

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 Anna Cherry 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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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Report

of

Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Anna Cherry 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

July 28 1920

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VOLTAIRE'S LE TRIUMVIRAT AND THE
TRAGEDIES OF RACINE.

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

by

Anne Cherry

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for the degree of
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It has been generally accepted that Voltaire as a tragic poet observed preferably the Racinian tradition in composition. It is the purpose of this study to see if this holds true of the unsuccessful and little known Le Triumvirat, which according to the poet's vigorous assertions, was written in a spirit quite foreign to that which prevades the work of the great predecessor.

In its first conception the play was to be, according to a letter of July 1763, "un drame un peu barbare, un peu à l'anglaise destiné à faire un grand effet sur le théâtre." The first presentation being unsuccessful he withdrew it, polishing it and correcting it "jusqu'à ce que la force de la diction puisse faire passer l'atrocité du style." When it finally appeared in print, he posed as its editor and ingenuously asserted in the preface "la pièce m'a paru tenir beaucoup plus du terrible que du genre qui attendrit le coeur et qui le déchire." On m'assure même que l'auteur n'a point prétendu faire une tragédie pour le théâtre de Paris, et qu'il n'a voulu que rendre odieux la plupart des personnages de ces temps atroces.

That was in fact quite in accord with Voltaire's conception of the English tragedy as represented by Shakespeare. It is difficult however, to fix upon any convincing traces of Shakespearean influence. Fulvie may seem to inherit some of Lady Macbeth's violence for characterizing herself she declares,

"C'est l'école du meurtre et j'ai dû m'y former
De leur esprit de rage ils ont su m'animer;
Leur loi devient la mienne il faut que je la suive
Il faut qu' Antoine meure et non pas que je vive."

Her appeal to the sleep of death to favor her deed is reminiscent of Macbeth's appeal to night to hide his murder of Malcolm.

Macbeth. Act. 3, Sc.2.

Le Triumvirat Act.4, Sc.4

Come seeling night	Les flambeaux dans ces lieux
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day	De leur faible clarté ne frappent plus mes yeux

And with thy bloody and invisible hand	Sommeil, sommeil de mort favorable
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond which keeps me pale.	ma rage.

And the representations of nature in Macbeth as in sympathy with the terrible deed of mortals appears in the opening words of Le Triumverat.

Macbeth Act. 2, Sc. IV.

Ross to the old man after the murder of Malcolm

Ah! Good father

Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's art

Threatens his bloody stage.

Le Triumvirat Act. 1 Sc. I

Quelle effroyable nuit. Que le courroux céleste

Eclate avec justice en cette île funeste!

But in spite of these touches of the "terrible" as Voltaire conceived it, there is no evidence of any sustained imitation of the English tragedies although they had made a strong impression upon him during his stay in England some twenty-five years before.

Le Triumvirat was written in 1764, during the period of Voltaire's life when, in the author's eyes, literature was to serve largely as a conveyance for political doctrines. He proposed to present to the Parisian public a terrifying object lesson of the hideousness

of political tyranny. Corneille before him had conveyed a very similar lesson, though in less melodramatic fashion in the Cinna ou La Clémence d'Auguste.

Voltaire knew Cinna very well. In the Kehl Edition of 1785 Voltaire's Commentaire sur Cinna,¹ his criticisms are given. In these he shows a great interest in Corneille's treatment of a political subject and speaks admiringly of it.

"Remarquez que l'on s'intéresse d'abord beaucoup au succes de la conspiration de Cinna et d'Emilie. 1° Parce que c'est une conspiration.

2° Parce que l'amant et la maitresse sont en danger

3° Parce que Cinna a peint Auguste avec toutes les couleurs que les les proscriptions méritent et que dans son recit il a rendu Auguste execrable.

4° Parce qu'il n'y a point de spectateur qui ne prenne dans son coeur le parti de la liberte', Il est important de faire voir que dans ce premier acte Cinna et Emilie s'emparent de tout l'intérêt, On tremble qu'ils ne soient découverts. Vous verrez qu'ensuite cet intérêt change et vous jugerez si c'est un défaut ou non."

Cinna has indeed as its subject a conspiracy, Cinna, the favorite of Octave, and lover of Emilie, led on by his love for Emilie whose father had been a victim of Octave's proscriptions, while feigning to be a councillor and friend of Octave's, plans his death. The conspiracy is discovered and Octave magnanimously pardons the treacherous friend, seeking to punish Cinna only by shaming him with kindness which he shows him.

Like Cinna, Le Triumvirat deals with a conspiracy against a
1. V 50 of Oeuvres Complètes. P.193-194.

tyrant. The fugitive Pompée whose father had been killed by the tyrant Octave, together with Fulvie the scorned mistress of Octave, plans revenge. Pompée as well as being a political rival of Octave is also his rival in love. They both love the gentle Julie whose father Octave has proscribed. Julie abhors Octave loving only Pompée. Pompée's conspiracy is discovered and Octave like Auguste in Cinna, though strongly inclined to punish the conspirator forgives him and bestows upon him Julie. Pompée unlike Cinna accepts forgiveness merely to use it in overthrowing the tyrant.

A summary of the two plays shows at a glance similarities and dissimilarities of plot. That Voltaire was conscious of the similarity of the subject while writing Le Triumvirat is evident from his comment upon Cinna in his historical notes in Le Triumvirat where he writes, "Mais enfin n'est pas un trait d'ingratitude lâche comme la Conspiration de Cinna." In his commentaires sur Cinna, he had also decried this cowardly trait of Cinna, declaring that it divided the interest, so that whereas at first one was interested in Cinna and admired him, later through his display of cowardice one disapproved of him and felt interest only in the tyrant, Auguste. "Lorsque ainsi on s'intéress tour à tour pour les parties contraires, on ne s'intéresse en effet pour personne. These later criticisms seem in truth to be the real feeling of Voltaire in writing Le Triumvirat. Tho' he admired the first act of Cinna, he disliked the deceit practiced by Cinna.

An examination of Cinna gives very little evidence of any indebtedness on Voltaire's part to Corneille. The plot of the first act which he had admired so much is not followed in Le Triumvirat. l. P. 242 Condoret edition of 1877.

In *Cinna* the heroine takes the centre of the stage in the very first scene, the interest is roused for the heroine and for *Cinna* by their appearance, by their love and their imminent danger due to their conspiracy against Auguste. In *Le Triumvirat*, Voltaire awakens the interest in the hero and the heroine indirectly through Fulvie, thereby following a plan which calls one's attention to its similarity to some of the Racinian tragedies. In the main theme of the play Voltaire causes Pompée to form a plot against a tyrant who has shown nothing but cruelty toward him, an enemy in politics and in love. It is a far cry from the Auguste of *Cinna* and the belief in the divine right of kings as expressed by Livie to the spirit of revolt against tyranny in *Le Triumvirat*. The former is pervaded by the Seventeenth Century respect for authority; the latter by the Eighteenth Century revolt against political and social injustice and tyranny.

Cinna.

Le passe' devient juste et l'avenir permis,
Qui peut y parvenir ne peut être coupable,
Quoi qu'il ait fait on fasse. Il est inviolable:
Nous lui devons nos biens, nos jours sont en ses mains,
Et jamais on n'a droit sur ceux du souverain

Le Triumvirat Act. 1, Sc.1

A quels maitres, grands dieux, livrez-vous l'univers!
Voilà donc les ressorts du destin de l'empire,

Ces grands secrets d'Etat, que l'ignorance admire!
 Ils étonnent de loin les vulgaires esprits,
 Ils inspirent de près l'horreur et le mépris.

And so while each tyrant forges the conspirator

Cinna Act. 5, Sc. 3.

Le Triumvirat Act. 5, Sc. 5.

Apprendre sur mon exemple à vaincre
 la colère.

Non, je veux vous apprendre
 à vaincre la vengeance.

Yet in accordance with the difference in conception the characters adopt quite different attitudes for while in Corneille's tragedy, Cinna and Emilie accept with gratitude and shame Auguste's magnanimity, Pompée with Voltaire shows a most haughty attitude before the generous and pardoning Octave. There is a slight similarity in the monologues which depict the conflict in the hearts of the tyrants who are uncertain whether they shall punish their victims or treat them with clemency.

Cinna Act. 4, Sc. 2

Le Triumvirat Act. 3, Sc. 7

O Romain, O Vengeance! O pouvoir
 absolu.

Le peux-tu supporter ce tourment
 douloureux

O rigoureux combat d'un coeur
 irresolu

D'un coeur emporté par de con-
 trairees voeux

Qui fuit en meme temps tout ce
 quil se propose

Qui fait le mal qu'il hait, et
 fuit le bien qu'il aime,
 Qui cherche à se tromper, et
 qui se hait lui-même?

As for the rest all the similarity which is discernible is a certain resemblance in passages which present quite conventional and commonplace ideas as for example.

Cinna Act. 5, Sc. 4

Il peut faire trembler la terre sous
ses pas

Mettre un roi hors du trone, et donner
ses États,

De ses proscriptions rougir la terre
et l'onde,

Et changer à son gré l'ordre de tout
le monde;

Mais le coeur d'Emilie est hors de
son pouvoir.

Cinna

Aussi n'est-ce qu'à vous que je
veux le devoir.

Le Triumvirat Act. 5, Sc. 6

Commandez, s'il le faut, à
la terre asservie;

Mon coeur ne dépend point
de votre tyrannie.

Vous pouvez tout sur Rome,
et rien sur mon devoir.

Octave.

Vous ignorez mes droits,
ainsi que mon pouvoir.

So in spite of the fact that the general theme is the same and that there are a few passages which might seem to owe something to Corneille's Cinna in the development of plot Voltaire has avoided, and perhaps consciously, any direct similarity to the earlier play.

Voltaire then was but little moved by Cornelian or English influences in spite of his assertions and allusions. It remains to be seen what possible traces may be found of a Racinian influence to which he makes no reference.

Among the tragedies of Racine, the one most akin to Le Triumvirat in spirit and in Roman setting is Britannicus. This tragedy depicts the change of Néron from a comparatively inoffensive and docile ruler to one who foreshadowed the ruthless tyrant he was later to become. Agrippine, the queen, worthy mother of such a tyrant has committed all manner of crime to usurp the rights of

Britannicus to the throne; angered by Néron's growing feeling of independence she espouses the cause of Britannicus whose fiancée has been abducted by Néron. Néron for his part, angered by the thought of a successful rival urged on in his ruthless acts by Narcisse plans to poison Britannicus. For some time, however, Néron wavers between the good influence of Burrhus, who counsels him to continue his reign of justice, and the evil influence of Narcisse who advises him not to be governed by Burrhus and Agrippine but to rule by terror as tyrants had done before him. At length Néron gives way to Marcisse's machinations and his own desire for power. He poisons Britannicus and the play ends with the well justified apprehensions for the future of Agrippine and Burrhus.

In the editor's preface to Le Triumvirat, Voltaire praised Britannicus greatly saying of it, "De toutes les tragédies que nous avons, celle qui s'écarte le moins de la vérité historique, et qui peint le coeur le plus fidèlement, serait Britannicus, si l'intrigue n'était pas uniquement fondée sur les prétendues amours de Britannicus et de Junie, et sur la jalousie de Néron." It would seem that Voltaire sought to follow Racine in maintaining this "vérité historique" while correcting the error which he maintains Racine has committed in inventing the love affair.

In the very first scene of Britannicus the situation is such as to remind one strongly of that in the corresponding scene in Le Triumvirat. Agrippine confides in Albine her loss in influence over Néron who has shown his ill will toward Britannicus; she fears that he feels she too is in the way. Albine attempts to reassure her.

"Tout lui parle, madame, en faveur d'Agrippine:

Il vous doit son amour."

The point of departure in Le Triumvirat is the same. Fulvie, the former mistress of Octave and the rejected wife of Antoine, complains to her confidante of the ignominy heaped upon her by Octave and Antoine. Again we are reminded of Britannicus in Albine's attempts to reassure Fulvie.

"Octave vous aime: se peut-il qu'aujourd'hui

Vos malheurs, vos affronts, ne viennent que de lui?"

In the first act of Britannicus, Agrippine is informed that Néron has abducted the fiancée of Britannicus just as in the first act of Le Triumvirat, Fulvie hears a rumor that a similar deed has been perpetrated by the tyrant Octave.

From this point of departure the plot develops in parallel fashion in the two tragedies. Fulvie like Agrippine is inclined to espouse the cause of the rival of the ungrateful tyrant. Each expresses the same idea of desperation though in words which are not similar.

"Act. 1, Sc. 1 Britannicus.

Je m'assure un port dans la tempête.

Act. 1 Sc. 2 La Triumvirat.

Je n'ai qu'une ressource, Aufide, en ma disgrâce;

Le parti de Pompee est celui que j'embrasse;

There is the same feeling of repugnance in the part of each heroine.

Act. 1 Sc. 2 Britannicus. Agrippine à Albine.

Elle qui, sans orgueil jusqu'alors élevée

N'aurait point vu Néron, s'il ne l'eut enlevée,

Et qui même auroit mis au rang de ses bienfaits
L'heureuse liberté de ne le voir jamais?

Act. 1 Sc. 1 Le Triumvirat.

Julie abhorre Octave; elle n'est Occupée
Que de livrer son coeur au fils du grand Pompée.

In both plays the tyrant is prompted by an evil genius who
urges him on in his evil deeds by reminding him of a former mis-
deed.

Act 2. Sc. 2 Britannicus.

"Craignez-vous? Mais, seigneur, vous ne la craignes pas:
Vous venez de bannir le superbe Pallas, "

Act. 1 Sc. 3, Le Triumvirat.

A qui prétendez-vous accorder un pardon,
Quand vous m'avez vous-meme immolé Cicéron?

The parallel is closer still in the original version of Voltaire's
tragedy where in a scene immediately preceding Octave's declaration
of love to Julie, Antoine urges him on by the assurance:

Il n'appartient qu'à vous
De régler ses destins de choisir son époux.

Now this is precisely what Narcisse does in the Britannicus
where he encourages the hesitating Néron that he will easily
triumph over the scruples of Julie,

Act. 2 Sc.2 Britannicus.

Maître, n'en doutez point, d'un coeur déjà charmé,
Commandez qu'on vous aime, et vous serez aimé.

And Voltaire's removal of this scene suggests at least that he was
conscious of having fallen into too direct an imitation of his
predecessor.

In Le Triumvirat, Julie having fled from Rome and the pursuing tyrant, is cast by a storm upon the very island where he with his co-triumvus is making his terrible proscriptions. Separated from her lover, Pompée, the rival of Octave, she attempts to flee from him and is promised support by Fulvie. Octave comes upon her when she is alone. Julie attempts to leave him but her flight is prevented by Octave (see 1b). She declares that she is on her way to Fulvie's tent but he detains her with a protestation of love and a promise of protection, explaining that to him alone belongs the duty of choosing her husband (2b) and that he has chosen himself as her husband. Julie begs him to be just without any ulterior motive. He suspects Pompée, she upbraids him as a cruel tyrant. Later when the plot of Fulvie and Pompée is discovered, Fulvie is taken prisoner by Antoine; Julie is left in the hands of Octave who accuses her of loving Pompée. She glories in her love for Pompée and declares that she has loved him in spite of his being unfortunate and abandoned, preferring him to the crowned Caesar (3 b).

It will be seen by comparing the progress of the plot that there are too many points in common to permit the assumption that we have here a mere coincidence. In Britannicus, Junie, abducted by Néron and compelled to remain in his palace would avoid all conversation with him, finding herself alone with him, she attempts to flee but just as Octave had done, Néron prevents this and asks her reason for fleeing. Like Julie who had replied that she was on her way to see Fulvie, Junie replies that she is on her way to Octavie. Here Junie upon Auguste's accusation confesses that she

loves Britannicus, that she has been promised to him by his mother; she expresses the belief that doubtless he too agrees with his mother's desire to bestow her hand upon Britannicus. Néron, furious, declares that it is for him alone to choose for her a husband, and the husband whom he has chosen is himself (2a). She protests that she is not worthy of such an honor any more than she deserved to be abducted by him. She also protests that it is unfair to Octavie. Néron sums up these excuses and declares that it is because of her love for Britannicus that she refuses him. Here she confesses that she does love Britannicus (3a) that she feels it even more now to be her duty to love Britannicus when he is unfortunate and abandoned by his court than when he had been the idol of the court, the heir-apparent to the throne. Néron angered by this refusal and by the thought that Britannicus, his political rival, is also his rival in the love of Junie plans dreadful punishment for the lovers. The parallel passages showing the parallel development of the love episodes are quoted below:

1. a. Act. 2, Sc. 3 Britannicus.

Act. 5, Sc. 4.

Néron attempting to stay Junie.

Vous palâssez Julie!

Vous vous troublez, madame, et

1 b. Octave attempting

changez de visage:

to stay Junie is met with

Lisez-vous dans mes yeux quelque triste

this reply by Julie.

présage?

Act. 3 Sc. 4.

Junie.

Aufide me ramène aux

Seigneur, je ne vous puis dé-

tentes de Fulvie.

guiser mon erreur;

J'allois voir Octavie, et mon pas
l'empereur.

2 a. Britannicus.

Néronie.

C'est à moi seul, madame, à répondre de vous;

Et je veux de ma main vous choisir un époux.

Junie.

Et quel est donc, seigneur, cet époux?

Néron.

Moi, madame.

Junie.

Vous!

Le Triumvirat. Act. 3 Sc. 6.

Octave.

Il n'appartient qu'à moi d'honorer dans Julie

Le sang, l'auguste sang dont vous êtes sortie.

Julie.

Vous!

3 a. Britannicus. Act. 2, Sc. 3.

Junie.

"Mais ces mêmes malheurs qui l'en ont écarté,

Ses honneurs abolis, son palais déserté,

La fuite d'une cour que sa chute a bannie,

Sont autant de liens qui retiennent Junie."

Le Triumvirat. Act. 5 Sc. 5.

"J'ai préféré Pompée errant, abandonné,

À César tout-puissant, à César couronné.

The unfortunate lover in both plays only adds another crime
to the crime of being a political rival of the tyrant proving him-

self to be also his rival in love.

4 a. Britannicus. Act. 2, Sc. 2.

"D'autant plus malheureux qu'il aura su lui plaire,
Narcisse, il doit plutôt souhaiter sa colère:
Néron impunément ne sera pas jaloux."

Le Triumvirat Act. 5 Sc. 5.

4 b. Par un crime de plus fléchit-on mon courroux?

Il n'est que plus coupable en étant votre époux.

But Le Triumvirat was designed above all to be a tragedy of political rivalry between men and that is why perhaps there are apparently very few reminiscences in it of Bérénice, Esther, Athalie or even of the Phèdre and on the other hand a few rather striking situations and passages which recall one of the least known and admired tragedies of Racine, the Alexandre.

In the Alexandre, the unrequited lover Taxile is led to hope that political power may bring success in love. This same idea occurs in the original version of Le Triumvirat. In this passage Voltaire balances the word "destins" with "époux" as Racine balances it with "cœur".

Alexandre Act. 3 Sc. 3.

Cléofile to Taxile who loves Axiana. Antoine encourages Octave.
but whose love is not returned. Il n'appartient qu'à vous
Maitre de ses destins, vous l'êtes De régler ses destins, de
de son coeur. choisir son époux.

Again in Le Triumvirat, Pompée and Julie are the avowed enemies of the tyrant Octave. Pompée has attempted to take the life of Octave, an attempt punishable by death. In the same way

in the Alexandre Porus and Axiane are openly enemies of Alexandre. Porus is vanquished in battle and as his enemy is at his mercy. Both heroines insist that sharing their lover's guilt, they shall be granted the privilege of sharing his fate. But in harmony with Voltaire's desire to improve upon Racine's methods his lovers are to be sacrificed to tyranny rather than to the love of a conqueror (Alexandre) for his mistress.

Alexandre Act. 5 Sc.3.

Immolez-lui, (Taxile) seigneur, cette
grande victime;
Vengez-vous. Mais songez que j'ai
part à son crime.

Le Triumvirat Act.5Sc 5

Tes édits l'ont proscrit,
arrache-lui la vie;
Mais commence par moi,
commence par Julie:

In very much the same way as that in which Alexandre forgives his rival despite the opposition of Cléofile and grants his political rival the hand of Axiane, expressing a hope that people may learn to follow his example of clemency, so Octave too, forgives Pompée in spite of opposition from Antoine and gives him Julie, desiring that Rome may learn clemency from his example.

Alexandre Le Grand Act.5,Sc.3.

"Regnez toujours, Porus; je vous
rends vos états.
Avec mon amitié recevez Axiane:
Cléofile.
Prenez les sentiments que ce rang
vous inspire;"

Le Triumvirat at Act.5,Sc.5

Octave a Antoine.
Non, je veux vous apprendre à
vaincre la vengeance:
(a Julie)
Je vous rends à Pompée, en lui
rendant la vie;

The similarity in the development of the last scenes is now at an end for Voltaire causes Pompée to accept his life only as a means whereby to continue his revenge upon the tyrant whereas Racine causes Porus and Axiane to accept the friendship of the play. The words with which Voltaire terminates the play, however, are very similar in sentiment to those expressed in Act. 4 Sc. 2 of the Alexandre; It is the same hatred of tyranny though justly and mildly exercised.

Alexandre Act. 4, Sc. 2.

Axiane to Alexandre.

Non, de quelque douceur que
se flatte votre âme,

Vous n'etes qu'un tyran.

In another speech to Alexandre rendent ennemis.

Non, seigneur: je vous hais

d'autant plus qu'ou vous aime, secours m'appelle.

Le Triumvirat Act. 5, Sc. 5.

Pompée to Octave.

En vain tu deviens grand, en vain
tu me pardones;

Rome, l'Etat, mon nom, nous

rendent ennemis.

Rome, par toi soumise, a son

J'emploierai tes bienfaits, mais
pour la delivrer

Va, je la dois servir, mais je
dois t'admirer.

While the sentiments expressed in this passage are quite characteristic of Voltaire's attitude as a "philosophe"; from the standpoint of a play it is interesting to note that this passage reveals very precisely the difference between Voltaire's sentiment of the theme of clemency and that of Corneille in the Cinna. While Voltaire had no need for suggestions as to the

ideas expressed, Racine may very well have rendered him assistance in the way in which it was done.

However, it is in the scenes depicting the passion of love that Voltaire apparently levied the greatest contributions on Racine. For this other tragedies besides the Britannicus came to his assistance, notably Andromaque in which Pyrrhus the tyrant is also the lover. Pyrrhus loves Andromaque, the widow of Hector. She lives only in the memory of Hector and in her love for his son and sees only in Pyrrhus the destroyer of her people just as in Le Triumvirat, Octave loves Julie who sees in him the tyrant of her family and country. Julie, too is promised the life of her father in exchange for her love just as Andromaque is promised the safety of her son if she will give her hand in exchange. The heroine in each play replies to the advances of her oppressor, first with appeals to his better nature.

Andromaque Act. 1, Sc. 4.

Pyrrhus to Andromaque

En combattant pour vous, me sera-t-il permis

De ne vous point compter parmi mes ennemis?

Andromaque to Pyrrhus.

Voulez-vous qu'un dessein si beau,
si généreux,
Passe pour le transport d'un esprit amoureux?

Le Triumvirat Act. 2, Sc. 6.

Vous devez présumer
Quel est le seul moyen qui
peut me désarmer,

Et qui de ma clémence est
la cause et le gage.

Julie. Ou, si quelques vertus
germent dans votre coeur,
En les mettant à prix n'en
souillez point l'honneur;
N'en avilissez pas le

caractère auguste.
Est-ce à vos passions à vous
rendre plus juste?

Vous répondre d'un coeur si peu maître de lui:
Il peut, seigneur, il peut, dans ce désordre extrême,
Epouser ce qu'il hait, et perdre ce qu'il aime.

Le Triumvirat, Act. 3, Sc. 7.

D'un esprit emporté par de contraires vœux,
*Qui fait le mal qu'il hait, et fuit le bien qu'il aime,
Qui cherche à se tromper, et qui se hait lui-même?

Two other tragedies of Racine present the same theme of a raval in politics and in love, Bajazet and Mithridate. Traces of them are clearly visible in Voltaire's work. In Bajazet, a tyrant, this time a sultana, attempts to impose her love upon others. Roxane upon the reported death of the sultan, Amurat to whom she had been promised, attempts to force the young prince, Bajazet to marry her. He refuses and is met with the threat of the angry and disappointed tyrant. Both the situation and the diction of the threat correspond in the two plays.

Bajazet Act.2, Sc.1

Songez-vous que sans moi tout
vous devient contraire?
Que c'est à moi sur-tout qu'il
importe de plaire?

Le Triumvirat Act.3, Sc.6

Vous ignorez mes droits, ainsi
que mon pouvoir.
Vous vous trompez, Julie, et
vous pourrez apprendre.
Que c'est à moi surtout que l'on
doit obéir.

The situation grows in intensity; as the tyrants begin to suspect that they have a rival. The climax reached in both cases is so similar that it is impossible not to see in them an inter-

*Line from one of Racine's Sacred Hymns.

relation. In Bajazet the sultana calls her unwilling lover before her and throws her suspicions in his face. In Le Triumvirat when Julie faces the same accusation from Octave who pronounces the name of her lover she replies in less dramatic but, according to Voltaire's views, more "convenable" fashion.

Bajazet Act. 5 Sc. 4

Le Triumvirat Act. 3, Sc. 6

Ne prétendrais-tu point, par tes
fausses couleurs,
Déguiser un amour qui te retient
ailleurs;
Et me jurer enfin, d'une bouche
perfide,
Tout ce que tu ne sens que pour
ton Atalide?

Et Pompée...

Julie.

Ah! cruel, quel nom prononcez-
vous?

Pompée est loin de moi: qui
vous dit que je l'aime?

Atalide, madame! Oh ciel! qui
vous a dit...

Again in Mithridate, a tyrant seeks to impose love by means of his political power. Pharnace, son of Mithridate, believing his father dead assumes political supremacy and attempts to force his love upon Monime who, like Julie, loves another.

Mithridate, Act.1 Sc.3

Le Triumvirat Act.3, Sc.6

Maitre de cet état que mon pere
me laisse,
Madame, c'est à moi d'accomplir
sa promesse.

Il n'appartient qu'à moi

d'honorer dans Julie

Le sang, l'auguste sang dont
vous êtes sortie.

In the same words as Octave he promises, "Vous pouvez tout."
And the passages containing the declaration of love ends in very
much the same way.

Mithridate.

Le Triumvirat.

Mais enfin je commence, après tant de
de traverses,
Madame, à rassembler vos excuses
diverses;
Je crois voir l'intérêt que vous
voulez céler,
Et qu'un autre qu'un père ici vous
fait parler.

Allez, je vous entends;
Et j'avais bien prévu vos refus
insultants.
Un rival criminel, une race
ennemie.....

Mithridate ends as doe Le Triumvirat with the tyrant's for-
givenness of a rival. Mithridate because of his long absence was
believed dead by his son, Ziphares and Pharnace. Both loved the
princess Monime who was betrothed to their father. Pharnace had
declared his love and was shunned by Monime. Ziphares had very
gallantly championed her cause against his brother, declaring
that he loved her and would do all in his power for her. Mith-
ridate, however, returns and learning through Pharnace of the
love of Ziphares for Monime feels at first a desire to kill him,
but is prevented from doing so by an invasion of the Romans in
which Ziphares fights for his father. The last scene thus ter-
minates similarly to the last scene of Le Triumvirat, although
Mithridate dies, begging his son to avenge him and Octave lives.

Besides the evident influence of Racine upon Voltaire in the construction of plot as noted above, there are many epigrammatic phrases and characterizations which may well be reminiscences of the earlier poet. In two of Racine's plays an expression occurs which doubtless Voltaire had in mind in using a very similar one in Le Triumvirat.

Andromaque Act.5, Sc.3

Barbare, qu'as-tu fait? avec
quelle furie
As-tu trauché le cours d'une
si belle vie?

Le Triumvirat Act.1, Sc.2.

Et l'infame avarice, au pour-
voirmasservie.
Doit trancher à prix d'or une
si belle vie;

Bajazet, Act. 1, Sc.3

Peut-être en ce moment Amurat en furie
S'approche pour trancher une si belle vie

Again in Iphigenie, a tense scene probably influenced Voltaire in portraying a similar situation. Achille is about to leave Iphigenie who believes he is going to almost certain death for he is going to interfere with her father's plans for sacrificing her to the gods. So in Le Triumvirat, Pompée leaves Julie to slay Octave, an attempt which Julie fears may mean death for Pompée. Her cry is strongly reminiscent of Iphigenie's.

Iphigenie, Act. 5 Sc.2

Ah seigneur! Ah cruel!..Mais il
fuit, il m'échappe.
Ohtoi, qui veux ma mort, me voilà
seule, frappe,

Le Triumvirat Act. 4 Sc. 3

Je t'invoque, Brutus! je t'imite;
frappons!
Il m'échappe, il me fuit; o ciel!
m'a-t-il trompée?

Again in Le Triumvirat, Voltaire causes Fulvie to express a malicious joy in the thought that she may some day have revenge in seeing her enemies quarreling with one another in words which recall those of Doris an unhappy slave in Iphigénie
Iphigénie. Act. 4, Sc.1

Ah Doris! quelle joie!

Que d'encens brulerait dans les temples de Troie,
Si, troublant tous les Grecs, et vengeant ma prison,
Je pouvois contre Achille armer Agamemnon,

Le Triumvirat. Act. 1, Sc. 1.

Mais si dans mes chagrins quelques douceurs me restent,
C'est que mes deux tyrans en secret se détestent.

Voltaire admired the epigrammatic, the well turned phrases and in Alexandre le Grand. occur a few phrases which from their similarity to Voltaire's lead one to feel his indebtedness in this phase also to Racine.

One of these though opposite in sentiment to that expressed by Voltaire is very similar in rhythm and sound.

Alexandre Act. 2, Sc.2

Le Triumvirat

Taxile a Porus.

Julie a Octave.

Un héros dont la gloire accompagne
les pas,

Mon coeur ne dépend point
de votre tyrannie.

Qui peut tout sur mon coeur, et rien
sur mes états.

Vous pouvez tout sur Rome,
et rien sur mon devoir.

Another similar epigrammatic saying may have remained in Voltaire's memory.

Alexandre Act. 3, Sc. 6

Le Triumvirat Act. 5, Sc. 2

Ne puis-je rien pour moi quand je
puis tout pour lui?

Je ne puis rien pour vous,
ni pour lui, ni pour moi.

Again, Voltaire gives the same ironical turn to words, as
for example.

Alexandre le Grand.

Le Triumvirat.

Taxile à Porus.

Julie à Octave.

Vous serez...Mais voici ce rival
magnanime.

Voilà donc ce grand coeur, ce
héros magnanime,

To convey the idea of tyranny being imposed upon the igno-
rance of the common people Voltaire may have found a model in
Bajazet though he characteristically added a touch of protest and
defiance.

Bajazet Act. 1, Ac. 1

Le Triumvirat. Act. 1, Sc. 1

Je sais rendre aux sultans de fidèles
services;
Mais je laisse au vulgaire adorer leurs
caprices,

Ces grands secrets d'État,
que l'ignorance admire!
Ils étonnent de loin les
vulgaires esprits,
Ils inspirent de près
l'horreur et le mépris.

Le Triumvirat is then a tragedy based upon Roman History.

When it was presented in 1764 Voltaire's best tragedies had al-
ready appeared. It was written at the time when he was primarily
interested in historical and political subjects and at the height
of his final campaign against superstition and oppression. The

dark side of the reign of Octave and his fellow triumvirs was to furnish him "des réflexions sur le caractère des Romains, sur ce qui intéresse l'humanité, et sur ce qu'on peut se découvrir de vérités historiques." The remark in his letter to d'Argental that it was "un peu à l'anglaise," connects this with the dramatic point of view which he had acquired during this sojourn in England and recalls the attempt which he had made thirty years before in the Brutus to use a tragedy as a vehicle of political propaganda and in the English manner of Shakespeare as he conceived it. What Voltaire admired in the English drama was the abundance and vigor of its action. In spite of the vague similarities with Shakespearean drama which have been noted above, the English influence can hardly be said to have gone farther than this general conception. The analogy of Voltaire's use of a Roman historical background with that of Corneille to present the triumph of a general idea is obvious. The difference in nature of that idea is no less evident and characteristic. In Corneille it is a question of morals, in Voltaire the triumph of social and political principles, hence there is very little relation between the Triumvirat and the Cinna where the same question of tyranny is involved.

Voltaire published the play under a pseudonym, assuming merely the role of editor. In his preface to the play he wrote, "Le public semble n'aimer que les sentiments tendres et touchants, les emportements et les craintes des amantes affligées. Une femme trahie intéresse plus que la chute d'un empire." Voltaire

had made at least two previous attempts to produce a tragedy in which there should be no love element. In his first the Oedipe 1719, "he had been forced to yield to the demands of the actors," and had inserted in postscriptum fashion a subsidiary love plot. In the Méropé he had been quite successful. In this tragedy upon which he seems to have counted much as an instrument of propaganda, he was evidently unwilling to take chances and consequently adopted the appealing theme of the "femme trahie" in the hope of captivating the attention of the "public" for his political lesson. The relative unimportance in his eyes of this part of the work would account then in a measure for the considerable importance which the tragedies of Racine played in this portion of his tragedy. But what is more important and impressive is the fact that even in the political and historical side of his play, which at the time influenced him most vitally and in which Corneille would have served more naturally as a model, either his oft declared preference for Racine over Corneille or the necessity of offering a palatable bait to his Parisian audience force him to become, as it were, "imitateur malgré lui" of the writer of Britannicus, Mithridate and Andromaque.

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