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REPORT
of
Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Marion Woodward 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.

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May 14 1917

REPORT
of
COMMITTEE ON EXAMINATION

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a Committee of the Graduate School, have given Marion Woodward 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

May 19 1917

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A COMPARISON OF THE PHÉDRES OF RACINE AND PRADON

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota

by

Marion Woodward

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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A Comparison of the Phœdres of Racine and Pradon

I

Circumstances of their Presentation

After* the presentation of Racine's "Alexandre" in 1665 he suddenly found that his success had attained for him the support of a number of influential friends among whom were numbered Louis XIV and the duchesse D'Orléans. It aroused however the antagonism of some of the most prominent literary men of the time. "Andromaque" followed with still more brilliant éclat, and Racine, now at the height of success, was usurping Corneille's place. Had the author of Le Cid given up writing, there would have been no competition and on the contrary he might even have taken pleasure in counseling his young successor, but this was not to be. Before there was any ill feeling between the two men, Racine submitted his

* Deltour's "Les Ennemis de Racine"

'Alexandre' to the older writer for his approval. In spite of receiving no encouragement from this quarter he produced the play, and being reassured by its great success, he and some of his friends ridiculed the famous author. Corneille was already irritated by the failure of his "Othon" in 1664 and the cold reception of his "Agésilas" in 1666, so that he resented bitterly this attack. The duchesse D'Orléans also, it is said, contributed to Corneille's cause for indignation by suggesting the subject of "Farewell of Titus to Bérénice" to each of them without their being aware they had a rival. Both plays were presented but Corneille's was soon deserted for Racine's. The two writers were now acknowledged rivals and further hostile acts on each side served to widen the breach into a life long enmity.

Even after Corneille's withdrawal from the theatre Racine continued to be harassed by all those who in the interest of their author of predilection, through motives of jealousy, or for private grievances, united

against him. The académie at this time was mostly composed of a group who "remained faithful to the traditions and men of Mazarin's age". The ancients were attacked by Desmarets de St-Sorlin and Perrault, and Boileau, seconded by Racine who felt that he owed too much to the Classics not to uphold them, sprang to their defense. Immediately Racine's enemies took the opposing side both in the académie and outside. In his preface to "Iphigénie" Racine defended Euripides and accused his opponents, referring especially to Pierre Perrault though no names were mentioned, of a superficial reading of the ancients, and taunts them with inability to understand. Charles Perrault, leader of the moderns, vowed vengeance for the attack on his brother, and Madame de Bouillon taking up the quarrel, organized a salon composed of the partisans of the new school and enemies of Racine. Pradon had, almost immediately upon arriving from Rouen, gained the friendship of Madame Deshouillères by admiration and catering to her, which won for him an invitation to this salon ^{at} ~~of~~ which she

was a frequent visitor. When therefore Bayle* wrote to Minutoli, professor of "belles lettres" at Geneva, that Racine was working on the subject of Hippolytus, the duchesse de Bouillon and her brother, leaders of the cabale, heard of the affair and asked Pradon to enter into competition by writing on the same subject.

We have but little biographical information about this writer and those accounts of him which we have are disputed. According to Thos. Le Breton,† Pradon was born in 1632 at Rouen in the parish of St. Vivien. Beaurepaire,†† however, who claims to have made a detailed study of the family puts the date of his birth on Jan. 21, 1644 in the parish of St. Godard. He belonged to an honorable family of Rouen, both his father and grandfather being "Huissiers aux requêtes du palais." The boy, Nicholas by name, was trained as an attorney although he never pleaded a case at Rouen. We have the first mention of him in a literary way when he was crowned at the Palinods de Rouen in 1664 for a poem in honor of the Immaculate conception. At the death of his father, from

* Deltour's "Les Ennemis de Racine" ch. 8

† Mémoires Biographiques de Guilbert-Beaurepaire-pg 12

†† Etude de Pradon-Émile Faguet

whom he received no inheritance, he is supposed to have gone to Paris to find employment. He was able to obtain the good will of several persons of wit and attract a number of powerful protectors who later served him to good advantage. The record that we have of Pradon's literary contributions is probably incomplete as many of his plays were never published. The first play which attracted the favorable attention of literary people was "Pyrame et Thisbé"* played in 1684 at the Hotel de Bourgogne. A year later in the same place "Tamerlan" was presented and on Jan. 3, 1677 at the Hotel Guénégaud his "Phèdre and Hippolyte" was performed in competition with Racine. "La Troade" (1679), "Statira" (1683), "Régulus" (1688) and "Scipion" (1697) were all published and played, some at the Hotel Guénégaud, others at the Comédie Française. His "Antigone", "Electre" (1677), "Germanicus" (1694), "Tarquin" (1682) and "Téléphonte" were played but never published, and in addition to these dramatic contributions Pradon wrote several satires in answer to the attacks of his enemies. Among these are "Le Triomphe de

* Grand Dictionnaire Larousse

Pradon Sur les Satires du Sieur D" (1684), "Nouvelles Remarques sur tous les ouvrages du Sieur D", (1685), "Le Satirique français expirant" (1689) and "Réponse de la Satire X du Sieur D" (1694); these are all in reply to Boileau*. To show in what esteem Pradon was held by his friends we have only to refer to the sentiment expressed in his epitaph at his death in 1698:-

Ci- gît le poète Pradon
 Qui durant quarante ans, d'une ardeur sans pareille
 Fit à la barbe d'Apollon
 Le Même métier que Corneille.

Also some of his later biographers and critics are inclined to be lenient. In her essay entitled "Une Victime de Boileau" Melle. Bosquet says, "On ne peut sans injustice refuser à Pradon de l'esprit et de l'imagination, de la facilité et la connaissance des règles de théâtre. Boileau n'épargna rien pour l'humilier - - S'il eut des ennemis il eut aussi des partisans - nous dirons même des admirateurs. Aujourd'hui ceux qui ne jugent point les ouvrages de Pradon d'après les vers de Déspréaux

* La Grande Encyclopédie

convienent que ce poète savait conduire régulièrement une tragédie, en ménager les incidents, y placer des peintures vives, des traits heureux, des situations intéressants, quelquefois même, des mouvements forts et véhéments". Beaurepaire* gives both Pradon's "Régulus" and "Phèdre" credit for containing lines which are worthy of praise but he says "Le grand crime littéraire de Pradon fut de s'être mis en concurrence avec Racine par cette tragédie de Phèdre et son grand malheur fut de voir cette pièce soutenue à l'hôtel de Guénégaud par de maladroits admirateurs du génie de Corneille",

Pradon, urged on it is said, by his noble friends and patrons, produced his "Phèdre" in three months, on the same night that Racine's tragedy was to be presented at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The duchesse de Bouillon rented the two theatres for the first six representations so that only the declared enemies of Racine

* Beaurepaire-- pg. 6

could witness his production. The result was that his piece was received with cold silence while Pradon's was loudly applauded. The quarrel was not limited to the theatre. At a gathering of the leaders of the cabale a sonnet was written by the Duc de Nevers or by Mlle. Deshouillères ridiculing Racine's "Phèdre". This sonnet was circulated by the abbé Tallemant and as soon as it was read by Racine's friends, they retaliated by another sonnet to the same rhyme, attacking the Duc de Nevers and his sister. Racine and Boileau were accused of composing this sonnet and the Duc de Nevers retorted with a third sonnet still in the same rhyme, threatening them with a beating. At this point the Grand Condé offered protection to Racine and Boileau under his roof. Finally Pradon spread the tale of a beating which Boileau was supposed to have received, and a professor in the college of Navarre recounted it in a fourth sonnet to the same rhyme. The Grand Condé ~~mpw~~ interfered again and said he would take any further insult to Racine and Boileau as directed to himself. Because of the notoriety of the affair, both houses were filled that a

comparison of the Phèdres might be made. Pradon's piece did not remain for more than three months while Racine's immediately came into its own. It was hailed as a chef d'oeuvre and was played at Versailles as at Paris and at the Fêtes of Octobre at Fontainebleau. Needless to say, Pradon's jealousy at the success of his rival was intense. Hostilities were reopened and Pradon made public accusations against Racine. He accused him of bribing the actresses of the Hotel Guénégaud not to accept the rôle of Phèdre in his rival's play, as a means of assuring its failure. The reason, however, for Pradon's being unable to secure their services was that they were too modest to compete with Champmeslé.* This beautiful and clever actress had entered into a liaison with Racine and it was pretty generally believed at this time that his plays were written for her. Whether this is true or not, it is known that he possessed almost a hypnotic power over her and that he trained her himself in all her rôles until she played them with such skill and charm that Pradon

* Deltour- Les Ennemis de Racine ch. 8

siezed upon this as a means of detracting from Racine's glory. He twisted the meaning of Boileau's lines

"Que tu sais bien Racine à l'aide d'un acteur
Emouvoir, étonner, ravir un spectateur",
emphasizing "A l'aide d'un acteur" and implying that
the lines in themselves were dull.

This affair coming as the climax of a series of disagreeable intrigues is said to have been one of the determining reasons why Racine gave up writing for the theatre. Another reason which is supposed to have influenced him is the fact that he had been gradually drawn back to Port Royal and wished for a reconciliation with that institution.

II

Sources and Influences

The theme upon which Euripides and his successors based their tragedies is the incestuous love of Phèdre for her stepson Hippolytus, her struggle against this criminal passion and its disastrous results. Euripides who is supposed to be Racine's chief source handled the subject in this way: Venus, piqued by Hippolytus' disdain for her and his devotion to Diana has determined to avenge herself by causing the destruction of this prince through Phèdre in whom she has inspired an illegitimate love for her stepson. Unable to resist the fatal power of Venus and suffering from the consequent disgrace, the queen resolves to die without revealing her motives for suicide. Her old nurse, however, appeals to her sense of duty to her children thus forcing a reluctant confession from her. To help Phèdre, but unknown to her, the nurse tries to seek some concession from Hippolytus. The chaste young man is

enraged at the proposition and when the queen discovers that the nurse has betrayed her she hangs herself in order to preserve what honor she has left, not however before she has attached to her wrist a tablet falsely accusing Hippolytus of attacking her. Theseus, her husband, returns from consulting the oracle and calls upon Poseidon to punish his son. Hippolytus denies the accusation but because of an oath of secrecy to the nurse he cannot reveal the truth and is exiled by his father. Before long a henchman announces that the prince is dying as a result of an accident caused by a sea monster frightening his steeds. Diana then reveals the whole truth and Hippolytus dies forgiven by his father.

The latin poet Seneca from whom Racine is also supposed to have received valuable ideas for his tragedy, departs in some measure from this treatment of the subject. Patin says "Euripide's Phèdre conserved modest reserve according to Greek "moeurs" while Seneca, writing in a time of corruption, pictured "le vice endurci, sans pudeur, sans remords". His contributions and

alterations of the story are as follows. When Hippolytus refuses the nurse's advances, this Phèdre does not die, but obstinately determines to win Hippolytus, so she tries to make him believe his father will never return from Hades and tells him boldly of her love. Hippolytus is enraged and raises his sword to strike her but throws it down as if contaminated, and the nurse conceives the idea of using the sword as false evidence against him. When Theseus returns, Phèdre brazenly lies to him about the violence she had suffered at Hippolytus' hands and Theseus appeals to Neptune for vengeance. At news of Hippolytus' death Phèdre confesses her guilt and kills herself with Hippolytus' sword.

In turning to Racine's tragedy we find that his imitation and original contributions are modified to conform to the atmosphere of the age in which he lived.

At the beginning of the first act Hippolytus, heretofore insensible to the attacks of Venus, admits his love for Aricie, the daughter of his father's mortal enemy. This scene, original with Racine, serves, by

introducing 'the element of love into Hippolytus' character to make him more pleasing to an audience of 1677. The next scene, in which Phèdre reluctantly confesses to the nurse her love for Hippolytus, is obviously inspired by Euripides. Oenone appreciates the dishonorable position of the queen and agrees that death is the only solution. At this point, however, Racine diverges from the intrigue of the Greek model and introduces a new and more convincing circumstance, and at the same time one which in a measure lessens in the minds of the spectators the guilt of Phèdre's next action and renders her an object of pity. Panope brings the false news of Thésée's death. This idea was perhaps suggested by Seneca who makes Phèdre herself try to convince Hippolytus of Thésée's permanent absence, but Racine's device is more clever in that it immediately enlists the sympathy of the spectators for Phèdre and prepares logically for the next scene in which Oenone convinces Phèdre that her love is now legitimate and that it is her duty to live for the sake of her son whose inheritance may be threatened by Aricie.

In Act II we have Hippolytus' and Aricie's mutual confession of love. Besides gaining the sympathy of the spectators by making Hippolytus love Aricie there is another reason for the love between these two young people. It serves later in Act IV to turn Phèdre's repentance into revenge. The last half of Act II is devoted to Phèdre's confession to Hippolytus of her love for him. This scene is usually attributed to Seneca and his device of the sword as proof of Hippolytus' guilt is used by Racine but his Phèdre snatches it from Hippolytus in order to end her life herself. She is interrupted, however, and like Seneca's heroine she is now determined to win Hippolytus at any cost, having degraded herself to the point of acknowledging her love to him. In desperation she sends the nurse to plead for her and tempt him with the offer of the crown of Athens. Oenone comes back immediately with the news of Thésée's return. As in Seneca, Phèdre is convinced there is nothing for her now but to die and this she resolves to do, regretting only in this intention the shadow she will cast upon her children's lives. Oenone uses this as an argument

to induce her mistress to throw the blame on Hippolytus, and Phèdre abandons herself to Oenone's plot.

Racine unlike Euripides and Seneca has Oenone, instead of Phèdre, accuse Hippolytus. To prove his innocence he confesses his love for Aricie which he maintains is his only crime. Thésée refuses to be convinced and like the other Thésées calls on Neptune to avenge him. Here Racine again resorts to his own invention to render Phèdre more natural and human. Overhearing the father's appeal for vengeance she suffers pangs of conscience and despite Oenone's entreaties rushes to Thésée to confess, but upon hearing that Hippolytus is sensible to the charms of Aricie she falls into a fit of jealousy and the words are frozen on her lips.

The entire first half of the last act is original with Racine. Aricie tries to persuade Hippolytus to exonerate himself before Thésée but Hippolytus refuses. He persuades Aricie, however, to marry him

secretly and flee with him. She consents, but remains behind for a short time after his departure in order to avoid suspicion. Thésée tries to convince her that she is only used as a blind by Hippolytus, and in self defense she is about to reveal the whole truth, stopping only when she remembers Hippolytus' request for secrecy. Once more Thésée is mystified and perplexed, too many times the truth has been hinted at and left untold. He is beginning to repent of his severe treatment of Hippolytus and appeals to Neptune to defer his punishment until he has had a chance to hear his son's defense. Théramène arrives, however, with the news of Hippolytus' death. Racine did not attempt to alter to any extent this account found in Euripides and Seneca. The latter's influence is especially reflected in his description of the sea bull and the profuse and hideous details of Hippolytus' wounds, which perhaps justifies the criticism that "his account savors too much of Seneca." Phèdre had already taken poison and after the recital of the death scene she, like Seneca's Phèdre, confesses her crime to

Thésée and dies.

Pradon and Racine had similar problems to meet in their treatment of the subject of Hippolytus and Phèdre. Both writing at the same time and for the same audience, the standards which they had to satisfy were identical. Their modifications therefore would of necessity have a similar tendency. Pradon's plot bears, in the main, a striking resemblance to Racine's but in his futile effort to fulfill the requirements of a French audience of that period he made one or two radical changes. In order to lessen the horror of Phèdre's crime he represented her as not yet married to Thésée, and for the purpose of winning the approval of the supporters of Corneille by employing his methods, he complicates the intrigue by making Aricie, instead of the nurse, serve as Phèdre's confidante. The situation becomes still more involved when he makes Thésée, through Phèdre, command Hippolytus to marry Aricie. We will endeavor to show by a comparison of the treatment of the parallel characters of the two tragedies how Racine's contributions served

to

to perfect the subject already ably handled by the Greek and Latin poets, and how Pradon failed to produce a tragedy which would outlive a few weeks popularity artificially provided by the influence of his patrons.

III

Comparison of Characters

In outline the two stepmothers follow a similar course of action. Both first confess their guilty passion to their confidantes, then to Hippolytus, to whom they offer the crown of Athens in order to win his favor. Finally both accuse him falsely to Thésée after which they repent and confess their crime. Racine and Pradon, however, handle the situations and the psychology of the characters very differently.

(A) Confession of love to confidante by
Racine's Phèdre.

From the moment of the entrance of Racine's Phèdre we are aware that she is suffering from some serious derangement:

"Je ne me soutiens plus: ma force m'abandonne."

and we soon learn that she is resolved to die;

"Soleil, je te viens voir pour la dernière fois."

The reason, however, for this resolution is a mystery

which Phèdre refuses to confide even to her old nurse for she feels her guilt too keenly.

"Je meurs, pour ne point faire un aveu si funeste."

Of this much we are convinced; Phèdre in all sincerity has determined to die for some sin which she hopes to bury with her. She tries to hide her crime, for admitting it would only make it the greater:

"Quand tu sauras mon crime, et le sort qui m'accable,

Je n'en mourrai pas moins, j'en mourrai plus coupable."

Oenone, however, at last appeals to her pity and prevails upon her to confess. In despair Phèdre attempts to convey to her nurse, without putting it into words, her incestuous love for her stepson Hippolytus. She is humiliated and cannot bring herself to utter the incriminating evidence and by hinting and making allusions she succeeds in forcing Oenone to name the object of her guilty passion.

"C'est toi qui l'as nommé."

Once having confessed, however, it seems to relieve her mind to talk about it and she relates the whole affair

from the beginning; her first consciousness of her love, her desperate struggle against it and her resolution to die because she cannot conquer it. Phèdre in this confession shows herself to be, though guilty of a criminal passion, sincerely horrified at her obsession and determined not to succumb to it. Her instincts are pure and noble but a power outside herself has subjected her to this disgrace. Our pity is immediately aroused for this wife of Thésée who, having fallen in love with her stepson and fought courageously against her criminal passion has sincerely resolved to overcome it by taking her life.

(B) Confession of love to confidante by
Pradon's Phèdre.

With Pradon's Phèdre we have a different proposition. She is not yet married to Thésée.

"Les derniers noeuds des Loix de l'Hyménée
Avec Thésée encor ne m'ont point enchainée,"
and her love for Hippolytus is not illegitimate. We have then not a tragic situation but the intrigue of a fickle woman who betrothed to one man comes to prefer

his son, which, though hardly commendable, is at least not criminal. Pradon in his effort not to shock the delicacy of his audience by representing adultery in his heroine took every precaution to assure us that Phèdre's love for Hippolytus is justified and not incestuous.

"Et Thésée infidele a degagé ma foy,
Toute la Grèce sait que Phèdre infortunée,
De mesme qu'Ariane en est abandonnée;
Sur le point d'un Hymen il ose me trahir, "

"Les Dieux n'allument point de feux illégitimes,
Ils seroient criminels en inspirant les crimes;
Et lorsque leur couroux a versé dans mon sein
Cette flame fatale et ce trouble intestin
Ils ont sauvé ma gloire et leur couroux funeste
Ne'scait point aux mortels inspirer un Inceste."

Then in order to increase the dramatic interest he proceeds to treat her as if she, like Racine's Phèdre, were guilty of a criminal passion. She herself calls it,

"Un Amour malheureux que ma vertu déteste".

This contradiction of course weakens the plot because it is not convincing. Although there were some exaggerated notions of constancy in the 17th century Pradon carried them to absurd lengths and Phèdre's infidelity to her fiancée impresses us as being too insignificant a cause for such disastrous results and not a worthy subject for a tragedy. For the sake of comparing the two characters, however, let us assume with Pradon that both are equally criminal. His Phèdre is moved to confess her love to her confidante also, but her first speech, regretful in tone,

"Arreste, Phèdre, arreste, et cours plutôt cacher
 Un secret que l'Amour commence à t'arracher,
 Et vous, cruels Tyrans, impétueuse flame,
 Gloire, dépit, raison, qui déchirez mon âme,
 Secret~~fardeau~~ pesant qui me fait soupirer
 Princesse, vous voyez une Reyne affligée
 Dans les plus noirs chagrins mortellement plongée,
 Qui ne peut plus se taire, et qui n'ose parler,
 Et qui cherche par tout qui la peut consoler."

rings insincere in the face of the succeeding lines in which, after admitting her love for Hippolytus with no reference to any attempt to subdue this passion, she unfolds to Aricie a most daring and unscrupulous plot. Like Seneca's Phèdre, she intends to spread the rumor of Thésée's death, and having prepared the minds of the people of Trézène has determined to offer Hippolytus the crown as an inducement to marry her. All this she has planned not under the stress of passion but coolly and premeditatedly. There is nothing in the situation of this Phèdre to inspire sympathy. Though not actually married to Thésée she believes that her love for his son is criminal and yet she calmly and deliberately sets out to gain for herself by an insidious plot the object of her desire. She feels no shame at the confession of what she considers a grave offense to Thésée and suffers no pangs of conscience over her wicked designs.

(C) Declaration of love to Hippolytus by
Racine's Phèdre.

After Phèdre's reluctant confession and after

the nurse has admitted that death is the only solution, Racine uses the device of a false report of Thésée's death. Phèdre is in no way responsible for this rumor and really believes it is true. Oenone now persuades her that her love is no longer criminal and that she must live to protect the rights of her son. This consideration, natural to a mother having at heart the welfare of her children, is the cause of Phèdre's unfortunate declaration to Hippolytus. Her son's inheritance she believes is threatened by Aricie and being ignorant of Hippolytus' love for that young princess, she determines to enlist his aid. Although she is moved at sight of him,

"J'oublie, en le voyant, ce que je viens lui dire", obviously she has no intention of making an avowal of her love for she is far from bold as we saw from the reluctance with which she made her confession to Oenone, and furthermore she still believes that her death is not far off:

"-----et le jour n'est pas loin

Qui de ma mort encore doit le rendre témoin".

Her first words are in regard to her son,

"Déjà mille ennemis attaquent son enfance.

Vous seul pouvez contre eux embrasser sa défense."

She fears, however, that Hippolytus may not be disposed to protect her son on account of her previous unfriendliness and hastens to explain that it was only feigned.

"Dans le fond de mon coeur vous ne pouviez pas lire."

The reason for the pretense, however, she endeavors heroically to conceal until, after Hippolytus' continued misunderstandings and attempts to console her for the loss of Thésée, she loses control of herself and in a burst of passion acknowledges her love. Nevertheless she does not lose sight of the fact that he is the son of her husband and although she believes Thésée to be dead she despises herself for daring to love Hippolytus. In shame and desperation she begs him to kill her and frantically snatches the sword from him to end her life. There is nothing bold or indelicate in her avowal and we do not feel inclined to censure Phèdre for this act. She believes her husband to be dead, her nurse has

shown her that her love is justified, she approaches Hippolytus with perfectly innocent intentions,

"Tremblante pour un fils que je n'osais trahir,
Je te venais prier de ne le point haïr,"

but she is driven by her passion to an involuntary declaration

"Faibles projets d'un cœur trop plein de ce qu'il aime
Hélas je ne t'ai pu parler que de toi-même."

(D) Declaration of love to Hippolytus by
Pradon's Phèdre.

Very differently does Pradon's Phèdre make her declaration to Hippolytus. In spite of her professed shame at loving him she sets out boldly to win him with no regard for womanly reserve. First she flatters him for his heroic ambitions.

"De ~~si~~ grands ~~sentimens~~ sont dignes d'un Héros,
L'on vous a toujours veu l'ennemy du repos,
Et vostre âme, Seigneur, de la gloire embrasée,
Fait reconnoitre en vous le fils du grand Thésée:"

Then she appeals to him for protection,

"Mais qui nous défendra contre nos Ennemis?"

and finally she reproaches him for his unfriendliness and attempts to arouse his affection:

"Ah! Seigneur, si jamais vostre coeur enflamé

Connoissoit la douceur d'aimer et d'estre aimé."

Hippolytus, however, is not convinced and Phèdre makes this final appeal,

"Ah! Seigneur, demeurez, ne précipitez pas

Un départ qui m'annonce un funeste trépas".

As Hippolytus consents to defer his voyage a few days Phèdre suspects that he loves her and does not make a more definite declaration at this time although there is no doubt in Hippolytus' mind as to the meaning of her advances. Pradon waits until the end of the third act to make Phèdre openly declare her love to Hippolytus and that after her husband's return! From Aricie's anxious protests against her attachment for Hippolytus Phèdre begins to suspect that they are lovers.

"Est-ce vous, qui tantôt l'avez fait demeurer,

Est-ce vous? est-ce moy qui l'ay fait soupirer?"

and decides to sound Hippolytus as to his affections.

"Il faut ~~S~~onder ~~S~~on coeur, ~~S~~urprendre ~~S~~a tendresse,
Je dois feindre, - - - - -"

So she pretends to Hippolytus that Aricie is going to marry her brother and when Hippolytus imprudently answers,

"- - - - - je ~~S~~uis son Rival,
- - - - - que j'adore Aricie,"

Phèdre enraged threatens her rival and declares her love:

"Je rougirois, Ingrat, de dire que je t'aime."

She continues, however,

"Je t'aimois, il est vray, Barbare, et je te hais".

There seem to be no redeeming features in this declaration of love or in the circumstances under which it is made. Phèdre with no consideration for her dignity as queen or as a woman brazenly makes love to her stepson while her husband is away. Then discovering that she has a rival she falls into a rage and her love instantly turns to hate, yet neither pride nor the fact that Thésée has returned, prevent her from declaring her now extinguished

love to the man who has repudiated her and who on account of his relationship should be the last person to hear such a confession. Anger, jealousy and revenge are her ~~only~~ emotions - remorse finds no place in her feelings for she blames not herself but Hippolytus.

"Mais puisque malgré moy tu luy voles son bien,

C'est ton crime, Barbare, et ce n'est pas le mien."

(E) Racine's Phèdre offers crown to Hippolytus.

After humiliating herself by confessing her love to Hippolytus, Racine's Phèdre is in a state of desperation. Nothing matters to her now except that she wants Hippolytus. Blinded by a passion stronger than herself she still hopes he may learn to love her.

"J'ai déclaré ma honte aux yeux de mon vainqueur,

Et l'espoir, malgré moy, s'est glissé dans mon coeur."

She persuades herself that some material gift might win him and she begs Oenone to offer him the crown of Athens.

(F) Pradon's Phèdre offers crown to Hippolytus.

Pradon's Phèdre is not suffering under the stress of intense emotion at the time she plans to bribe

Hippolytus with the crown. This was only one step in an elaborate plot of which all details were carefully worked out.

"Hippolyte dans peu Je verra couronner,
 J'ay préparé l'esprit du Peuple de Trézène
 A le proclamer Roy comme il me nomma Reine,
 De la Mort de Thésée on va semer le bruit,
 Et pour ce grand dessein j'ay si bien tout conduit,
 Qu'il faudra qu'Hippolyte à mes vœux moins contraire
 Reçoive cette Main destinée à son Père."

Furthermore she has arranged to have her brother at hand with an army and she even takes the precaution of trying to enlist Aricie on her side. All of which goes to show that this Phèdre is a cold blooded creature who acts not on impulse but with calculating determination.

(G) Racine's Phèdre accuses Hyppolytus.

In place of an answer to her offer of the crown Racine's Phèdre learns of Thésée's return. She is completely crushed at this news. The wrong she has done her husband and the horror of the thing overwhelm her. In

the idea of this base act to one of mean origin, and his Phèdre, though she admits she no longer loves Hippolytus and that she now sees him as

"un monstre effroyable"

is at first horrified.

"Moi, que j'ose opprimer et noircir l'innocence?"

then Oenone persuades her that Thésée will be lenient with his son and will punish him by exile only. Just then Phèdre sees Hippolytus approaching with Thésée, and reads her condemnation in his menacing look. Frightened and in desperation she consents in order to save her children.

"Fais ce que tu voudras, je m'abandonne à toi.

Dans le trouble où je suis, je ne puis rien pour moi."

Phèdre voluntarily would never have descended to this contemptible act. Crazy with passion, urged on by the nurse and having lost control of herself, she is reduced to the state where she would resort to almost any means, fair or foul, to extricate herself. Nevertheless she cannot bring herself to make the accusation and Oenone takes the responsibility upon herself.

(H) Pradon's Phèdre accuses Hippolytus and confesses.

Upon discovering that she has a rival Pradon's Phèdre considers herself outraged and her one idea is to avenge herself. Nothing is too terrible for her to threaten:

"Mon Frère n'est pas loin, son Armée à tes yeux
 Pourra me secourir et désoler ces lieux, - - - - -
 Je mettray ce Palais et ma Rivale en cendre,
 1 1 - - - - - Il n'est rien de si saint que je ne
 sacrifie,

Après cela, tu peux épouser Aricie".

Yet strangely enough, still in the heat of anger her first words to Thésée are conciliatory to Hippolytus:

"Mais, Seigneur la Nature en faveur d'Hippolyte
 Doit parler pour un Fils".

We might naturally assume by this change of attitude that Phèdre had repented of her cruel threats and fearing for Hippolytus was endeavoring to soften Thésée, yet in her very next speech she condemns Hippolytus by falsely

accusing him to Thésée.

"Et jamais à ma honte un aveu si cruel

Ne pouvoit me frapper par un coup plus mortel

J'avois cru comme vous Hippolyte inflexible,

Et cependant, Seigneur, il n'est que trop sensible.

- - - - - Ah! je rougis encor de honte et de colère, "

Then with Thésée having made no worse threat than before (he still intends only to banish Hippolytus) she bursts forth in praise of Hippolytus and appeals to Thésée to spare him.

"C'est votre Fils, Seigneur, c'est ce cher Hippolyte,

De qui toute la Grèce adore le mérite,

Dont le front vous fait voir vostre image et vos traits,

Et de qui la valeur vous doit suivre de près.

Oubliez comme moy son amour et son crime,

Ne vous immolez pas cette chère Victime."

The character of Phèdre as represented by Pradon is full of such surprising inconsistencies for which there is no explanation unless he intended by these to indicate a changeable feminine nature. Even women, however, require

some external circumstance, however slight, to alter their way of thinking. Phèdre continues from now on to seesaw back and forth from one emotion to another, love, hate, jealousy, revenge, and for the first time, contrary to her nature, she begins to show signs of remorse,

"Cours aux pieds de Thésée, et le tirant d'erreur

Découvres luy ton crime, et te perces le coeur."

Pradon here has tried to doctor her ^{role} up a bit and give to her the sentiments which it is time she entertained in order to bring about the dénouement. We find Phèdre therefore suddenly and most unexpectedly repentant, and to our amazement this hardened unscrupulous creature confesses her crime to Thésée in order to save Hippolytus.

"C'est le crime de Phèdre, et ce n'est pas le sien."

Furthermore she frees Aricie whom she has kept imprisoned ever since she learned they were rivals. We are surprised at this change because up to now there has been nothing in her character to show that she was capable of remorse or self sacrifice.

(I) Racine's Phèdre confesses.

In the case of Racine's Phèdre the confession of her crime is what we would have expected. Upon hearing Thésée calling on the gods to punish Hippolytus, she hastens out in spite of Oenone's protests to acknowledge her guilt and save Hippolytus, but before she can speak the words Thésée tells her of Hippolytus' love for Aricie. This was the very last thing that Phèdre expected. She had had no suspicions, no warning, so that the news came as a terrible blow. She is speechless with horror and cannot bring herself at that moment to make the confession. Her hesitation, however, is not of long duration. In despair and fully aware of the horror of her position she takes a slow poison and before dying reveals the whole hideous truth to Thésée.

As Deschanel says the beauty of Racine's piece consists in the true painting of the guiltiest passion and in the courageous struggle which Phèdre maintains against it and we might add that the chief interest lies in the true psychology of Phèdre's character. Although

her sentiments and acts are in constant opposition, Racine has so handled her that the conflict seems natural and logical. With an honest and sincere desire to do the right thing Phèdre pursues a criminal course because she is a victim of circumstances and powerless under the force of her passion. That she is weak and passionate we must admit but her nature is not a mean one, and if she had not received the false news of Thésée's death she would never have declared her love to Hippolytus and as a result of that committed the crime of blaming an innocent man. In spite of her guilt she is interesting and appealing because this guilt inspired her with horror. From the first she arouses sympathy by her sincere struggle to overcome her criminal passion. Racine believed that to make a passion interesting it must be violent, and in this tragedy in which he treated his favorite passion, love, he did not hesitate to paint it in its most violent form, yet he handled Phèdre in such a way that we are impressed by her delicacy and refinement. Even her declaration to Hippolytus and her sacrifice of

him to her jealousy which would ordinarily be impossible to reconcile with our idea of a heroine, are, because of his skillful handling of the situations and because of the circumstances with which Racine has led up to them, neither bold nor unnatural. But Racine does not hesitate to inflict punishment for weakness. Robert* says "Racine est plus attiré par ce qui plie dans l'âme humaine que par ce qui résiste, par la faiblesse que par les triomphees de volonté" - - But he has "Point en meme temps que nos faiblesses le châtement qui en est la conséquence." This idea is brought out in his Phèdre. Love dominates and governs her will, and jealousy, exciting this passion, precipitates the crisis. In Phèdre's suicide we have an eloquent expression of her remorse, and herein lies her punishment. That is, it comes from within and is not inflicted by an outside agent. In this tragedy Racine has expounded the Janséniste theory that without the grace of God there can be no good in man. Phèdre is a striking example of the Christian fallen from grace and by this production he hoped for a reconciliation

* La Poétique de Racine.

with Port Royal. "Ce * serait peut-être un moyen de réconcilier la tragédie avec quantité de personnes célèbres par leur piété et par leur doctrine".

Pradon usually painted his heroes as "honⁿêtes gens" with the idea of making them pleasing, and probably for the same reason he could not bring himself to represent his heroine as an adulteress. So he borrows from Gilbert^{††} a means of avoiding the difficulty and by violating mythology makes Phèdre only Thésée's fiancée. The greatest interest, however, is at once lost, and with the changed situation the tragedy might better be called "Much Ado about Nothing". Furthermore, Pradon's conception of Phèdre does not add perceptibly to the interest of the piece. She is a cold blooded calculating coquette with no delicacy of sentiment and she does not rouse in us any sympathy for her plight - we only feel deep pity for her victims. Pradon seems to have no regard for psychology in his treatment of her. He has made her a wooden creature whose sentiments vary mechanically at the proper time for the progress of the action.

* Preface to Phèdre.

† Grande Cyclopédie.

†† Deltour - Les Ennemis de Racine.

From her first appearance when she prefaces the confession of her criminal plans with a speech of remorse, we are impressed by the insincerity and artificiality of her sentiments.

(J) Racine's Aricie.

In contrast to the ardent passion of Phèdre Racine has represented in Aricie a more normal love. She is youthful and timid but withal a bit sophisticated. It has been said that she is typical of the young girl of the 17th century, modest, delicate and refined, and, to some extent a coquette. A minor character, Racine has painted her as carefully and made her as clear-cut a personality as his heroines. At the beginning of the play she has begun to suspect that Hippolytus is not indifferent to her and she is interested more than she cares to admit,

"L'insensible Hippolyte est-il connu de toi?
 Sur quel frivole espoir penses-tu qu'il me plaigne,
 Et respecte en moi seule un sexe qu'il dédaigne?
 Tu vois depuis quel temps il évite nos pas,
 Et cherche tous les lieux où nous ne sommes pas."

She is wise enough to interpret his avoicing her as a sign of his interest. Brought up a prisoner, with the idea that she could never marry, she supposed herself opposed to love. The indifferent Hippolytus, however, by his inflexible courage and his "orgueil,"

"Quē jamais n'a fléchi sous le joug amoureux."
has won her affection. She scorns "la gloire aisée" and aspires

"De porter la douleur dans une âme insensible"
Hippolytus after giving her her freedom and her share of Thésée's kingdom, is about to take leave of her without declaring his love. With irreproachable modesty and very delicately, though effectively, she contrives to bring him to the point of making an avowal.

"N'était-ce pas assez de ne point me haïr,
Et d'avoir si longtemps pu défendre votre âme
De cette inimitié - - - - - ."

At the suggestion of his hating her Hippolytus is aroused immediately in self defense to acknowledge his surrender to her charm. Aricie's acceptance of his love

is delicate and subtle—

"J'accepte tous les dons que vous me voulez faire.

Mais cet empire enfin si grand, si glorieux,

N'est pas de vos présents le plus cher à mes yeux."

There is, however, another side to Aricie's character,

- artfulness and coquetry are not her only qualities.

Kindliness and sympathy are shown in her answer to

Hippolytus when he resents being sought by Phèdre.

"S^gigneur, vous ne pouvez refuser de l'entendre.

Quoique trop convaincu de son inimitié,

Vous devez à ses pleurs quelque ombre de pitié."

Later when asked by Hippolytus to flee with him, much

as she loves him, her "pudeur" will not allow her to con-

sent until Hippolytus promises to marry her. Then in the

face of danger she consents to go with him. A more ser-

ious side to her nature is now evidenced. She is resigned

for herself but ready to revolt when Hippolytus is in-

involved. When Thésée attempts to blacken Hippolytus'

character, her resolute courage makes her stand up to him

without fear.

"Cessez: repentez-vous de vos vœux homicides;

- - - - -

Prenez garde, Seigneur. Vos invincibles mains

Ont de monstres sans nombre affranchi les humains;

Mais tout n'est pas détruit, et vous en laissez vivre

Un - - - - -."

Here she breaks off not because she fears Thésée but because she does not want to risk offending her lover who has asked her not to divulge Phèdre's guilt.

(K) Pradon's Aricie.

Pradon is supposed to have stolen the idea of Aricie from Racine. None of the other tragedies on the subject of Phèdre and Hippolytus made any reference to such a person and Deltour* maintains that Pradon through his friends, members of salons, had access to Racine's play before it was produced. To enlist the approval of the Corneillites, however, he complicates the intrigue by making Aricie not only Hippolytus' sweetheart but also Phèdre's confidante, so that after accepting Hippolytus as a lover in one scene she learns of Phèdre's

* Deltour's - Les Ennemis de Racine.

love for him in the next and finds herself in a most embarrassing position. Pradon's Aricie as well as Racine's is a coquette but lacks the subtlety and charm of the latter. She more deliberately and more crudely forces Hippolytus to a declaration.

"Mais quoy? vous n'avez rien qui vous retienne icy,

Sans trouble, sans chagrin vous sortez d'une Ville
Où . . ., Que l'on est heureux^u d'estre si tranquile!"

and a little further

"Seigneur, parlons sans feinte,

Quand on est sans amour, on est toujours sans crainte,

Vostre superbe coeur l'a toujours outragé,"

After such an invitation could Hippolytus refuse to declare himself? Yet in spite of her broad hint she pretends to be surprised at his confession.

"Seigneur, je vous écoute et ne scais que répondre,

Cet aveu surprenant ne sert qu'à me confondre,

Comme il est impréveu, je tremble que mon coeur," etc.

A few lines later we have another indication of her

false modesty

"Peut-estre j'en dis trop, et déjà je rougis

Et de ce que j'écoute et de ce que je dis:"

Why should she blush to hear the acknowledgement of an honest man's love and why should she hesitate to accept him especially when his declaration is what she has been seeking? In addition to inconsistency Pradon makes Aricie ridiculously blind and absurdly innocent. From her own lips we learn

"Cette Phèdre paurtant si charmante et si fière

Fait voir une amitié pour vous tendre et sincère,

Peut-estre pour Thésée en auroit-elle moins;

Tous ses soins vont pour vous jusqu'à l'inquiétude,

Elle me reprochoit alors avec ardeur

Que je parlois de vous avec trop de froideur.

On diroit à la voir languissante, abattue,

Qu'un poison lent, secret, la consume, la tue."

and Phèdre tells her

"Et bien que contre luy tout me parle et M'irrite,
Je ne scaurois haïr le Père d'Hippolyte".

Yet when Phèdre confesses her love for Hippolytus, Aricie is surprised! Pradon's Aricie acts neither according to psychology or common-sense logic. After insisting to Hippolytus that he hide his love for her from Phèdre

"Que l'Amour vous redonne un air d'indifférence
Et pour cacher à Phèdre une innocente ardeur,
Demandez à vos feux une feinte froideur?"

she apparently forgets this request, when to save her, Hippolytus pretends indifference. She immediately assumes that he loves Phèdre and never for a minute doubts his guilt:

"Il viendrait me trouver s'il n'étoit point coupable,
Je le verrois, Cléone, et loin de m'oublier,
Il chercheroit du moins à se justifier."

(L) Racine's Hippolytus.

Both Racine and Pradon have given Aricie to

Hippolytus in order to make him more interesting, for at the time they wrote an indifferent hero would have had little chance of favor. Racine, to reconcile the Greek conception of Hippolytus and the 17th century ideal of a hero, combined the two by painting him as a former lover of the chase, - impervious to the attacks of Venus, but at the opening of the play reduced by the charms of Aricie to a surrender to the goddess of love. Racine has been criticised for the liberty he took in altering the character of Hippolytus and it has been said that he was too much influenced by the conventionality and artificiality of the love making of high society. "Where the poet ought" Dryden tells us, "to have preserved the character as it was delivered to us by antiquity, when he should have given us the picture of a rough young man, of the Amazonian strain, a jolly huntsman, and both by his profession and his early rising a mortal enemy to love, he has chosen to give him the turn of gallantry, sent him to travel from Athens to Paris and transformed the Hippolytus of Euripides into Monsieur Hippolytus". This

would seem to be an unwarranted criticism. As M. LeMaitre says, there is in the art of Racine a something forever inaccessible to foreigners, and Irving Babbitt in the Introduction to his edition of Phèdre asserts that no translation or adaptation of Racine has been able to gain a foothold on the English stage or in English literature. An Englishman cannot comprehend the spirit of the court of Louis XIV, and that the element of love was an essential feature to the character of a hero is almost beyond his power of imagination. Furthermore Racine had no intention of translating the tragedy of Euripides. The subject of Phèdre interested him and he chose to present the story in accordance with his ideas of art, making variations as he saw fit regardless of the methods of his predecessors except where he hoped to profit by imitation. Racine, however, had other reasons for representing Hippolytus a lover besides pleasing his audience. His plot and his characterization of Phèdre required such a device for while there was yet time to save Hippolytus, Phèdre would have confessed

her crime to Thésée had her jealousy not been aroused. In order to make Phèdre consistent with his conception of her, Racine had to provide an excuse sufficient to warrant her hesitating to exonerate Hippolytus and one which at the same time would arouse sympathy. In his preface Racine justifies his alteration by still another reason. He complains that Euripides' Hippolytus was criticised for being too perfect:

"Ce qui faisait que la mort de ce jeune prince causait beaucoup plus d'indignation que de pitié. J'ai cru lui devoir donner quelque faiblesse qui le rendrait un peu coupable envers son père, sans pourtant lui rien ôter de cette grandeur d'âme avec laquelle il épargne l'honneur de Phèdre, et se laisse opprimer sans l'accuser."

Racine's Hippolytus then, heretofore insensible to feminine charm, has finally succumbed before the attractions of Aricie and although Racine does not emphasize his sterner side he does not allow him to give up his ideas of chastity without a struggle. From his earliest childhood he has been a great admirer of his father's heroic

deeds:

"Tu sais combien mon âme, attentive à ta voix,
S'échauffait au récit de ses nobles exploits,

but he deplored his

"- - - - - Faits moins glorieux,

Sa foi partout offerte et recue en cent lieux;"

When he finds himself in love therefore, and with a person whom his father has forbidden ~~him~~ to marry, he feels humiliated, especially as he has performed no heroic deeds to counterbalance his disobedience. His instinct is to hide his love not only from others but from himself. He decides to leave Trézène on a pretense of searching for Thésée but just at this point comes the news of the latter's death. Out of respect to his father, Hippolytus still intends to conceal his love but he gives Aricie her liberty and offers to return to her the sceptre of Athens. Then piqued by Aricie's deprecating words,

"N'était-ce pas assez de ne point me haïr?"

he bursts into a passionate declaration. He admits that heretofore he was

"- - - - - Contre l'amour fièrement révolté,"

but naively maintains that he is completely

"Asservi maintenant sous la commune loi."

This declaration is typical of Hippolytus' character, touching and noble in sentiment. The same spirit is found in his attitude toward Phèdre. Tender and sympathetic when he supposes she is mourning for Thésée, his rebuke when he grasps her meaning, is not harsh but expressive of surprise and horror. Almost his first thought is for her:

"Mais on vient. Evitez des temoins odieux;

Venez, rentrez, fuyez une honte certaine."

and his heroic delicacy keeps him from revealing her secret even to Thèramène

"Phèdre . . . Mais non, grands Dieux! qu'en un profond
oubli

Cet horrible secret demeure enseveli."

His noble sentiments, however, do not blind him to Phèdre's guilt and when he hears that Phèdre's son has been proclaimed king of Athens his sense of justice is outraged.

"Dieux, qui la connaissez,

Est-ce donc sa vertu que vous récompensez?

Partons; et, quelque prix qu'il en puisse coûter,

Mettons le sceptre aux mains dignes de le porter."

This touch of indignation renders the noble Hippolytus more human. However, when accused by his father of a crime of which he is innocent, he refrains from speaking in order to spare Thésée's feelings:

"- - Mais je supprime un secret qui vous touche.

Approuvez le respect qui me ferme la bouche;"

The only defense which he makes is his long life of virtue and his love for Aricie, but all to no avail. He accepts his exile with dignity, and when implored by his fiancée to clear himself before Thésée his respect for his father prevents him from acquiescing and he forbids Aricie to tell Thésée.

"Ai-je dû mettre au jour l'opprobre de son lit?

Devais-je, en lui faisant un récit trop sincère,

D'une indigne rougeur couvrir le front d'un père?"

His manliness and independence express themselves in his plan to take Aricie with him and we have new evidence of the purity of his soul when Aricie hesitates for the sake of her "Gloire alarmée".

"Non, non, j'ai trop de soin de votre renommée.

Un plus noble dessein m'amène devant vous:

Fuyez mes ennemis, et suivez votre époux."

The heroic nobility of this Hippolytus together with his occasional outbursts of uncontrolled emotions, which by keeping him from being too perfect render him more realistic, tend to arouse in us deep pity when, innocent, he suffers at the hands of Phèdre.

(M) Pradon's Hippolytus.

Pradon, also endeavoring to please, has made Hippolytus love Aricie, but he seems to have had difficulty in reconciling the opposing characteristics of the old and the new conception of the young prince. Hippolytus enthusiastically confesses his love to Aricie and in his very next speech announces his early departure in search of glory:

"Je suis Fils de Thésée, et dois m'en souvenir,
 Et je n'ay point encor par aucune victoire,
 D'alliance avec luy du costé de la Gloire."

Racine's Hippolytus after his declaration to Aricie prepares to set out, not in pursuit of adventure but to serve her by reuniting her interests in Athens. It hardly seems probable that immediately after being accepted by the girl he loves a young man would be so eager to be off on so indefinite an errand as that of proving himself worthy of his noble origin. A few scenes later, however, Hippolytus announces his intention of remaining with Aricie in spite of the call of glory and his duty to his father. He scorns Aricie's warning of the danger of admitting their love to Phèdre yet when approached by the latter he denies any interest in such things and maintains firmly that glory alone attracts him.

"Je n'aime que la Gloire, et déteste l'Amour."

We are not certain by this whether Hippolytus was pretending in order to mislead Phèdre or whether he has suddenly reverted to his passion for glory, for when

Aricie begs him to leave for the sake of safety he answers:

"Cependant je prévois qu'il faudra différer
Ce départ dont mon coeur commence à murmurer;
Je dois trop de respect aux ordres d'une Reine;
Pour quelques jours encor je demeure a Trézène."

Did he want to go or was he glad of an excuse to remain?
Hippolytus himself seems to be in doubt:

"Ouy, j'obéis, Madame et cet ordre est si doux,
Qui malgré mes desseins me retient près de vous,
Que ma gloire jalouse en demeure interdite."

A little further he starts to tell Thésée but is interrupted,

"Vous m'avez enseigné le chemin de la gloire,
Et je brûle, Seigneur"

that he longed to follow him. Pradon insists so constantly upon his sterner nature that at times we almost lose sight of the fact that he is supposed to be in love. Besides being uncertain of his own state of mind Hippolytus impresses us as being somewhat of a dupe when he

falls so easily into the trap Phèdre lays for him. Aricie had warned him of Phèdre's jealousy and had implored him to conceal his love, yet Phèdre only has to suggest that Aricie is to marry her brother and Hippolytus, in a rage, gives her the information she was seeking.

"- - - - Que je suis son Rival,

- - - - Que j'en fis un secret, que j'adore Aricie."

It is hardly probable that a normally intelligent young man in love with a girl, being warned of the dangers of exposing his love, would be so easy a victim.

We found in Racine's Hippolytus a nobility of soul which we look for in vain in the Hippolytus of Pradon. The latter aspired to make his heroes pleasing, yet delicacy and high mindedness are not among Hippolytus' characteristics. He has no reticence about divulging another's crime. Long before Phèdre has confessed her love for him his suspicions have been aroused and he does not hesitate to impart these to Idas:

"Et c'est là, cher Idas,

Ce trop d'égards, de soins, qui fait mon embarras,

Sa trop tendre amitié me pèse et m'importune."
and to Aricie he hints of his fear of Phèdre's love:

"Je m'éloigne bien plus de Phèdre que de vous."
Nor is his treatment of Phèdre chivalrous. When told by her that Aricie is going to marry her brother he angrily threatens to take vengeance.

"Je vous entens, Madame et voy ce qu'il faut craindre
Mais je puis la vanger et c'est trop me contraindre
Craignez à votre tour un amant furieux
Qui pourrait tout - - - - - "

"Madame, et vous verrez peut-estre votre Frère
Me payer de son sang ce dessein téméraire."

Then with characteristic inconsistency Pradon has made Hippolytus behave suddenly, for no apparent reason, with an unselfishness hitherto lacking. When Thésée denounces him for his supposedly guilty conduct toward Phèdre he answers:

"Contre un Père irrité je n'ay rien à répondre."
and departs refraining from accusing Phèdre. Nothing in Hippolytus' character prepares us for this sacrifice

and unconvinced we wonder at it.

(N) Racine's Thésée

In his conception of Thésée Racine seems to have fallen below his usual high standard of characterization, for in general, even his minor personages are painted true to life. Thésée accepts as final the nurse's testimony against his own son whom he loved fondly, and does not question it. That Oenone might have a motive for deceiving him he does not suspect.

"Ah! qu'est-ce j'entends? Un traître, un téméraire
Préparait cet outrage à l'honneur de son père?"

Instead of demanding an explanation from Hippolytus his first words to his son are in bitter condemnation:

"Perfide, oses-tu bien te montrer devant moi?
Monstre, qu'a trop longtemps épargné le tonnerre,
Reste impur des brigands dont j'ai purgé la terre."

and before Hippolytus has had a chance to say one word in self defense Thésée appeals to Neptune to punish him. Even when Hippolytus reminds him of his chaste life heretofore, Thésée continues blindly to accuse and denounce

him. There are no bounds to his fury but after Hippolytus leaves he begins to show signs of paternal feeling

"Je t'aimais; et je sens que malgré ton offense

Mes entrailles pour toi se troublent par avance."

His inconceivable blindness, however, is again manifested in his talk with Aricie - he still cannot comprehend the situation although he realizes there is something amiss. It is only upon learning of Oenone's death that he is aroused to a full realization that there has been foul play and he is now willing to hear his son's defense. He implores Neptune therefore to defer punishment but it is too late. Théràmène brings news of Hippolytus' death and Thésée is completely crushed.

(O) Pradon's Thésée.

In Pradon's treatment of Thésée there are traces of Corneille's influence. Thésée as he supposes, reads in Hippolytus' eyes his love for Phèdre. Such mistakes are often used by Corneille in the entangling of his plots. Thésée had been warned by the oracle to expect

trouble, and looking for it he found it. Except for the absurdity of his convicting his son on such slight evidence as a "look in his eye" we may say that Pradon's Thésée acts with truer psychology than Racine's. After he has convinced himself that Hippolytus is in love with Phèdre, instead of resorting to violent measures, although he is exceedingly angry and jealous, he proposes to have Hippolytus marry Aricie for political reasons. (Here again we recognize Corneille who considered political intrigue necessary to the interest of a tragedy.) At least this Thésée shows paternal consideration - lest he forget himself and become too severe he allows Phèdre to convey his command to Hippolytus. It is not until Hippolytus has committed a second offense and Phèdre has accused him that Thésée applies rigorous measures. Hippolytus has refused to marry Aricie and Thésée determines to banish him. Then Thésée discovers his son on his knees before Phèdre (In reality Hippolytus was only pleading with her to remain faithful to his father) and he can no longer control his anger. He appeals to

Neptune to punish Hippolytus with death. His natural feelings for his son, however, outbalance his sense of justice and there arises in his soul a struggle between his paternal instinct and his outraged honor. Love for his son inclines him to inaction, and a desire for vengeance prompts him to extreme severity.

"- - - - - une secrète horreur

Et m'arreste le bras, et me glace le coeur.

- - - - -

Et c'est par là qu'il faut qu'Hippolyte périsse

C'est trop peu que l'exile, holà, Gardes, à moy"

We cannot avoid the feeling, however, that Pradon makes Thésée absurdly blind in his refusal to believe in Hippolytus' innocence when Phèdre herself openly confesses her guilt and exonerates her stepson. Her first confession

"C'est le crime de Phèdre, et ce n'est pas le sien."

Thésée entirely ignores, and to her second one

"Quoy? je verrois périr ce Prince infortuné,

Et ma perfide main l'auroit assassiné!"

he replies,

"Ah! Madame, Je scay discerner le Coupable."

thereby showing his stubborn credulity in his own conclusions, for he had no real proof of Hippolytus' guilt and he should have seen that if Phèdre had not been in love with Hippolytus she would not have striven so hard to save him. In order to bring about the climax both Racine and Pradon had to represent Thésée as convinced of Hippolytus' love for Phèdre but both Pradon's and Racine's supposedly stern heroes and imperious monarchs show themselves to be absurdly weak and credulous in this domestic disaster. The one, without question, accepts the testimony of a hireling against the word of his son and heir who had, previous to this time, led an upright life and is famed for his impeccable virtue. The other, on the flimsy evidence of an oracular prophesy of a domestic calamity misreads the expression in his son's eyes and refuses to be enlightened by the confession of his guilty wife. Such credulity is inconsistent with the craftiness of one who "par politique" *has deceived

* Pradon's Phèdre 173.

a whole population as to his destination in order to
accomplish his purpose unknown to them.

IV

The foregoing comparison exhausts the list of principal characters; those of Idas, Cléone, Thérémène, and Ismène are of such minor importance that any attempt to compare them would be futile. On the other hand a study of the language of the two Phèdres and the possible borrowings of Pradon from both Corneille and Racine would prove extremely fruitful but would make the subject of another thesis and such a study must be left for some future date. It is quite certain, however, that Pradon did borrow from Racine. We have already hinted that much of Racine's plan of Phèdre was known to Pradon before either play appeared. The introduction of the character of Aricie is conclusive proof of this, and several of Pradon's lines are strongly reminiscent of the other Phèdre. Deltour* maintains that plagiarism was habitual with Pradon and cites a great number of lines which he considers parallel in the two Phèdres.

Perhaps there could be no surer indication of Racine's vast superiority over Pradon than the facts just stated. Even with an advance knowledge of Racine's

* Deltour's - Les Ennemis de Racine pg 343

subject, plan, and some of his speeches, Pradon failed miserably. Mediocrity versus genius - the issue is never in doubt. As Deltour* says, for the success of so difficult an enterprise as handling the subject of Phèdre "C'est ce qui demande l'adresse d'un grand maître". The comparison of the two plays has proved nothing previously unknown but it has made Racine's talent stand out the clearer by contrast with Pradon's pitiful puppet show and it has endeavored to indicate the main causes for the latter's failure. A brief recapitulation of these points then will be the only conclusion necessary.

- (1) Complexity of incident for no other end than itself alone, Aricie is made the confidante of Phèdre, complicating matters without adding anything to the character development or the story.
- (2) Characters made unattractive by their unnatural and inconsistent actions showing an almost complete lack of psychological insight on the part of the author.

* Deltour's - Les Ennemis de Racine pg 343

(3) Absurdity of plan from the very outset. Phèdre being only the fiancée of Thésée instead of his wife, thus transforming the situation from tragedy to one of light comedy and almost nullifying the dramatic interest. Deltour says of this "que c'est ne pas l'avoir traité que d'avoir éloigné l'image de l'amour incestueux qu'il fallait nécessairement faire paraître."

Each point at which Pradon erred Racine with infallible genius scored. No better refutation of Taine's famous "race, moment, milieu" theory could be asked, for why is not the level of Pradon and Racine the same? Here we have two men born in the same century, within a few years of one another in fact, both French, both surrounded by the same Parisian society. This explains it is true why Racine, helléniste and janséniste put into his works that which the ignorant and gallant Pradon did not, but how explain the difference in the intensity of their intellects, in the beauty of their works? The answer is as obvious as the superiority of Racine. Both men realized that to succeed they must

please their audience but Pradon's desperate efforts to "plaire davantage" were not governed by that rare quality, a true sense of the artistic. In short Pradon had only protectors — Racine had genius.

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