
- (2) See bibliography p. 53.
- (3) Mr. Zuk taking Hawkins as an authority page 63 chap. III
Thesis on Bossy by Zuk.

Le Français à Londres. 1727

"Le Français à Londres" was the most successful of Boissy's plays. By that I do not mean that it was his best piece of work, but that it did more in a material way to establish the prestige and renown of its author than even his best known work, "L'Homme du Jour", which in most respects is superior to it.

Its popularity is proven by the numerous allusions to it found everywhere, in the critical writings of Boissy's contemporaries and in the criticisms of men of today, such as Lanson, who considers it worthy of mention in his history of French Literature. The long run it enjoyed on the stage, lasting probably until 1802, when the last edition of it was printed, also indicates its favor with the public.

Mr. Zeek, taking Hawkins as an authority, suggests that the reputation of this play was acquired through indirect, if not direct reference to Voltaire, who at this time was meeting with unusual success in London. In all probability, Boissy did have Voltaire in mind since, as we have already stated, Boissy and he were on friendly terms; as "L'Élève de Terpsicore" shows, our author was an ardent admirer of Voltaire and spent no small amount of his energy in defense of the great wit.

A discussion of the play would be of little value without a résumé of it. "Le Français à Londres", a comedy in one act in prose, was represented for the first time, July 19th, 1727. Other editions of the play were published in 1735, 1759, 1773 and 1802.

The story of the play is as follows; the scene is in London in a hotel. The Marquis of Polinville, a man of wit but not of common sense, and the Baron of Polinville, a man of common sense, brothers, both present themselves for the hand of Eliante, an English widow. Eliante has already been promised in marriage by her father to an Englishman, a certain Jacques Rosbif. Milord Craff, the father of Eliante, on seeing his daughter's dislike for the man he has intended for her, gives her the privilege of choosing for herself the man she is to marry. Eliante declines her father's offer and decides to leave her future to his judgment. She does not fail however, to make her father realize her partiality for the Baron, the man she really loves. Milord's choice of son-in-laws finally falls upon the Baron because he is a man of common sense.

This play is not so much a comedy of character as one of manners. In the early 18th century neither France nor England knew or understood each other. France's idea of England and her people came from not altogether reliable sources. It was largely

acquired through second hand information, either from enthusiasts who had a tendency to exaggerate the good qualities of the British, or from people who, disliking them, made it a point to emphasize their faults.

In 1726 Béal de Muralt thought that the English had little education, much money, and all possible opportunities for devoting themselves to vice. (1) L'Abbé Desfontaines does not seem to agree with Muralt and he has a tendency to represent the other extreme when he says; "On apprend aux jeunes gens les lois, les interets, et les droits de la Nation..... Il est certain qu'il n'y a aucun pays ou la Vertu soit plus estimée et ou le vice soit plus en horreur!" Dédieu, in his work on Montesquieu, says that Desfontaines' idea of the English was the accepted one in France as late as 1760. (2)

The Frenchman, at this period, thought of his English neighbor as a man of very strongly marked characteristics. He imagined that he was an ardent patriot, a lover of liberty, a passionate conservative character. He also thought that in England people spent their time talking of public affairs, finance and commerce. For them, even a bourgeois was supposed to have his part in the quarrels of the nation and participate in the politics of his country. (3)

Boissy, to a certain degree, exemplifies the French attitude, but his point of view is unusually fair. Among his seem-

ingly superficial observations on English life and customs are many just criticisms. The austerity of the English, their treatment of their wives, their cold business-like courtship which can well be contrasted with the sentimental courting of the French, are very well brought out in this play. The inelegance and stolidity of the English bourgeois, as typified by Rosbif, the exaggerated place of common sense and reason are justly given as some of the outstanding characteristics of the people across the channel.

To Boissy, then, the Englishman seemed virtuous because of his republican instincts. He was reputed to scorn privileges and he had the ability to discriminate between personal value and fictitious titles. In Boissy's play, an English business man, who responds to the suggestive name of Rosbif, voices this supposed or real disdain of the 18th century Briton for hereditary titles, which are not backed up by personal merit. "Je me moque moi, d'une noblesse imaginaire; les vrais gentilshommes, ce sont les honnetes gens; il n'y a que le vice de roturier". (4)

From Muralt's letters through Voltaire's "Lettres Philosophiques", down to the letters of Abbé Leblanc, one notices a constant increase in the esteem for England, which degenerated into a real anglomania at certain periods. The Abbé Leblanc (5) on his opinions and relations ^{to French literature} drew a somewhat conventional portrait of the English, which is also to be found in Rousseau's "Edward Bombston" and in the works of the Abbé Prevost. He is reasonable; he thinks slowly; is frank and outspoken, and is a man rather of

Muraet Lettres N + V 1665 - 1749

Page 9 Sacon wrole Odes in Verse date

Voetaire Lettres Philosophiques

Testament politique, 1754 - autre
traduction sous le titre de, Réflexions
sur l'état présent de l'Angleterre,
par l'abbé Le Blanc 1754

solid sense than of brilliance. His conversation is not like that of the Frenchman, fireworks of wit and invention, but is rather dry and serious. He is tenacious in his purposes. His crude exterior, his brusque manners and his violent, melancholy temperament make a sharp contrast to the gay, pleasure loving disposition of the Frenchman.

In 1756 there begins a reaction. In that year, appeared a very important work entitled "Préservatif contre l'Anglomanie" which is attributed to a certain Fougereais de Montbrun. In that year too, Abbé Leblanc writes with sadness on the imaginary virtues of the people he loved so much. In his letters of 1745 he had gone so far as to say that the English nation was the most perfect on the earth. He now stresses the British shortcomings in character in a pamphlet which has been little studied. (6) After Leblanc, the Frenchman Genest contributed to destroy the then existing false idea of Anglo-Saxon virtue with his numerous volumes which he published between 1755 and 1762. (7) Up to the very end of the century there appear interesting parallels between the characters of the two countries, such as "L'Espion français à Londres" by de Goudar, which came out in 1779.

Boissy's play is in fact an early and neglected document on this quarrel over British superiority, over alternatives from disparagement to exaggerated esteem and back again. In general, Boissy is pro British. But when it is remembered that in 1727

the star of England was still in the ascendant one has to acknowledge that his treatment of the English is unusually general.

In the following lines between the Baron and Milord Craff he says that the purpose of his play is an earnest endeavor to bring about an understanding between the two nations. He tried to show that both France and England produced their share of foolish and of sensible men; that while differences did exist, they were not of a nature that would tend to make these peoples antagonistic or unsympathetic to each other.

Milord Craff:

"Vous êtes français et vous êtes raisonnable".

Le Baron:

"Eh Monsieur, pouvez - vous donner dans un préjugé si peu digne d'un galant homme, tel que vous me paraissez être, et décider de toute une nation sur un étourdi comme celui que vous venez de voir? Croyez-moi, Monsieur, il est en France des gens raisonnables autant qu' ailleurs: et s'il se trouve parmi nous des impertinens, nous les regardons du même oeil que vous, et nous sommes les premiers à connaître et à jouer leur ridicule. D'ailleurs, c'est un malheur que nous partageons avec les autres peuples. Chaque nation a ses travers, chaque pays a ses originaux. Sortez donc, Monsieur, d'une erreur qui vous fait tort à vous même et rendez-vous à la raison dont vous faites tant de cas. (8) Scene 13, p. 43.

As has already been said, the play had a most flattering success. The author of the article on Boissy in the Année

Littéraire in speaking of the play says, "Malgré ses défauts, 'Le Français à Londres' est une de nos plus jolies petites pièces. La charge des ridicules est peut-être le défaut le plus excusable au théâtre, où il ne faut point des nuances délicates, mais des couleurs vives et fortes pour frapper les sens de la multitude." (9)

The following notes are taken from pages 96 to 100 inclusive of the Dictionnaire Néologique. They are contained in a "Lettre au Rat Colotin", and are of particular importance because of their general criticism of Boissy's works, specially significant here because they refer to the play just treated. They are Boissy's own words, of value because they supply us with first hand information about himself and his work. Here Boissy is the Bel Esprit, overheard in dialogue, probably while dining in a restaurant.

"Caché sous le comptoir du café de Procope j'entendis un bel esprit qui parlait ainsi:

"Molière, disait-il a du bon, il connaît comme moi, le ridicule des hommes mais faisait-il des tragedies? Il avait plus de bon sens que d'esprit; il copiet les anciens et n'avait point ce caractère original, qui fait le succes de ma pièce. Mon génie est toute ma ressource. J'y puise ces caractères nouveaux, qui forcent le public de m'applaudir; j'ai étudié son goût je le tiens: les traits, voila ce qu'il lui faut. Il y viendra, morbleu, il y viendra; je ne suis point épuisé; je l'amuserai long-tems; mon génie se développe de plus en plus; ma dernière pièce en est une preuve; ce ne sont que pétards que grenades, que bombes que foudres qui

éblouissent, qui frappent; aussi, est-ce la seule pièce où je me reconnoisse; je sens pour elle des entrailles de Père; cessez donc vos critiques fausses plâtes, communes, maussades, dites quelque chose de mieux, si vous voulez que je vous écoute, allons, parlez, quoi vous reculez? Vous faites bien; car que désiriez-vous? Que feriez-vous? Vous échoueriez. Vous vous feriez siffler; qu'objecter contre un tel ouvrage? Qu'objecter Monsieur? (Lui repartit brusquement un certain misanthrope aussi grossier et aussi brutalement sincère que Jacques Rosbif). Bien car Muralt et Stelle sont à l'abri de la censure "Si c'est en leur faveur que vous avez renoncé à être original. Vous ne ferez pas mal toutes les fois que vous composerez, de faire de même, votre gloire y perdra, mais le Public y gagnera. vos ouvrages ne passent le médiocre; souvent ils ne l'atteignent pas, et cela vous arrive toutes les fois, que vous ne copiez personne. A vous entendre cependant, il n'y a eu et il n'y aura jamais d'auteur, qui vous égale, et sur quel fondement vous flattez vous de la sorte?

"Le Public ne vous a jamais applaudi; aurez-vous pris son indulgence pour une approbation? Quoi qu'il en soit, le succès de votre espèce de comédie, n'a été ni assez brillant, ni assez durable pour vous inspirer de la vanité poétique. Cessez donc de vous dire à vous même comme votre petit maître. Ah! Que je suis un joli garçon, que j'ai d'esprit, que j'amuse, que je fais rire, non, non, Monsieur, ce n'est pas vous qui plaisez, c'est

vosre ami l'acteur, à qui vous aviez confié vosre principal rôle. J'ai entendu dire plus souvent, allons voir Quinault que je n'ai entendu dire, allons voir la pièce nouvelle.

"Un certain 'Élève de Terpsicore' aurait dû vous apprendre que rassembler des mots, compiler, par ici, par là, quelques traits d'esprits les coudre ensemble, et en faire un tout grossier, sans ordre, sans liaison n'est pas un assez grand mérite pour emporter les suffrages du Public ni pour se placer modestement à coté de Molière.

'Hort.

Neque enim concludere versum

Dixeris esse satis.'

"Non Monsieur, cela ne suffit pas pour faire le grand auteur il faut avoir de l'invention de l'enthousiasme, et de la noblesse; auriez-vous quelques unes de ses parties?

"Auriez vous comme Molière, attrappé ce comique noble et simple en mem-tems. Prendriez-vous comme lui le ridicule? Il faut que cela ne soit point, puisque ni le François, ni l'Anglais ne se reconnoissent point dans les caractères que vous leurs répétez. Peut-on s'amuser, disent-ils à une farce si mal conduite, et si mal imaginée? Que signifie ce petit maître pédagogue, qui nous étourdit avec son fratras de définitions qui traînent les rues? Que veut-il dire avec son poison Anglais qu'il donne pour négociant de Londres. Son Milord Craff qu'il

peint comme un homme exempt de préjugés, ne débute-t-il pas bien pour nous en convaincre.

"Est-il bien sage de donner précipitamment sa fille à un inconnu, parce qu'il ne lui dit pas des injures, et qu'il ne met pas l'épée à la main contre lui? Mais que penser de la veuve Anglaise, qui ne demande, à M. le Baron que quelques heures pour se déterminer à l'épouser, et qui se pique pourtant de réfléchir beaucoup parcequ'elle est Anglaise?"

"Je vous avoue que la brusquerie de ce misanthrope m'étonna. Je craignis que l'auteur naturellement impatient ne l'accablât de traits car il est rude joueur lorsqu'il s'échauffe, cependant il se contenta de jeter quelques regards méprisants sur lui ensuite il se leva fit une révérence, et prit congé de la compagnie en disant, quel calotin, quel maussade? Cette réponse cavalière fit sourire la compagnie qui n'était pas trop mortifiée de l'embarras où elle le voyoit; quelqu'un, ajouta même qu'il seroit bon que des personnes raisonnables voulussent de temps en temps faire des semblables sorties, sur tous les auteurs trop contents d'eux-mêmes: nous ne serions plus accablés de tant de misérables livres; et peut-être enfin, rameneroit-on à la raison tous ceux qui s'élèvent contre la critique, l'intérêt qu'ils ont de la condamner cesseroit à mesure qu'ils n'écriraient plus.

In the "Histoire de L'Ancien Théâtre en France" by A. Ducasse there is a notice on the play saying that it no doubt had been the inspiration for "L'Anglais à Paris" by Foote, which

was represented in London in 1753.

Both Boissy's and Foote's plays seem to have given rise to a whole genre, as the following notes from Brunet's table show.

L'Anglais ou le fou raisonnable, 1781, Soleinne 2246 & 3211

Anglais à Bagdad Theaulon, Moreau Curry 2562

Anglais à Bordeaux, 1763, Favart, 2005, 2006, Soleinne.

Anglais à la foire, 1763, 3422 Soleinne.

L'Anglais à Paris, Bertin, C. d. Aitilly, 1783,

Soleinne, 3211, 3346

Anglais à Paris C. Foote tr. de l'anglais 2e suppl.

Soleinne, 431, 4917.

L'Anglais de retour à Paris, tr. fr. Soleinne 431.

Le Français à Amsterdam, about 1780, Soleinne, 2066, 2872.

Les Français à Burgos c. Denoit 1796, Soleinne, 2516

Les Français à Cythère 1798, Soleinne 244, 2521.

Les Français à Francfort 1741 2e suppl. Soleinne,

345, 3785

Les Français en Alger, 1804 Dumaniant 2249

Les Français en Angleterre op. 2 v. 3211, 289, 3301.

Les Français en Espagne, 1823, Soleinne, 3146.

My study of this play has given more complete information on its various editions, has added the author's own criticism from material found in "Dictionnaire Néologique," has supplied information on one play which was inspired by it and has given some data on the genre which followed.

- Note (1) Muralt, op, Lettre IV and V, 1665-1749.
- Note (2) Montesquieu et la tradition politique, pp. 304-24.
Dedieu.
- Note (3) Albert de Luynes - Voyage en Espagne, suive d'une re-
lation d'une voyage en Angleterre - 1717.
- Note (4) Note from play necessary. *Page 19* *Home I Boccage's*
- Note (5) Lettres d'un Francois - 1745.
- Note (6) Pamphlet little studied. Le Patriot Anglais, traduit
de l'Anglais by John Tell Truth, par un avocat du
Parlement de Paris Geneva, 1756.
- Note (7) La verite revelee, 1755, L'Etat Politique de l'Angleterre
1758, in 10 volumes.
Essais historiques sur l'Angleterre, 1761 etc.
- Note (8) From play.

*in French
with Latin &
English L?*

Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt.

"Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt", a one act comedy in verse by Boissy was presented for the first time in November, 1730. Other editions of the play appeared in 1734 and 1741. The 1741 edition was published under the title of "Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt, comédie sur les mémoires anecdotes de M. Duliz et la suite de ses aventures après la catastrophe de celle de Mademoiselle Péliissier, Actresse de L'Opéra de Paris par Desforges comédien."

The following résumé of the play will be necessary for an understanding of the allusions to it, made later in this chapter. Mercury, the god of liars, merchants, and thieves has left his home with the gods to offer his services to Interest, who has become the idol of the century. A number of scenes follow, in which Mercury, in Interest's behalf, interviews the several characters of the play, among whom are Jacquin, Fanchon, David, Tapi-nois, Ventrebleu and others. All of these people come seeking Interest's favor for the purpose of furthering their own selfish ambitions. By means of flattering promises, Mercury is successful in winning many partisans for his friend Interest. Of all of those who come under Mercury's influence, Arlequin alone has the strength to resist his tempting offers. Then comes that interesting scene in which the two characters, Honor and Interest, with their followers, appear face to face and argue over their respective merits.

Interest, after displaying his vast wealth manages to lead all of Honor's comrades to his side. The play ends with Interest celebrating his victory over his opponent.

The object of this study is to indicate the sources of "Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt", to identify all the personages of the play, to bring out their importance in the society of the author's day, and to add some interesting information obtained from the *Chanoonnier Historique du XVIIIe Siècle*. It is an attempt to complete the work of Mr. Zeek, who has already treated this play in his thesis on Boissy, which appeared in 1914.

The word "interest" as used in the title of the play, refers to the vice of selfishness. With David, it is the folly which drives him to satisfy his own personal grudge at the expense of another's life. In the case of Fanchon, it is ambition which leads her to sacrifice everything even her virtue, for a successful career on the stage. Hipolite is an example of a man intent upon achieving material wealth at the expense of love; in similar fashion, through the play, the author has selected characters who typify various kinds of egoism and self interest.

Besides Interest, there are four other abstract characters, namely, Honor, Bankruptcy, Mercury and Arlequin. Arlequin represents the just man who refuses to be influenced by flattery and ambition. This is the second instance in which Boissy uses Arlequin to typify the good and uncorrupted person. He appears in "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi",¹⁷³⁷ where the author makes a fool of him and brings him to a sad end.

Mercury here represents liars, robbers and merchants. Honor and Bankruptcy can be dismissed by saying that their titles are self explanatory. In addition to the foregoing abstract characters appear Fanchon, David, Jacquin, Ventrebleu, Phèdre, Hipolite, and Tapinois. All of these are distinct personalities; they present real people who existed during Boissy's time, men and women who played a more or less prominent part in the public life of his day.

In the "Journal Historique et Anecdotique du Règne de Louis XV", by J.F. Barbier, Paris chez Renourd et cie M. DCCC XVII, there is an interesting account of the story of du Lys. In December, 1739, Barbier gives the following facts of the case. A certain Mr. du Lys, called David, in Boissy's play, a rich Jew, living in Holland, was the annual recipient of some seven or eight hundred pounds of revenue. He left Holland, and came to Paris, where he met the actress, Mlle. Péliissier, one of the most facinating stage women of his time. After du Lys had spent a great amount of money upon the woman and had given her many valuable gifts, she became his mistress. Later the Jew left Paris. He did not go away, however, without a quarrel with the actress. He accused her of having stolen from him diamonds he had not given her, and he said that she refused to return them to him.

Du Lys was furious and determined to have the affair righted by law. He secured the assistance of several persons, but when it came to a settlement of the matter, nothing was done, owing to the influence of the actress, who was greatly loved by the public.

Barbier again mentions the affair in May, 1731, seven months before the appearance of Boissy's play. This time he speaks of a Jew called du Lys, who was leaving Holland. He says that this man was fifty-five years old, and that he was going to Paris where he had as a mistress, a certain Mlle. Pelissier. He here relates many interesting details of the affair. He states that du Lys escorted the actress to court in a carriage drawn by six horses, bought the best seats in the theatre for her, and showed her the greatest possible attention. The end of this liason was tragic, however. Du Lys left Paris and had a lawsuit against this woman because he heard that she was willingly receiving the attentions of a certain Mr. Francoeur, a famous violinist of the Opera. This deceit, on the part of Mlle. Pélissier, made the Jew very angry and he decided to have revenge. He returned to Holland and sent Joinville to Paris to kill Francoeur, who was an artist of renown, and one who was greatly liked by the French people. The Jew's plot to kill was discovered and both du Lys and Joinville were hung in effigy. Joinville was later hung in fact.

This matter came near being very serious for Mlle. Pelissier because a contemporary law forbade an actress to have relations with a Jew. Barbier said that Mlle. Pelissier was to blame for the whole matter but that it was passed over lightly because she was needed in the opera.

The following verses are taken from two poems, "Le Trio Comique", which also treats of the affair; the first is an extract from a poem in Barbier's "Journal Historique", page 345, and the other is from "Le Trio Comique":

Pelissier, Marseille a des shaines
 Bien moins funestes que les tienés
 Sous tes fers on est accablée
 Sans que jamais rien tranquilisé
 Quand on les porte, on est volé.
 On est roué quand on les blesse.

Admirez combien l'on estime
 Le cour d'archet plus que la rime
 Que Voltaire soit assomme,
 Themis se tait, la cour s'en jupe
 Que Francoeur ne soit qu'alarmé
 Le seul complot mene à la roué.

Le Trio Comique.

Un riche juif et un dévot curé
 Voulant devaliser une coquette fine
 (Les homs ne font rien au marché
 Puisque aisément on les devine)
 Chacun de ces acteurs parait fort occupé
 à remplir son role comique;
 Le juif y joue l'amant dupé,
 La donzelle y défend la récolte lubrique;
 Le curé, comme un bon pasteur,
 Destinant tout a son saint édifice,
 Entreprend de venger l'acteur
 Par la dépouille de l'actrice.

Ah le plaisant événement!
 Qu'il sera digne de mémoire!
 Si le curé remporte la victoire,
 Il gagne d'un seul coup le prix de plus de cent.

P. 230 Année 1730 V.5. *Barbier Chansonnier*

The Jew referred to above is du Lys, the coquette fine, Mlle Pélissier, and the curé, Languet de Gergy, curé de Saint Suplice.

In another part of the same poem there is a reference to Mlle.'s relations with the violinist of the opera, wherein he is named. These lines are a bit risqué and are better left without repetition.

The du Lys affair afforded the critics of the day no small amount of diversion. The matter led to the circulation of a great many verses. Both Barbier's Journal and the "Chansonnier Historique" of the 18th century contain verses relating to the subject.

Additional notes on this may be found on pages 228 and 255, "Chansonnier Historique, XVIIIe Siècle".

A manuscript of about 1735 "Recueil de diverses Pièces", which belongs to Mr. Van Roesbroeck contains the following fable written in defense of the Jew, du Lys, which does not seem to have been published:

Le Pérruche et la Pélican.

Fable.

Jadis un escadron d'ayseaux mélodieux

Faisant retentir le Parnasse

Par ses concerts harmonieux

Certaine Parruche eut l'audace

De joindre ses fredons a leurs chants gracieux;

Voix platte, chetive ancolure

? Petets yeux, large bec, regard sombre, air commun,
Plumage sale et caquet importun,

Voila les dons que la nature

En la faisant versa sur sa figure,

Ajoutez à ces traits un esprit de travers,

Un coeur ouvert au vice avec pleine licence,

Dans le plus vilain corps qu'ait connu l'univers;

Vous avez un portrait si juste et si fidèle

Qu'on pourroit egaler la copie au modele.

Pour contester son luxe et ses désirs honteux

Elle faisoit un infame partage

Avec un perroquet boiteux; (Francoeur. Note of the Ms)

Et leur coupable intelligence

Ne soulageoit que foiblement

Les noirs soucis de l'indigence,

Qui de leur lache assortiment

Etoient le digne chatiment.

A la Perruche misérable
Un vieux Pélican charitable
Vint un jour offrir son appui:
Il fit pour la sauver de l'affreux précipice
Ou l'entraînoit son penchant pour le vice
Tout ce qui dependoit de luy.
Ses dons et ses beinfaits du néant la tirèrent,
D'un gouffre de malheurs ses soins la préservèrent,
Mais son coeur généreux n'obtint pour récompense
Que larcins soutenus d'une horrible impudence,
Que noire trahison, et qu'infidélité.

Surpris de cette lacheté,
Le Pélican se plaint et s'en afflige.
Un moineau franc dit: ce serait prodige
Si pareille Perruche avoit quelque équité.
Du tigre le plus barbare
On adoucit les fureurs,
Mais d'une coquette avare
Rien ne corrige les moeurs.
Ouvre les yeux, et dans ma fable
Ingratte Pélissier, coeur indigne et sans foi,
Reconnois de du Lys le portrait véritable,
Qui se sacrifia sans peine et sans effrai
Pour assouvit ton luxe insatiable.
Quant à la Perruche, dis moy,
Si sa figure détestable
Peut ressembler à quelque autre qu'à toi.

Fanchon was the name of one of the most immoral characters of Boissy's time. She was a purveyor of women. Her name is given in this play to the character whose exploits are taken from the conduct of Mlle. Pelissier whose identification has already been discussed. Jacquin was Comprà, the director of the opera. (1) The story of Phedre and Hipolite which occurs in scene 10 refers to the Duclos Duchemin story. The old Duclos was a famous actress who married the young Duchemin. (2) Tapinois is a certain man who tried to get an office in place of Mr. Pelltier Desforts, the controleur general who was put into prison for squandering public funds. (3) Ventrebleu is Galpin, who had just gone through bankruptcy and raffled to pay his debts. (4) Francoeur is the violinist of the opera. (5)

Note (1) "Chansonnier Historique XVIII Siecle," p. 216.

Note (2) "L'Année Littéraire," 1759, p. 24; and Mélanges "Historiques et Anecdotes de Bois jourdain," p. 326, Frerons

Note (3) "Barbier Journal," March, 1730, p. 303.

Note (4) Mélanges "Historiques Satiriques et Anecdotes", by M. de B. jourdain, Tome II, p. 376.

Note (5) Barbier, 345, 346, from ~~play~~ itself.

Melpomène Vengée.

In the manuscript 9322, found in the Bibliothèque Nationale occurs an unpublished play by Boissy called "Melpomène Vengée ou les Trois Spectacles Réduits à Un et Les Amours des Déesses à Rien". Mr. Zeek, who has not seen the manuscript of this play, basing his statement on de Lérès, states that it is in three acts, and in prose. The copy in my possession is in one act, for the greater part in verse interspersed with prose. It also has a divertissement and the music for it was written by Mouret. "Melpomène Vengée" was presented by the Comédie Italienne, September 3rd, 1729. For the other part of his information, Mr. Zeek quotes Desboulmiers, Hist. du Tr. Ital., who says that this play is nothing but a parody of a Ballet des Déesses, by Fuzelier with music by Quinault, which was represented at the opera in the month of August together with another play called "Les Trois Spectacles". The latter is by Dumas d'Aygueberre with music by Mouret. It was presented at the Theatre Francais in July, 1729, with considerable success. Desboulmiers states, "Le grand success de ces deux pieces leur attira la parodie de Boissy!". Quoting again the same author, the following description of the ballet by Fuzelier is given: "Il y avait d'abord un prologue entre L'Amour et L'indifférence. La Première entrée représentait les Amours de Venus et d'Adonis la deuxième celle de Diane et d'Endimion et la troisième celles de

Melpomène et de Linnis inventeur de L'Élégie. La Pièce d'Aygue-berre était composée d'un prologue en prose et de trois petites pièces en un acte à savoir; Polixene, Tragédie en vers, L'Avare Amoureux, comédie en prose et Pan et Doris, pastorale héroïque ou plutôt une espèce d'opéra avec un ballet et des chœurs, dont la musique était de Mouret. On ne dit pas comment le public a accueilli la parodie de ces pièces, mais il est bien probable qu'elle n'a pas beaucoup de succès." Zeek, p. 230.

Boissy's "Melpomène Vengée" opens with the muse asleep on a bed of flowers. She is awakened by a chorus which tells her that someone has shortened her gown. On seeing her dress, Melpomene becomes very angry and determines to have revenge before the day is over. The first few pages of the play consist of a dialogue between Melpomène and an author in which there is a discussion about an incident that caused much sensation in the theatre. A very bold playwright had ventured to reduce the stately tragedy from five acts to one and thus bring down upon himself the wrath of the tragic muse. All the affair at the beginning of the play refers in a symbolical way to a certain play which had violated the rules of classic tragedy. Then follows this passage which criticises the unhappy condition of the theatre in 1729:

"L'Auteur:

Je vous dirai Brillante souveraine du cothurne que tout est boulgversé qu'on n'y connoist plus rien. On chante sur le théâtre de l'opéra des farces italiennes, l'Opéra comique met sur le

"sien des romans sérieux la Comédie françoise donne des opéras et la Comédie Italienne menace le public de jouer des tragédies.

Melpomene:

Juste ciel que me dites vous là?

L'Auteur:

Je vous apprendrai de plus pour nouvelle particulière que les trois spectacles que la Comédie francaise a donne ont soulevé contre elle tous les autres théâtres, que le Dieu momus mon amy m'a chargé de vous dire que l'opéra doit vous envoyer un de ces héros qui chantent dans les coeurs pour vous demander justice du tort qu'il prétend que lui a fait la Comédie italienne et l'Opéra Comique doivent ne plaindre en meme tems, l'une députe vers vous l'actrice nouvelle et l'autre vous envoie un chantre du Pont Neuf." (page 5)

In scene 4, Diana comes on the stage scolding Melpomène because she seems indifferent to the insults directed against both of them. Melpomène, much astonished at this rebuke, asks Diana the nature of the injury inflicted upon them. She receives the following answer:

"Diane:

Cet impertinent dans un balet nouveau intitulé les amours des Déesses.

Melpomène:

Qu'a t il donc fait cet impertinent?

Diane:

Il a eu l'insolence de nous faire figurer avec Venus et de nous mettre au rang des déesses galantes nous ma cousine la

"sagesse et la chasteté même." (page 8)

One of the most interesting parts of the play is that in which Les Trois Spectacles appear upon the scene. Boissy, a defender of the Ancients, and no doubt an advocate of the strict observance of the rules of Classicism, pictures, with vividness and emotion, the great stir made by this play which threw all these restrictions of tragedy to the winds. He voices the opinions of many of the foremost critics of his day when he opposes this evident lack of proper respect for art craft on the part of a modernist playwright.

Scene 7e,

"Les Trois Spectacles Les Précédents

Mais que vois je? quelle est cette figure baroque qui s'avance vers nous plastronnée de deux grandes affiches, un casque à la teste une houlette à la main en habit bourgeois et chaussé comme un berger de théâtre.

Cléone:

J'ose vous présenter icy nos trois spectacles.

Licas:

Ah te voilà perfide auteur de nos débats.

Melpomène:

Ah vraiment vous êtes un fort joli garçon et je suis charmée de vous voir ajustée de la sorte.

III

Les trois Spectacles:

"Je suis nouveau, je suis singulier, n'est ce pas?

Melpomène:

Pas si singulier vous portes une phisionomie qui
 ressemble à bien d'autres et je reconnois les différnetes boutiques
 ou vous avez été prendre tout votre ajustement il y a une cer-
 taine Polixène en cinq actes vous a pretés l'étoffe de votre
 habit et Issé avec Amphidron vous a donné de quoi vous chasser.

L'Actrice:

Sans compter nos comédiens esclaves.

Arlequin:

Il y a trente ans

Que mon cotillon traine

Il y a trente ans

Que mon cotillon pend

Mais qu'est-ce donc Mr. L'Ambigu à la teste tragique au
 corps comique et au pied lirique il me semble que vous boitez."

The importance of this play is largely historical. Boissy was an author noted for his treatment of subjects drawn from the life of his day. He writes of L'Homme du Jour, Le Français à Londres, L'Apologie du Siecle, all of which, as the titles indicate, deal with events of the writer's time. "Melpomène" also, can be classed with the plays which deal with events contemporary with the author's own life. This play gives a very vivid picture of the state of the theatre in the early 18th century. In a play of his own Boissy thus criticizes the Trois

Spectacles which violated those rules of classic tragedy so carefully observed in the first part of the century. Desboulmiers calls Boissy's play a parody on the *Trois Spectacles*. It is rather a critical play resembling his "*La Critique*" or "*L'Apologie du Siècle*", interspersed with parodies from verses and arias of Dumas d'Aigueberre's play.

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Le Je Ne Sais Quoi.

"Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" is a one act comedy in verse by Boissy which was presented for the first time, September 10, 1731.

The play consists of a number of clever scenes in which the role of "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi", the god of embellishment, is taken by Arlequin. This "I don't know what", the embodiment of taste, beauty, poetry and love, has fled from Paris, where affectation and vulgarity reign, to take refuge in a grotto in the desert, far from the common crowd and near to nature. Here he is sought by many, both gods and men. In that throng of devotees figure Apollo, Venus, a petit maitre, Le Public Feminin, a Geometrician and a man from Switzerland. These in turn beg the god to come back to Paris, which they say languishes and is sad without him. Arlequin refuses to accept these invitations and turns a deaf ear to their pleas.

Finally Silvia, an Italian actress comes, sent by Momus, the god of mockery, with a brevet de la Calotte. (/) She, by her charms, wins the approval of the god and makes him a member of la Calotte, the great nonsense society of the day, and induces him to leave his rustic dwelling place and to return to Paris, where Momus and the Regiment of ^{the} Calotte celebrate his triumphal entry.

The popular petit maitre, who styles himself the favorite of Venus, carries his préciosité to extremes and in this way loses his sense of good taste and is condemned by Arlequin for confusing agrément with mauvais goût. The geometrician, that practical, materialistic man, who must have a proof for everything, disgusts the god with his lack of appreciation of the spiritual which cannot be defined. The man from Switzerland with his amusing accent gives the play a true touch of humor. He is rejected on the grounds that he is not sufficiently amiable. Le Public Féminin has lost her charm through her affectation and too great a desire to please.

Silvia, who impersonates simplicity and true natural charm, is the only one that is successful in bringing about the return of the god to Paris.

The character of Arlequin in "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" is unique, and deserves special attention. He reminds one of the Arlequin found in a play called "Arlequin Sauvage" by de Lisle, written in 1721. In this work the crude, natural state of the savage is contrasted with that of the artificial type produced by modern civilization. It attempts to show how modern life and customs tend to lead one astray from the truth. It pictures a primitive man in France, gifted only with natural reason, without prejudice or error. The man manages to live peacefully without laws and institutions. He hates the artificiality of manners, finds the hypocrisy of society distasteful, and is bored by the

inequality of human beings. He cannot understand the existence of classes of rich and poor. His inborn and natural ideas of justice force him to rebel against humanity and lead him to consider society as the height of unnatural artifice. In his opposition to all that is contrary to nature and affected in society, Boissy is a precursor of Rousseau.

A discussion of this play would not be complete without an explanation of the title. In order to treat of the origin of "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi", it is necessary to go back to "Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène ou les mots des Devises Expliqués" written in 1721 by Dominique Bouhours.

Here this author explains that "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" is something which can be easier felt than understood. "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" can be defined as an exquisite sentiment of the soul for an object which touches it, or some hidden beauty in a masterpiece or work of art. This mysterious phenomenon has certain marked characteristics. It is so delicate and imperceptible that it escapes the notice of the most penetrating and subtle intelligences. It is known only by the effect that it produces. It attracts the hardest hearts and excites violent passions in the soul. Both the Spanish and the Italians, who delighted in mystery, knew it well. With the latter it was called "non se ché", and with the former, "no se que". Again in a work, "Les Caractères de la Tragédie publiée d'Après un manuscrit, attribué à La Bruyère, p. 108, vol. V, there is another definition of

"Le Je Ne Sais Quoi", "cette ordre divin est la principale source des graces cachées, des beautés de sentiment, qu'on appelle le je ne scay quoy, beautés de Sophocle, beautés rares que l'esprit ne connaît point et que appartiennent au seul genie, beautez que les critiques sentent rarement et que le public préfère par éminent à toutes les autres."

In both of the preceding definitions "le je ne sais quoi" is a term synonymous with 17th century "préciosité". Boissy, however, wrote in the early 18th and did not refer so much to the préciosité of manners which is so characteristic a feature of Voiture's time.

He is more concerned with the préciosité of wit as exemplified by such men as Fontenelle, Montesquieu and Voltaire. It is against the affectation of esprit that the author aims his play "Le Je Ne Scay Quoy". Boissy makes this idol of the ambitions and aspirations of both gods and men the object of subtle satire when he makes "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" a member of the great nonsense society of the 18th century, the regiment of Calotte.

There was a scene to be added to this play which appeared with LaComette in 1789. Soleinne, 1709, 3416, Querard.

Note: (1) Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Calotte, Paris 1723. in - 12.

Pamela en France.

"Pamela en France, ou La Vertu Mieux Eprouvée", by Boissy, a comedy in three acts, in verse, was written in 1743 and presented for the first time on March 4th of the same year by the Italian Comedians of the King. Another edition of the play appeared in 1745.

The following résumé of the play will serve as an introduction to my work on it. A beautiful young girl, Pamela, runs away from her master Mr. Jeukes and goes to reside with a person she supposes to be a countess. This countess goes to France and takes Pamela with her. Here the virtuous girl has many admirers. A Chevalier pays a great deal of attention to her and it is through him that she learns the identity of her mistress, the countess, who is in reality a Marquis. Pamela is greatly grieved at this deception which has been practised upon her and determines to leave the Marquis at once. She asks the help of Mathurin, the gardener, who had already proposed to her. When the Marquis hears that Pamela is about to leave, he uses every means in his power to persuade her to stay. He sends his servant, Nérine, to tell her that he is planning to marry another woman the very night she is intending to go. Pamela really loves the Marquis and becomes

very jealous at this news. She determines to go, however, rather than see her lover married to another woman. Both she and Mathurin start on their way, but they do not get far when they are stopped by a band of musicians, hired by the Marquis for the occasion. Pamela is told that the Marquis has resorted to this scheme in order to win her affection. She is assured of the Marquis' love and the play ends with the union of the two.

The well known story of Richardson's "Pamela" which appeared in 1740 enjoyed popularity not only in England. It also had a large number of readers in France, through l'Abbé Prévost's translation, which was unusually good and gave a fairly exact rendering of the original work.

That the book was widely read in French is proven by the number of editions of the novel. Lyon Phelps, in his introduction to Richardson's works, notes two editions of L'Abbé Prévost's translation, one appeared in 1742, and the other in 1743.

Harris gives the following data on publications of Pamela in French. "Pamela, ou la Vertu Recompensée traduit de L'Anglais, à Londres, Chez Jean Osborn, à la Boule d'or dans Pater Noster Row, Pres Saint-Paul, 1742. IN-12 Quatre volumes de XXIII et 273, 324, 298, et 302 pages contenant quatre parties souvent reliée en deux tomes seulement Bibliot, Nation. x 2 11496-99 Harris p. 336."

Whether Boissy drew his material from Richardson directly, or whether he got it from Prévost's translation is doubtful,

but in all probability he took it from the former. The critics disagree on this point. Mr. Zeek, the author of the most extensive work on Boissy, says that he made use of Prévost's translation, Collé[^] in "le Drame en France au XVIIIieme siecle" maintains that Boissy, Voltaire, Fontenelle and Nivelles de la Chaussée all of whom treated the subject of Pamela, got their inspiration directly from Richardson. Again, in Volume X of "Cambridge History of English Literature", there is a notice of the play which reinforces the foregoing statement. Here Boissy's "Pamela" is given as a direct adaptation of Richardson's work. Gaefte, "Le Drame en France au XVIIIe siecle", also says that Boissy took his "Pamela" from the English novelist.

The French were not the only ones, to dramatize the story of Pamela. In 1742, one year before the appearance of Boissy's play, there appeared in London a comedy by that name. This was written by a certain James Dance, and was considered one of the best of his plays. Dance's "Pamela" is very different from Boissy's "Pamela en France". It is in five acts, in prose, has both a prologue and an epilogue; and the virtuous character is here given the title of Mrs. Pamela. The play opens with a prologue. Here Dance says that his play is written for the purpose of turning men from their evil ways and impressing upon them the reward of virtue. Mrs. Pamela is the faithful and humble servant of a cruel and exacting master. Pamela is on the point

of leaving her lord to go to her fond parents who are ever solicitous for her virtue. After many trials she stays and is finally married to Belville, who has at last recognized the value of her virtuous character.

The element of disguise found in "Pamela en France" seems original with Boissy. As far as I know there is no such story in the Richardson novel, nor in the other plays on the subject. In the following letter which Pamela addresses to her parents the author gives us the purpose of his play. This is, no doubt, to transport the much talked of English story to the French stage.

"Mes tres chers Père et Mère,

Réjouissez-vous pour le coup, ma gloire est en sureté. J'ai trompé la vigilance de M. Jeukes, et je me suis sauvée par la porte du jardin, à la faveur d'une clef; par ce moyen j'ai eu le bonheur d'échapper au pouvoir du plus méchants des maîtres et de tomber entre les mains de la meilleure des maitresses. C'est une comtesse Française, qui s'est trouvée dans le voisinage comme elle était instruite et touchée de mon malheur, elle m'a prise à son service, et m'a conduite avec elle en France ou je commence le cours d'une histoire Nouvelle!(1)

Since Dance and Boissy, both treat the same subject and both base themselves on the same general source, there are a few similar incidents. None of these are even enough word-perfect to be called parallels.

Nivelle de la Chaussée also wrote a five act play on

Pamela which was published in 1743. This work, however, is very different from Boissy's story. In fact it resembles Dance's "Pamela". There are many incidents which remind one of the English author's play.

Boissy's treatment of ^{subject of} the English novel is, on the whole, very different from both Dance's and Nivelle de la Chaussée's representation of it. Both of these men seem to emphasize the moral purpose of the play. This is particularly true of Dance, who at times becomes decidedly preachy. The whole character of "Pamela en France" is light, gay and amusing, and one is ever tempted to laugh rather than cry. The masqued countess gives an Italian flavor to the whole thing, and one is inclined to agree with the critic of "L'Année Littéraire", (tome 1 1759) who says that it is nothing but a parody of the Richardson novel. Of course, the word "parody" is here used in the broad sense, meaning general imitation. Neither "Pamela" of Nivelle de la Chaussée nor "Pamela en France" met with success. The first had thirteen performances and the second only one. The failure of both plays called down upon them a parody by Dancourt, called "La Déroute de Deux Pamela". (2)

In 1749, after rebaptizing the heroine, Nanine, Voltaire won the public who welcomed his play with hearty applause. Other authors who later treated the subject of Pamela were François de Neufchâteau and Goldoni, who wrote two plays on it.

Note (2) Zeek. Chapter on "Pamela en France".

Note (1) "Pamela en France".

Conclusion.

We may thus sum up the contents of this thesis. We have added the information that twelve unpublished manuscripts of Boissy do exist in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The one of these which has been discussed in this paper has to do with some of the plays which violated the rules of classic tragedy, "Les Trois Spectacles" in particular. We have found that "L'Élève de Terp-sicore" is a satirical work written largely in defense of Rousseau and Voltaire. We have completed the identification of characters in "Le Triomphe de L'Intérêt". We have added the author's own criticism of his play "Le Français à Londres"; emphasized the role of Arlequin in "Le Je Ne Sais Quoi" and stated that in this play Boissy is a precursor of Rousseau. We have supplied some new points on "Pamela en France" and added to it a comparison with the English play by James Dance, which preceded it by a year, and with others. We have furnished a few interesting notes on the author's biography and supplemented the bibliography with some important additions. On the whole this work has been largely a criticism of Mr. Zeek's thesis on Boissy, which appeared in 1914.

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