ETHICS AND THE NOVEL AS STUDIED IN THE WORKS OF
WOMEN NOVELISTS FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THE
PRINCESSE DE CLÈVES, 1678, UNTIL THE END OF
THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV, 1715

by

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Thesis presented for the Degree of Ph.D. in the
University of London

1961
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I should like to thank my supervisor, Professor J.S. Spink, for the immense patience and kindness he has shown me during the preparation of this thesis.

A study of the female novel from 1678 to 1703, at which it seems to have suffered a relative eclipse, shows that whereas women writers portrayed passion and not amorous dalliance, they were faithful to the ideal held by an earlier generation: that

Their conception of passion as omnipotent, together with the absolute virtue of the protagonists, means that there is no real moral dilemma. The heroines and berêêines are thus represented as being worthy of pity, and their helplessness leads them to adopt a fatalistic attitude. The didactic aim, which had been so strong in the novel, tends thus to be replaced by a desire to move the reader.

The moral notions, which act as an accurate guide to the ethics implied in the novels, reflect this change of emphasis from the struggle of will to the portrayal of sensibility and suffering virtue. Such notions as 'la délicatesse', which has replaced 'la gloire' in importance, seem to hold the key to the understanding of this new ideal.

A comparison with the contemporaneous masculine novel demonstrates the unity of tone in the novels of women writers.
ABSTRACT

The introductory section is taken up with an examination of the moral climate of the society in which Mme de Lafayette wrote. The eclectic nature of honnêteté is pointed out, together with its lack of concern for perfection to which it preferred a pursuit of refined pleasure guided by reason.

Mme de Lafayette's ethics are found to be those of her generation in the setting of her novel, whilst her conception of love presents greater complexities. Mme de Villedieu is seen to preach a doctrine of hedonism which reflects exactly 'mondain' mentality.

A study of the feminine novel from 1678 to 1703, at which point it seems to have suffered a relative eclipse, shows that whereas women writers portrayed passion and not amorous dalliance, they remain faithful to the ideal held by an earlier generation: that of pure love. Their conception of passion as omnipotent, together with the absolute virtue of the protagonists, means that there is no real moral dilemma. The heroes and héroïnes are thus represented as being worthy of pity, and their helplessness leads them to adopt a fatalistic attitude. The didactic aim, which had been so strong in the novel, tends thus to be replaced by a desire to move the reader.

The moral notions, which act as an accurate guide to the ethics implied in the novels, reflect this change of emphasis from the struggle of will to the portrayal of sensitivity and suffering virtue. Such notions as 'la délicatesse', which has replaced 'la gloire' in importance, seem to hold the key to the understanding of this new ideal.

A comparison with the contemporaneous masculine novel demonstrates the unity of tone in the novels of women writers;
from the masculine novel is absent such evidence of moral preoccupation as we have found in the main part of this study. Thus it is to the works of women writers from the publication of the Princesse de Clèves until the end of the reign of Louis XIV that the credit must go for the development of the cult of sensibility in the novel.

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INTRODUCTION

Before discussing the moral standards in the works of fiction which followed the Princesse de Clèves with the ultimate purpose of understanding the influence of these moral standards on the development of society whose ethics are relevant to this study. In the title of this section we have deployed the term 'mondain', by which we mean society, 'le grand monde', those who were the chief actors or the chief spectators on the fabulous stage of Versailles.

The reasons for this restriction are simple and of an eminently practical nature. In the first place, Mme de Lafayette herself was 'une grande dame', and, secondly, the women novelists who form the main subject of this study belonged also, for the greater part, to high society. These writers, forced by economic reasons to put their literary talents, great or small, to profit, composed novels destined for a leisurely audience made up, for the greater part, of women.

The ideal to which this society subscribed, in matters of practical morality, was that of 'honnêteté', which therefore will
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The exact sphere of society to which we refer - the aspects of its conception of 'honnêteté' and the 'honnête homme' relevant to this study. - Précieux thought in the early seventeenth century - the development of this thought and its influence on 'honnêteté'. - Méré as an exponent of 'honnêteté' - the application of the doctrine of pleasure and the moral implications of this. - Mlle de Scudéry as a mondain theorist.

Before discussing the moral standards in the works of fiction which followed the Princesse de Clèves with the ultimate purpose of indicating the influence of these moral standards upon the development of the novel, it is necessary first of all to define the exact stratum of society whose ethics are relevant to this study. In the title of this section we have employed the term 'mondain', by which we mean Society, 'le grand monde', those who were the chief actors or the chief spectators on the fabulous stage of Versailles.

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form the main burden of this discussion. The particular aspects of the man of Society's conception of 'honnêteté' to which we shall refer are the more immediate ones: what is deemed to be laudable or reprehensible in matters of conduct and what makes for perfection in Society.

These preliminary remarks concerning the exact limits of this study, together with their object, explain in some measure the restrictions which must be placed upon this introductory discussion. On no occasion are we primarily concerned to trace the spiritual or philosophical ancestry of the ideas which are presented. Not only would this be irrelevant in this present context, but also difficult of accomplishment owing to the essentially heterogeneous nature of the ethics under examination. It is generally agreed that mondain theorists neither evolved nor adhered to an original system of thought. Their aim, as will be seen, was an intensely practical one: that of evolving a mode of conduct which ensured the greatest comfort and happiness for all. Their approach towards morality, having such a practical aim in view, was, understandably, the opposite to the spiritual. The happiness for which they strove was that of the here and now; it was therefore a matter of indifference to them that the various elements of their moral code were derived from contrasting sources. Given the eclectic nature of 'honnêteté' and the necessarily narrow limits of this study, we feel justified in omitting any reference to other current moral philosophies, particularly that of Cartesianism, upon it.

1. The relative nature of this morality will be discussed later. The term itself, 'honnête', was subject to different interpretations according to the social class of the person using it. See M. Magendie, La politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté, Paris, Presses Universitaires, 1925.
4. P. Hazard, La crise de la conscience européenne, Paris, P. 1949, sums up admirably the 'honnête homme' thus: "Il était fait de contrastes, mais si habilement ajustés qu'il finissait par présenter une harmonie parfaite: conciliation entre la sagesse

(cont. overleaf)
A study of 'mondain' moral theories, with a view to their relationship with the novel would, however, be incomplete without a reference to préciosité, which, in many ways, we regard as the precursor of 'honnêteté'.

The question of préciosité arises, furthermore, not only as a possible influence upon honnêteté but also because we shall subsequently be dealing with Mme de Lafayette and her successors, not only as members of a somewhat select society of honnêtes gens, but also as heiresses to the tradition of the immortal 'Sapho', Mlle de Scudéry.⁵

It is essential - although a somewhat forbidding task - that we attempt to demonstrate succinctly what we mean by the term 'précieux' or 'précieuse' and which facets of the term are of particular interest to us. From the point of view of chronology, we regard préciosité as having been a potent force during the early years of the seventeenth century, when Mme de Rambouillet was 'Maîtresse de céans' of the Chambre Bleue. The particular aspect of the préciosité of this time - which we consider to be its essential attribute - significant to this study is its eminently spiritual quality.⁶ By 'spiritual quality' we mean in the (cont. from previous page) antique et les vertus chrétiennes, entre les exigences de la pensée et celles de la vie, entre l'âme et le corps, entre le journalier et le sublime. Il enseignait la politesse, vertu difficile, qui consiste à plaire aux autres pour se plaire à soi-même, il disait qu'il fallait fuir l'excès, même dans le bien, et ne jamais se piquer de rien, sauf d'honneur ... L'honnête homme ne semble toute grâce que parce qu'il règle sa force intérieure et la dépense en harmonies".

⁵ Mme de Lafayette was herself described as "une précieuse de la plus haute volée".

⁶ Fascinating though a comparative study of critical opinion on préciosité would be, it would detract from the unity of this present discussion. For a list of relevant works, see Bibliography.
first instance a consideration for the spirit to the detriment of the senses. In the matter of love this meant that the emotion was purged of all sensual dross, leaving the pure gold of the spirit. In the matter of thought, it was held that the mind could function independently of the body. This definition of préciosité, albeit schematic, contains what we consider to be the key to the history of its subsequent development. The spirit being all important, one sought after spiritual values in order to acquire worth and, by the same token, conferred spiritual value upon other things in order that this value be reflected upon oneself.7

We are not concerned here with the sociological or psychological roots of préciosité, the connexion between this movement and the feminism of the time or the possible reasons for women affecting the précieux mode as an escape from the mundane reality of their existence.8 That the early Précieuses should use these ideas in their struggle to alleviate their condition seems a reasonable assumption. What could be more understandable than that an essentially feminine movement should be also a feminist movement?

The corollary of the initial précieux belief in the value of spirituality, of prime importance to us, is the cult of refinement. The connexion between the two notions is one which is, logically, perfectly sound and comprehensible. Equally easy to comprehend is that this search for refinement should come to impinge on matters relating to expression and conduct. The spiritual cannot be expressed in gross terms; therefore, one must seek to evolve a refined medium of expression. By the same token, in order to show oneself to be endowed with this spiritual quality, one must give ample proof of one's wit - 'esprit' - and refinement.

7. See R. Bray, La préciosité et les précieux..., Paris, 1948;
It is not specifically our aim to enter into a discussion on the value, in terms of sincerity, of these early précieux tenets, being primarily concerned with the effects of these ideas and ideals, which are indisputable.\footnote{9} We should, however, like to stress what we feel to be the eminently social orientation of précieux thought, even at this early stage, which inclines us to see in it more easily the harbinger of 'honnêteté' than the heir of the true neo-platonic tradition.\footnote{10}

Many critics, in discussing 'préciosité' have given some attention to what M. Reynier has termed 'la crise précieuse', that is, the period at which the movement began to attract attention and adverse comment. It will be noted that the dates ascribed to this event invariably fall within the 1650's.\footnote{11} An obvious assumption concerning any movement of ideas is that, having enjoyed a vital period when it could be accounted a positive force, it then inevitably undergoes a period of decline, when having lost its original impetus, certain of its manifestations become exaggerated, and when it is eventually replaced by a new mode of thought. Could not this be the case of the précieux movement? Given that some aspects of préciosité have degenerated into the grotesque or ridiculous, not the least of the reasons for an awareness of these ridiculous aspects would be the presence of new, more vital, forces in fashionable thought. It happens that H. Busson states that a change in public opinion from a general acceptance of Stoicism to an adherence to the general principles of Epicureanism occurred with the generation of 1660.\footnote{12} We are by no means suggesting that Epicureanism as interpreted by Gassendi was responsible for the précieux eclipse. It cannot be doubted, however, that the diffusion of vaguely Epicurean ideas would bring about a change in the moral climate from that which nurtured the early préciosité.

\footnote{9} It is of little importance to us that there should be a discrepancy between what was practised and what was preached by the habitués of the Chambre Bleue, that such as Voiture should worship simultaneously - and ardently - at the altars of Vénus Urania and Vénus Anadyomène.

\footnote{10} See R. Bray, op.cit., p. 103.

\footnote{11} See inter alios, A. Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVII è siècle, Paris, Domat, 1954, tome II.

\footnote{12} op.cit., p. 198 sq.
We do not seek, however, to compare 'préciosité' with Gassendism: the two terms do not admit of comparison, owing to the inalienably social nature of the one and the indisputably systematic nature of the other. Nevertheless, we are satisfied that the dissemination in 'mondain' circles of beliefs ascribing supreme importance to pleasure must radically alter the climate of opinion from that which prevailed in the heyday of the Chambre Bleue. Examination of 'mondain' moral treatises reveals the influence of these new ideas whilst one looks in vain amongst such works for reference to what we consider to be the essential features of préciosité.

It is for this reason, envisaging préciosité as we do, as an intellectual and moral phenomenon which could only occur at a single point of time, that we are inclined to disregard, to reject the idea of a second préciosité in the context of this study. If the basic beliefs which informed the movement had continued to flourish, there would be no need to discuss honnêteté; all would come under the heading of préciosité. As it is, by the ineluctable and irreversible process of evolution, its peculiar characteristics, by virtue of which it merits attention as a movement of thought, are discarded and its secondary characteristics alone are taken up by, or rather play an important role in formation of, the new ideal, that of honnêteté.

We do not infer, however, that the years following the assumption of personal power by Louis XIV mark the advent of honnêteté. M. Magendie has shown at length the development and influence of the movement from the beginning of the century onwards. Honnêteté and préciosité probably enjoyed the same life-history and those movements whose vulgarisation they represent: Epicureanism and Stoicism. These, according to M. Busson, existed simultaneously, their rate of development and expansion depending upon the moral climate of the time.


15. H. Busson, op. cit., p. 213.
Let us now examine the works of an eminent theoretician of
honnêteté, Antoine Gombauld, generally known as the Chevalier de
Méré. The choice of the Chevalier in preference to Saint-Evrémond,
a notable example of an honnête homme, might at first seem
invidious. Once again, two intensely practical reasons motivate
this decision: firstly, the Chevalier began to publish his writings
in the 1660's, and secondly, his writings, which are
essentially practical guides to conduct, demonstrate admirably such
aspects of honnêteté as are relevant to this study.

One is almost overcome by the profusion of detail given by
Méré on honnêteté and notions relating to it. We do not intend,
therefore, to discuss his works in anything but the briefest
outlines: in the first place, they have already provided the subject
of a recent study, and in any case, they do not interest us
in themselves but only insofar as they indicate trends of thought
which are of interest to the main subject.

What does Méré propose as the highest good? Examination of his
writings quickly shows such a question to be abortive: in order to
understand Méré's aim, for 'highest good' one must substitute the
phrase 'aim of existence'. Hereupon the answer appears, unvarying
in essence throughout: that of pleasure. What is, then, honnêteté,
and what is Méré's conception of the 'honnête homme'? The answer is
again simple: 'honnêteté' is the way of life by which one derives
the maximum of pleasure and the 'honnête homme' he who gives the
largest amount of pleasure.

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16. Les Conversations, published in 1668, which take the form of
dialogues between the author and the Maréchal de Clèrembault.
They were followed in 1677 by a work entitled Des Agréments.
The title of the first work is significant from the point of
view of the importance attached by this society to the art of
conversation.

17. P.M. Harry, The ethics of the Chevalier de Méré, M.A. Thesis,
University of Manchester, 1958.

18. These ideas, although developed at greater length in the last of
Méré's works on the subject, De la vraie honnêteté, were already
fully articulate in the Conversations. See Méré (Antoine
Gombauld) Chevalier de, Oeuvres complètes, texte établi et
présenté par Charles H. Boudhors, Paris, F. Roches, 1950 Vol.1,
(cont. overleaf)
How does one give pleasure? That is to say, how does one discern that which is most likely to please one's fellow-men, in the sense of those with whom one lives and upon whom one relies for one's happiness, for there is no altruism implied in this philosophy. The faculty regarded as essential here would seem to be wit - 'l'esprit'. This aspect of Méré's doctrine must immediately strike one as evidence of 'précieux' influence, both in its emphasis on cerebral qualities and in the emphasis placed throughout on psychological observation, to which the Chevalier attaches cardinal importance. 19.

Of more importance still, perhaps, in Méré's system, is the faculty of reason - 'la raison' as he understands it. He himself is at great pains to distinguish between 'la raison' and 'l'esprit' in the chapter bearing the latter title. 20. Such hair-splitting

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second conversation, pp. 33-34, fourth conversation, p. 51, fifth conversation, p. 75, "Ceux qui disent que l'honnêteté consiste à bien vivre et à bien mourir, changent les termes sans éclaircir la question. La parfaite honnêteté est toujours la même en tous les sujets où elle se trouve, quoique la différence du temps et de la fortune la fasse paraître bien différemment. Mais sous quelque forme qu'elle se montre, elle plaît toujours, et c'est à cela principalement qu'on la peut reconnaître."
Vol. III, p. 99, "L'honnêteté me semble la chose du monde la plus aimable, et les personnes de bon sens ne mettent pas en doute, que nous ne la devons aimer que parce qu'elle nous rend heureux; car la félicité, comme on sait, est la dernière fin des choses que nous entreprenons. Ainsi tout ce qui n'y contribue en rien quoique l'on s'en imagine quelque apparence honnête, c'est toujours une fausse honnêteté."

19. See Oeuvres Complètes, vol. II, De l'Esprit, p. 75, "En quelque lieu qu'on se rencontre il faut pénétrer les choses qui se vont produire, et prévoir ce qui doit arriver, quoique le succès en paraisse encore douteux". p. 34, "C'est acquérir de l'esprit, que de se rendre plus habile en tout ce qui regarde la vie. Cet avantage consiste à nous bien servir des choses qui dépendent de nous pour vivre plus heureusement." See also pp. 76, 80, where Méré explains the psychological motive for wishing to please others: that of influencing them, "car rien ne se communique plus aisément que ce qui plaît". See also Conversations, vol. I, p. 46, "... quelle apparence de plaire aux honnêtes gens, et de les persuader, à moins de connaître ce qui les peut toucher, et par quelle voie on les gagne?"

definitions, where his labours only serve to render confusion worse confounded, need not concern us here, however. If *l'esprit* was necessary to guide one's footsteps in society, the primary function of *la raison* was that of finding the course of action best suited to one's own interests and, at the same time (for both are synonymous in the long run) least detrimental to the interests of others, *le juste milieu* as Méré would conceive of it. One scarcely needs to point out that this was not reason as understood by Descartes, nor yet an instrument of repression of the ego, but, rather, an instrument of expression of the individuality.\(^{21}\)

The use to which this reason was put demonstrates the gulf which exists between *l'honnêteté* and the essence of *préciosité*. Where the one was orientated towards the quest for an ideal, the other now turns its back definitively on perfection and with it all fixed and immutable standards. The aim is, not to excel in anything, not to seek after the sublime, which is suspected of being fundamentally anti-social, to adhere to an *heureuse médiocrité*,\(^{22}\) fleeing from excess, even of virtue.\(^{23}\)

Two points of equal importance arise from the preceding statements. The one is that pre-occupation of the *honnêtes gens*, as opposed to the *Précieux* was not with perfection but with pleasure; the other, the corollary of this first principle, is the essential relativity of everything, judged by the standards of honnêteté.\(^{24}\) In matters of aesthetics, that which pleased did

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\(^{21}\) See P. Hazard, *op.cit.*, vol.II, pp.76-76, "...*la morale des honnêtes gens; une morale psychologique. Elle ne dédaignait pas de puiser aux sources antiques, qu'elle préférait de toute manière au christianisme; mais elle invoquait surtout la raison. Une raison qui s'était civilisée, qui n'était plus rude et austère comme autrefois, qui ne conservait presque rien de son ancienne rigidité*".

\(^{22}\) *Des Agréments*, p.33, "... car pour être bien dans le monde, il n'est pas nécessaire d'avoir rien d'exquis: cela même pourrait nuire en plusieurs rencontres, parce que lorsqu'on excelle, il arrive toujours qu'on efface beaucoup de gens, et qu'ensuite on s'attire l'envie: mais la médiocrité ne choque personne; ..."

\(^{23}\) This particular conception of the *aurea media* we regard as an example of the theoreticians of honnêteté's application of, rather than direct borrowing from, Epirudean ideas.

\(^{24}\) The term itself refers to purely relative standards, see (cont.)
so by virtue of the universal harmony with which it was endowed, in matters of ethics, the final test was the innate harmony between the subject, his environment and the action. It is thus perfectly understandable that the 'honnêtes gens' were concerned not with the content but the form, not the underlying morality but with the exterior expression. These eminently aesthetic standards were adopted because the chief criterion was that of pleasure. The profound implication of such a doctrine, as has been pointed out by M. Benichou, is a tacit acceptance of human limitations - of human nature, in fact.  

According to this new scale of values, in many ways diametrically opposed to that subscribed to by an earlier generation, the passions must inevitably be re-appraised and revalued. Those passions which militated against an inconspicuous life in society, against the peace of mind of the individual, must become subordinate and suffer the yoke of reason. Thus it is that such considerations as 'la gloire' and 'la générosité' in the Cornelian sense, disappear from usage.

The passion of love, accorded a position of primary importance by Corneille and the Précieux alike, is dispensed with. It is replaced by a conception of love where the emotion remains subordinate to the dictates of reason, and therefore to self-interest, and where it is ascribed the aim of completing one's education, of refining and polishing the wit. The pleasures of loving, without the thorns of emotional involvement, are tacitly accepted.

The notion which perhaps most completely sums up the attitude to life of the advocates of honnêteté is that of 'la bienséance'.

(cont. from previous page)


25. P. Bénichou, op.cit., p.224, "La primauté attribuée au plaisir, comme critère du beau, n'est que la forme, transposée sur le plan esthétique, d'une philosophie morale profonde, dont la satisfaction, le contentement, l'honneur fait à la nature est la loi profonde."

26. "L'amour donne de l'esprit" - this phrase sums up the attitude of the honnêtes gens.
itself originally a term of aesthetics and one which remains essentially devoid of moral connotation. All questions of behaviour are judged by the yardstick of 'la bienséance', the final measure of all things.

Having thus surveyed briefly the salient points of Méré's teachings, arising from the fundamental importance attached to pleasure, let us see how these ideas are corroborated in the works of the mondain theorists who followed him in the field, and who addressed themselves specifically to an audience who wished for a practical guide to conduct. Is it surprising to find Mlle de Scudéry's name amongst the ranks of these writers? Her Conversations de Morale, which she published during the 1680's and which incorporate much material which had been scattered at random through the countless pages of Cyrus, embody many of Méré's views and show a considerable unity of thought amongst the theoreticians of honnêteté of the time.

The form of 'Sapho's' mondain treatises, like those of her literary contemporaries in the same field, is that of a set of

27. See M. Magendie, op. cit., vol. II, p. 144, "Enfin le monde a répandu et fortifié la notion de bienséance. Il ne faut pas chercher en elle un principe de morale qui éclaire et épuré la conscience. Elle n'est pas incompatible avec ce qui est beau, vrai, ou bien, mais elle en est indépendante; elle n'est pas toujours attachée à la vertu; elle s'accorde avec le vice qui se cache, et même avec certains défauts qui se donnent libre cours, lorsqu'ils sont de nature à apporter de l'agrément à la vie de société".

28. Des Agréments, vol. II, p. 19, "Je veux dire que celui qui paraît plus sombre ou plus gai que la bienséance ne veut, doit essayer par adresse ou par habitude d'y apporter quelque modération. ... la principale cause de la bienséance vient de ce que nous faisons comme il faut ce qui nous est naturel; ..."

29. op. cit., p. 29, "Enfin qui me demandent une marque infaible pour connaître le bien et le mal, je n'en pourrais donner ni chercher une plus forte ni moins trompeuse, que la décence et l'indécence; car ce qui sied bien est bon, et ce qui sied mal est mauvais."
conversations or discourses upon the practical application of ethics. The writer simply gives a list of qualities deemed necessary to life in society, together with a criticism of those faults or vices considered detrimental to such an existence. Such a practical aim implies a choice of eminently social qualities such as 'la complaisance'. To guide the reader through society, in order that he or she may be universally persona grata, constant use of judgement, 'le discernement', is deemed essential; and, of course, much importance is attached to 'la politesse'.

Hypocrisy, when positively harmful to others, is frowned upon, whilst it is admitted that a little dissimulation is unavoidable in social intercourse.

Just as Mâré made reason the primary attribute of the 'honnête homme' with pleasure as the touchstone of his conduct, so Mlle de Scudéry also reserves for this faculty, which would seem nearly to resemble what might nowadays be termed psychological intuition, a place of primary importance. The essential quality of all speech and action is that it must be the fruit of conscious choice: art - and artifice - has in every sphere replaced spontaneity. Virtue itself, judged by such standards, is of itself not sufficient.

30. Nouvelles conversations de morale, Paris, 1688, p. 395, "Cette science (du savoir vivre) sans laquelle toutes les autres sont désagrâables, ne s'apprend pas sans choisir, et sans discerner les bonnes manières qu'il faut suivre, et les mauvaises qu'il faut éviter".


33. Conversations nouvelles sur divers sujets, p. 322, "La valeur naturelle est brutale, l'amour de tempérament est grossière (sic) la bonté même de cette espèce est trop simple; en un mot il faut que la raison donne la perfection aux inclinations."

34. ibid., p. 325, "... je ne loue les actions vertueuses que lors
Here, as in Méré's works, love is relegated to the still not unimportant task of giving grace and charm to the individual. 35.

It would be impossible, within the limits of this study, to give a survey of the moral treatises extolling the virtues of honnêteté and implementing the definition of the 'honnête homme' given by Méré, which continue to appear both until the end of the seventeenth century. We have, however, examined such works as L'Homme de Qualité by the Abbé de Chalesme, which first appeared in 1671;36. the Nouveau traité de la civilité by one Antoine de Courtin, an eminent diplomatist in his time, published for the first time in 1672;37. Chétardie's Instructions pour un jeune seigneur, ou l'idée d'un galant homme, of 1683;38. Discours sur la bienséance... and Les devoirs de la vie civile by the same author, Jean Pic, and which seemed to have appeared in the same year, 1687;39. Le Portrait d'un honnête homme, by the Abbé Goussault, a second edition of which was published in 1693;40.

(cont. from previous page)

35. ibid., p.367, "Il faut de plus que le grand commerce du monde choisi et du monde de la cour, aide encore à le donner (l'air galant), et il faut aussi que la conversation des Dames le donne aux hommes ... je dirais encore qu'il faut même qu'un honnête homme ait eu du moins une fois en sa vie quelque légère inclination, s'il veut avoir parfaitement l'air galant; ..."


37. Nouveau traité de la civilité qui se pratique en France parmi les honnêtes gens, Amsterdam, 1672.

38. Instructions pour un jeune Seigneur ou l'idée d'un galant homme, Paris, Girard, 1683.


L'Ecole du monde ou instructions d'un père à un fils, by Lenoble, whom we shall meet again later, which appeared in 1695, and finally during the period under consideration, Entretiens sur les devoirs de la vie civile, by one Marsollier, published in 1714.

These particular works have been singled out for mention in the first place because their authors belong either to the leisured classes, abbés de cour or courtiers of Louis XIV, or are professional moralists who frequented such circles: all address themselves to the 'honnêtes gens', the section of society which provided Méré's material and his audience. If the ideal of 'honnêteté' was becoming effete in the closing years of the century, there is nothing in these works which would indicate that fresh vital inspiration would emanate from this quarter. The same world, revolving on the axis of pleasure, is presented: the same notions, those of 'la bienséance', 'la raison', 'la délicatesse', recur constantly.

Having thus surveyed the ethics which were current when Mme de Lafayette's masterpiece appeared, and to which many continued to render lip-service, let us now begin the task of seeing to what extent women novelists echo the opinions formulated by such as Méré; and how these theories, as understood by these writers, affect the development of the novel.

42. Entretiens sur les devoirs de la vie civile, Paris, 1714.
Chapter I

Ethics in the Feudal Novel: 1678–1687: Madame de Lafayette

Madame de Lafayette's choice of material — interest in reproducing court life — a pleasing reality. — In examination of the background of the Princesse de Clèves — the importance attached to pleasure — a disregard for moral issues — the significance of 'Le Rêver', 'La Bienséance', 'La galanterie'. — Nemours — the courtier, the honné homme — he partakes of and contributes to the moral tone of the Clèves — the honné homme — his part in the complex web of the passions of love and jealousy. — Mrs Clèves — cannot be distinguished from the other characters — the importance of jealousy — the fundamental disbelief in the permanence of passion. — Sensibility in Mrs de Lafayette's work. — The Princesse de Clèves — 'asal de mine au point'.


An examination of Madame de Clèves, whose four short volumes were published anonymously by Martin in the early months of 1678, must occupy a position of primary importance in this study. Here our main concern will be to distinguish and identify, where it is relevant to do so, the elements of moral characterization in the Princesse de Clèves through an examination of the characters, of the relationship in which they stand to the other, and of the background against which they act. And in order to do this, we shall refer constantly to the text. 1

The choice of material, we have stated, may be found to reveal the author's ethical allegiance, not only by the ordering of events within the artefact but also by the context in which the action is placed. Let us, therefore, as a preliminary to a study of...

1. We make no apologies for the sometimes lengthy quotations, the inclusion of which we feel necessary to allow the reader to judge the validity of our argument. For a discussion of the difficulty which faces a critic dealing with a work of prose fiction, when all quotation from the text must to some extent alter its significance, see M. Turnell, The novel in France, London, Hamilton, 1950, p. 3.
CHAPTER 1.

ETHICS IN THE FEMININE NOVEL, 1678: MADAME DE LAFAYETTE

Mme de Lafayette's choice of material — interest in reproducing court life — a pleasing reality. — An examination of the background of the Princesse de Clèves — the importance attached to pleasure — a disregard for moral issues — the significance of 'le mérite', 'la bienséance', 'la galanterie'. — Nemours — the courtier, the honnête homme — he partakes of and contributes to the moral tone of the work. — Clèves — the honnête homme — his part in the drama — the importance of the passions of love and jealousy. — Mme Clèves — cannot be distinguished from the other characters — the importance of jealousy — the fundamental disbelief in the permanence of passion. — Sensibility in Mme de Lafayette's work. — The Princesse de Clèves — 'essai de mise au point'.

An examination of La Princesse de Clèves, whose four short volumes were published anonymously by Barbin in the early months of 1678, must occupy a position of primary importance in this study. Here our main concern will be to distinguish and identify, where it is relevant so to do, the elements of moral characterization in the Princesse de Clèves through an examination of the characters, of the relationship in which they stand the one to the other, and of the background against which they act. And in order to do this, we shall refer constantly to the text.¹

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character, look at Mme de Lafayette's use of history in the Princesse de Clèves: what significance have the terms 'history' and 'reality' as applied to this work? 2

The writer carefully sets the scene of the court of Henri II in the prologue to the drama: she sketches, briefly but accurately, the monarch and his entourage, together with such outstanding courtiers as the Duc de Nemours, the Vidame de Chartres, the Prince de Clèves, and the Chevalier de Guise, with truth and fiction adroitly intermingled in the latter instances.

Not only does Mme de Lafayette render a relatively accurate account of actual historical personages but she also weaves history into the very fabric of the plot. Although the heroine herself can claim no exact counterpart in history, the drama of which she is the centre is played out against a background of historical fact. For instance, the animosity which was presumed to have prevailed between the Dauphine - Mary, Queen of Scots - and Catherine de Médicis, is given as the indirect cause of Mlle de Chartres marrying the Prince de Clèves. The celebrations which accompany the marriages of Marguerite de Savoie and Elizabeth de France serve as a pretext for further incidents of vital importance in the story: for Nemours's accident, which reveals Mme de Clèves's feelings to herself and to Guise; and for the projected journey of M. and Mme de Clèves to Spain in the company of Elizabeth de France. Again, following the death of Henri II, court obligations play a large part in the story: it is during the Prince de Clèves's absence from his wife, who has chosen to go to Coulommiers rather than to follow the Court to Rheims, that the incident occurs which causes his death.

Mme de Lafayette's choice of subject is quite clearly not 'historical' in the sense in which it was understood by Mlle de Scudéry. Her presentation of an epoch generally known to her readers is precise; historical fact is, moreover, made to blend in with the intrigue. It is apparent, therefore, that Mme de Lafayette has not merely chosen an historical theme in order to embroider upon it a tale which in no way respects historical fact. She uses history as a guarantee of the veracity of her story; being chiefly concerned with reality, as a passage in her letter to Lescheraine indicates: "... (C'est) une parfaite imitation du monde de la cour et de la manière dont on y vit. Il n'y a rien de romanesque ni de grimpé. Aussi n'est-ce pas un roman: c'est proprement des mémoires." 3.

She is, therefore, interested in history as a guarantee of fact and not as a pretext for flights of idealistic fancy. A study of the Princesse de Clèves reveals Mme de Lafayette's aim as being that of producing a simulacrum of reality: of the reality of court life. We may presume that Mme de Lafayette, in company with the honnêtes gens of her generation, was attracted by the air of refinement which she felt characterized the age of Henri II. Thus the aesthetic consideration of nobility of choice would be doubly satisfied: not only would the drama take place amongst high-born protagonists, but those protagonists would be courtiers of the glorious Valois. She thus may use history, not only to substantiate her claim of veracity, but also because that particular period in history may, for the reasons which have already been suggested, present such similarity to her own ideals and aspirations that she will feel free to create a court atmosphere where both intermingle.

Let us look at the place accorded to court activities in the Princesse de Clèves. Mme de Clèves and Nemours first meet at a

court ball; and it is at another ball - given by the Maréchal de Saint André this time - that the heroine first becomes aware of the force of her passion. Court functions and duties are responsible for Nemours' and Mme de Clèves' constantly meeting: whether the background of their encounters be a reception, a ball, or one of the Dauphine's conversation circles. These latter are particularly important: it is during the course of one of them that Mme de Clèves hears of Nemours's indiscretion regarding a confession made by a married woman - Mme de Clèves herself - to her husband.

In addition, Mme de Lafayette has woven into the story certain court figures, who, whilst they play but a minor role, are nonetheless indispensable as part of the dramatic fabric. Outstanding amongst these are the Dauphine and the Vidame de Chartres. It is perhaps surprising that the former has received so little attention from the critics, (both) in view of the character study which she presents and of her importance in the plot. She is described at the outset of the story as being admirable by virtue of her beauty and her wit, a delightful example of the latter being given when, on the subject of M. de Nemours's scruples, she remarks that if his mistresses were to be absent from a ball, the numbers would be sadly depleted.⁴ Her grace, her wit, her heartlessness, all serve to create an image of court mentality. The Dauphine's role is particularly important on the occasion of the Princesse de Clèves's hearing of Nemours's indiscretion.⁵ With what thoughtless gaiety she pursues the subject of Nemours's adventure, in spite of Mme de Clèves's attempts to divert the conversation!

The Vidame de Chartres is equally important, in that it is owing to a lost letter, written to him by a much-prized mistress, that the violence of Mme de Clèves's passion is revealed to her through

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5. op.cit., pp.139-143.
the jealousy which she feels. It is on this occasion, too, that Mme de Clèves realizes the power of her emotions over her will, through the violent changes which her attitude to Nemours undergoes. The Vidame recounts, as background to the story of the letter, a tale of amorous intrigue in which duplicity is accepted as a necessary part of conduct.

We would maintain, then, that these details do not merely provide a background but form an integral part of the drama. That is, Mme de Lafayette shows throughout an interest in reality and an attention to worldly matters which has a bearing not only on the atmosphere, as we have seen, but also upon the protagonists themselves, as we shall endeavour to prove.

It has been argued that the court which appears in the pages of the Princesse de Clèves is not that of Henri II but, rather, that of the Roi Soleil. However that may be, we are content to assert that Mme de Lafayette's primary consideration in her choice of subject was not so much its historical as its pleasing value. Her aim— for choice of material and aim are synonymous in this context —that of presenting a reality both pleasing and worthy of emulation.

We have intimated that Mme de Lafayette really sought to portray 'mondain reality: this is shown by the fact that reality, 'court atmosphere', is everywhere present, that it pervades and permeates the whole. This atmosphere is created, not by a narration of facts alone, but by the mode in which they are presented, by the words which are used to describe them. Let us look, therefore, at the terms in which Mme de Lafayette renders the refined yet troubled world of the Princesse de Clèves. Court mentality is defined at the beginning of the book: "L'ambition et la galanterie étaient l'âme de cette cour, et occupaient également les hommes et les femmes. Il y avait tant d'intérêts et tant de cabales différents, et les dames avaient tant de part que l'amour était toujours mêlé aux affaires et les affaires à l'amour."

"Ainsi il y avait une sorte d'agitation sans désordre dans
cette cour, qui la rendait très agréable, mais aussi très dangereuse pour une jeune personne". 6.

Mme de Chartres, at an early juncture in the story, warns her daughter thus: "Si vous jugez sur les apparences en ce lieu-ci... vous serez souvent trompée: ce qui paraît n'est presque jamais la vérité". 7. If the prevailing tone is claustrophobic, a term applied by M. Adam, 8. it is also one of restraint, of frenzied activity beneath a calm and ordered surface. The primary concern of all, without exception, in this society, is to hide their feelings. Typical of such an attitude is the commentary upon the state of the court as Henri II lies dying. Intrigues and cabals flared up with unwonted vigour: "... néanmoins, tous les mouvements étaient cachés et l'on ne paraissait occupé que de l'unique inquiétude de la santé du roi". 9.

The primary characteristics of the court as thus described are those of intrigue beneath a polite exterior, where, in order to achieve the aim of existence - pleasure - duplicity is a natural and necessary weapon. As the drama gathers momentum, the chief protagonists themselves will order the tone of the work. We shall see, subsequently, how they appear in relation to this world. In the meantime, we should stress the fact that on no occasion does Mme de Lafayette offer any true criticism of the world which she portrays. In the absence of such criticism, one is, therefore, entitled to conclude that the behaviour of these 'honnêtes gens' has her implied suffrage. She herself states that "la galanterie" is the essence of this society. Let us examine the meaning and importance of this term in the work as a whole. Although, as the glossary of M. Magne's edition of La Princesse de Clèves points out, "la galanterie" has various meanings, we shall not seek to distinguish them one from the other and

6. ibid., p.23.  
7. ibid., p.39.  
to treat them separately, but stress, rather, the relationship between each shade of meaning; we wish to emphasize the underlying idea behind the notion.

Taking firstly the epithet 'galant', we shall endeavour to demonstrate its significance by citing the particular instances in which it is used. It appears in the opening paragraph of the book, referring to the monarch's character, and is used on two subsequent occasions when Mme de Lafayette is setting the stage for her drama, referring to the men at Henri II's court. 10. The term is used not only to refer to the background, but also to the protagonists themselves. Mme de Clèves reflects thus upon Nemours's discreet declaration of love: "Le discours de M. de Nemours lui plaisit et l'offensait quasi également; elle y voyait la confirmation de tout ce que lui avait fait penser Mme la Dauphine; elle y trouvait quelque chose de galant et de respectueux..." 11.

From the outset, this term presents an interest not only in that, used with regard both to the background and to the main characters, it creates an initial sense of unity, but also by its very nature. It strikes us as vague, almost esoteric, in that its sense was fully apprehended by the initiated, the select and relatively restricted circle of society for which Mme de Lafayette was writing. One may argue that Corneille's contemporaries had an equally close understanding of 'la gloire'. The difference between cases lies on the one hand in the fact that, unlike 'la gloire', one of the primary characteristics of 'la galanterie' and 'galant' is their flexibility; and on the other, the heart of the matter, that the significance of these latter terms is essentially amoral.

Thus 'la galanterie' evokes a conception of life orientated towards pleasure with refinement as its necessary concomitant: a conception of life lacking in a concern for moral issues for their own sake; in fine, a conception of life resembling in all essential points,

10. ibid., pp. 5, 27, 33.
11. ibid., p. 77. See also pp. 37, 148. "Il était inconsolable de lui avoir dit des choses sur cette aventure qui, bien que galantes en elles-mêmes..."
the principles of honnêteté have been previously exposed. Mme de Lafayette's tacit acceptance of these implications of 'la galanterie' is shown by her constant use of the term. 'La galanterie' in the sense of amorous dalliance where the emotions are no more than skin-deep, is indeed the prime preoccupation of the court. Nemours's love affairs are referred to in these terms, as are those of the other courtiers: Diane de Poitiers, Mme de Tournon, and the Vidame de Chartres.

Nemours, the fascinating Nemours, is described first of all as having "... tant de douceur et tant de disposition à la galanterie". It is this very 'galanterie' which attracts Mme de Clèves to him, in spite of her mother's warnings concerning "... les malheurs d'une galanterie", where the term is used in a moral sense.

Finally, if the term 'la galanterie' exhibits an extreme flexibility of meaning, it is also highly revelatory of the mentality which coined the phrase. We have already referred to the 'mondain' cult of refinement; we should add that of euphemism. It should be noticed that the word love, 'l'amour', is totally absent and that a veil, drawn over the emotions in general, serves also to hide the scabrous nature of situations.

This systematic evasion of displeasing truth - in deference to the taste for refinement - accounts for the force, or rather, the lack of it, of such notions as 'le mérite', which, although frequently used.

13. ibid., p.44.
14. ibid., p.62.
15. ibid., p.103.
16. ibid., p.11.
17. ibid., p.56. 'La galanterie' in this sense is seen as bringing inevitably unhappiness in its wake. See also p.52, p.17. "La plupart des mères s'imagent qu'il suffit de ne parler jamais de galanterie devant les jeunes personnes pour les éloigner".
remains nebulous throughout. How can it be otherwise when it is divorced from the notion of worth, with which it was intimately linked in Corneille's ethics? It should be added, however, that even in this earlier period, 'le mérite' had been used in the sense of physical beauty. Its popularity amongst the honnêtes gens, who tended to use it in an amoral sense, is attested by the importance which it is accorded in Méré's works, for instance.

'Le mérite' is frequently invoked in the Princesse de Clèves. Queen Elizabeth of England is described as being acquainted with "... (des) intérêts de la cour de France et (du) mérite de ceux qui la composaient,..." That 'le mérite' is an essential attribute of the sympathetic character is shown in such instances as when it is applied to Mme de Chartres "... dont le bien, la vertu et le mérite étaient extraordinaires". The Chevalier de Guise, Chastelart, and Mme de Tournon are all described in similar terms. As employed by Mme de Lafayette, it is a term devoid of moral significance. Furthermore its exact sense is clear only in the wider context of other notions referred to. Notwithstanding, its role is far from negligible, playing a part as it does in setting the tone. A study of such notions is relevant not only in that their very presence is indicative of an underlying mentality, but also because it reveals the interrelation between them and the cadre: that is to say, their significance is most fully understood by examination of the context in which they are placed.

20. ibid., p.15.
21. ibid., p.17.
22. ibid., pp.22, 23.
23. ibid., p.27.
24. The presence of 'le mérite' for instance is significant in that we already know it to be one of the keywords of mondain theorists.
Mme de Lafayette refers to another notion, briefly commented on in the introductory section: that of 'la bienséance'. Once again, the writer seems to presume that the reader will know exactly what is meant by this term. Nemours, for instance, is described as waiting the prescribed time — that dictated by 'la bienséance' — before he visits Mme de Clèves after her mother's death. Mlle de Chartres, in an interview with the Prince de Clèves before their marriage, alleges that 'la bienséance' is the reason for the lack of spontaneity in her behaviour. The dialogue runs briefly thus: "— il me semble que la bienséance ne permet pas que j'en fasse davantage." The Prince de Clèves "— au lieu que la bienséance vous retienne, c'est elle seule qui vous fait faire ce que vous faites." The significance of the fact that 'la bienséance', originally a term of aesthetic connotation, is here applied to moral questions, will be borne in mind. Quite clearly, the society depicted by Mme de Lafayette is one preoccupied with the rules of behaviour, but from a social not an ethical point of view. 'La bienséance', in spite of its somewhat neutral character, is possessed of a certain force, by virtue of the frequency of its use (which in its turn infers a general acceptance). It represents for the heroine a regard for society and an accepted norm in the matter of behaviour. Thus on two occasions when after her husband's death, Mme de Clèves is considering the implications of acceding to Nemours's entreaties, 'la bienséance' is referred to as representing the minimum and irrefutable demands of society.

The notions of 'la galanterie', 'le mérite' and 'la bienséance' are included in this discussion for a variety of fairly obvious reasons.

25. op. cit., p. 29.
26. ibid., p. 31.
27. ibid., p. 194. "... la seule bienséance interdit tout commerce entre nous." Also p. 198, "... mais elle voyait aussi qu'elle entreprenait une chose impossible, que de résister en présence au plus aimable homme du monde qu'elle aimait et dont elle était aimée, et de lui résister sur une chose qui ne choquait ni la vertu, ni la bienséance".
reasons. In the first place, preoccupied as we are with the question of the general tone of the novel, we have been concerned to demonstrate the role played by these notions in creating the tone: for we do maintain that they are both quantitatively predominant and qualitatively representative. Having acknowledged their hegemony, we must then refer, in addition to points made in this present chapter, to the discussion of their heterogeneous nature in the introductory study of 'honnêteté.'

Let us now continue our study of the moral standards in the Princesse de Clèves by examining the protagonists: Nemours, the Prince de Clèves and the Princesse herself. How far do they conform to the ideal of 'honnêteté'? And how do they compare with the background?

First of all Nemours, whose character, according to one critic, is out of keeping with the general tone of the work. One is forcibly struck by the great resemblance which he bears to the ideal of the 'honnête homme' as described at rapturous lengths - by the Chevalier de Méré. Moreover, we may not disregard the fact that Mme de Lafayette has considerably modified Brantôme's portrait of the real Nemours, suppressing the all-too-realistic details and transforming him into a worthy conqueror of the Princesse de Clèves's heart. Nemours's pleasing quality, the essential attribute of the 'honnête homme,' is brought to our attention when he is first introduced: "Ce qui le mettait au-dessus des autres était une valeur incomparable, et un agrément dans son esprit, dans son visage et dans ses actions que l'on n'a jamais vu qu'à lui seul; il avait...enfin un air dans toute sa personne qui faisait qu'on ne pouvait regarder que lui dans tous les lieux ou il paraissait." It is as a courtier that Nemours excels; and therefore as an 'honnête homme.' We are left in no doubt that it is by virtue of these

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29. op.cit., pp.10-11.
attributes, esteemed to be virtues, that he captures Mme de Clèves's heart.

If the character and general demeanour of Nemours present striking similarities to the ideal of the *honnête homme*, he would seem to adhere, in his relationship with Mme de Clèves, to the same ideal. That is to say, he observes throughout - superficially - the rules of conduct for the respectful lover, thus laying a further hold on the Princess's affections. Apart from the occasion when Nemours, addressing Mme de Clèves, refers to the respectful nature of his passion, her heart is set at rest by his submissive attitude at two crucial points in the story: firstly when the heroine believes Nemours to be in love with the Dauphine; and secondly following the revelation of his fatal indiscretion at the Dauphine's court. The latter occasion is described thus: "Il n'osa lui parler, quoique l'embarras de cette cérémonie lui en donnât plusieurs moyens, mais il lui fit voir tant de tristesse et une crainte si respectueuse de l'approcher qu'elle ne le trouva plus si coupable, quoiqu'il ne lui eût rien dit pour se justifier".

That a humble and submissive attitude's being the prerequisite of the lover is a legacy of the Chambre-bleue period would not be seriously contested. Equally familiar to the student of mondain theories of the late seventeenth century is the emphasis placed on

30. We are not here referring to Mme de Lafayette's conception of love, but simply to the attributes with which she endows a loveable man. See p. 37, "... elle le vit toujours surpasser de si loin tous les autres et se rendre tellement maître de la conversation dans tous les lieux où il était, par l'air de sa personne et par l'agrément de son esprit, qu'il fit, en peu de temps, une grande impression dans son cœur". See also p.93.

31. op.cit., p.80, "... je serais heureux par les bontés de la personne du monde pour qui j'aurais la plus violente et la plus respectueuse passion".

32. ibid., p.55. "Il lui faisait voir combien il prenait d'intérêt à son affliction et il lui en parlait avec un air si doux et si soumis qu'il la persuadait aisément que ce n'était pas de Mme la Dauphine dont il était amoureux. "

33. ibid., p.151.
refinement, both on refinement of thought and of expression. 'La délicatesse', as it manifests itself in Nemours, is important both in its original form and also by virtue of the development which takes place within the story.

One cannot read the works of the 'Précieux' for long and remain ignorant of the store they set by 'la délicatesse des sentiments' where the pleasure lay in the subtle paradox, the quasi-imperceptible meaning. Nemours's pleasure at Mme de Clèves's anger is highly reminiscent of this attitude of mind: "L'aigreur que M. de Nemours voyait dans l'esprit de Mme de Clèves lui donnait le plus sensible plaisir qu'il eût jamais eu et balançait son impatience à se justifier". It is the same taste for subtlety which causes his reaction, first of all when Mme de Clèves refuses to receive him; and later, on the occasion of his clandestine visit to Coulommiers: "Voir au milieu de la nuit, dans le plus beau lieu du monde, une personne qu'il adorait, la voir sans qu'elle sût qu'il la voyait, et la voir tout occupée de choses qui avaient du rapport à lui et à la passion qu'elle lui cachait, ..." Mme de Lafayette's description leaves us in no doubt that it is this latter refinement in the situation which confers its value in Nemours's eyes.

We have, however, referred to a development of the idea of this 'délicatesse', which is an intrinsic quality of the Princesse de Clèves. This is the sentimental element, in the sense of the enjoyment of the sentiments, present in the portrayal of Nemours's passion, notably in the famous scene which follows immediately upon Nemours's nocturnal visit to Coulommiers. The passage begins: "La passion n'a jamais été si tendre et si violentes qu'elle l'était alors en ce prince". This idea is evidently linked to preceding statements on Nemours's love. However, Mme de Lafayette terminates the description with the following details: "... il s'abandonna aux transports de son amour.

34. This too is closely related to the search for the quintessence, "le fin du fin", an attitude of mind shared, in some respects, by Nemours, Méré, and Mme de Rambouillet's coterie.
35. op.cit., pp.113-114.
36. ibid., p.159.
37. ibid., p.167.
et son coeur fut tellement pressé qu'il fut contraint de laisser couler quelques larmes; mais ces larmes n'étaient pas de celles que la douleur seule fait répandre, elles étaient mêlées de douceur et de ce charme qui ne se trouve que dans l'amour." 38. We shall have cause to re-view this aspect of the Princesse de Clèves when examining the character of the heroine.

This is perhaps an opportune moment to survey Nemours's character as it has been shown up to the present. We have referred to his submissive attitude, to the delicacy of his feelings, to a certain sensitivity which he manifests. Would one be at all justified in applying the term ' précieux ' to these characteristics? It might be pertinent here to recall our discussion of honnêteté, when we showed how useless it is — in this study — to attempt to identify certain characteristics taken out of context, instead looking at the underlying elements of the whole. Preceding comments on the tone of the Princesse de Clèves should have sufficed to show how great a gulf lies between it and the era of Céladon. In the later work, the emphasis is indubitably on refinement of pleasure and appearance rather than on refinement of virtue. There are indeed certain discrepancies in Nemours's character between thought and deed which mirror faithfully 'mondain' mentality. He is never portrayed as having 'un coeur tout neuf'; on the contrary, it is his previous amatory experience which enables him to see through the mask of indifference which Mme de Clèves's pride leads her to adopt. 39. Is Nemours's attitude in regarding the Prince de Clèves, not as the husband of the woman he loves, but simply as a dangerous rival, one of cynicism, or is it simply unmindful of moral issues? Such an attitude is implicit in his actually stealing the miniature of Mme de Clèves belonging to her husband. 40.

The tenderness of Nemours is that of words rather than sentiments:

38. ibid., pp. 169-170.
39. p. 81, "Un homme moins pénétrant que lui ne s'en fut peut-être pas aperçu; mais il avait déjà été aimé tant de fois qu'il était difficile qu'il ne connût pas quand on l'aimait".
40. See ibid., p. 86.
he regards Mme de Clèves as a conquest worthy of him, and glories in his triumph thus: "... il aimait la plus aimable personne de la cour; il s'en faisait aimer malgré elle". The true nature of Nemours's attitude towards Mme de Clèves and her husband is fully revealed on the occasion of the latter's fatal illness. Upon the Princesse's widowhood, he refrains from visiting until the first pangs of grief have abated, but is anxious not to delay too long, lest her passion for him abate, too.

The foregoing comments on Nemours have, it is hoped, shown the evolution which the old idea of the hegemony of love has undergone under the impact of the essential belief in pleasure. This is not to say, however, that the Princesse de Clèves contains elements of cynicism, but rather that it gives proof, in the character of Nemours, of a fundamental disregard for the moral implications of a situation. The sole criterion is pleasure; and worth is judged according to these terms.

What of the Prince de Clèves? How far does his character accord with that of Nemours and the 'honnêtes gens' of the court? It may be noted, first of all, that to Clèves alone is the term 'honnêteté' applied with a strongly moral connotation.

Clèves has been deemed to partake of many of the qualities of his 'illustrious' wife, representing a contrast to Nemours. An examination of his rôle, both in what he says and the terms which are used to describe him, will shed more light on the question.

In the first place, one may be a little surprised that so little attention has been given to his role in the confession: for it is he who first mentions the idea of a confession on the part of a woman

41. See ibid., p.46.
42. Ibid., p.88.
43. See ibid., p.175.
44. See ibid., p.162, "... mais il (Clèves) lui écrivit une lettre pleine d'affliction, d'honnêteté et de douceur"; p.163, "Toutes les fois que cette princesse parlait à son mari, la passion qu'il lui témoignait, l'honnêteté de son procédé..."
to her husband or her lover. A close examination of the text has revealed the precision with which Mme de Lafayette has composed the story. Whilst not wishing to defend the inclusion of the Mme de Tournon anecdote, it should be noted, however, that M. de Clèves remarks on this occasion: "...la sincérité me touche d'une telle sorte que je crois que si ma maîtresse, et même ma femme, m'avouait que quelqu'un lui plut, j'en serais affligé, sans en être aigri".45 That Mme de Clèves has heeded her husband's remark, with its final promise of understanding, is shown when, looking desperately for a defence against the violence of her passion: "Ce que M. de Clèves lui avait dit sur la sincérité, en parlant de Mme de Tournon, lui revint dans l'esprit; il lui sembla qu'elle lui devait avouer l'inclination qu'elle avait pour M. de Nemours."46

The high esteem in which the Prince de Clèves holds 'la sincérité',47 implying as it does a respect for integrity, inclines one to see an element of idealism in his character. We must, however, immediately qualify the term idealism in this context by further reference to the characteristics displayed by the prince. The notions of 'le respect' and 'l'estime', associated with the idea of pure love, are employed particularly by Clèves in statements which bear the unmistakable imprint of 'précieux' reasoning.

He seizes the first occasion which presents itself in order to represent to Mlle de Chartres: "...qu'il avait été le premier à l'admirer et que, sans la connaître, il avait eu pour elle tous les sentiments de respect et d'estime..."48. Once again, the careful49.

45. ibid., p.64.
46. ibid., p.89. M. Magne states in a footnote that this is the first time that the idea of a confession had occurred to Mme de Clèves. This does not detract from M. de Clèves's credit.
47. The theme of 'la sincérité' recurs during the confession, when Mme de Cleves exclaims: "Il me semble, ... que vous devez être assez content de ma sincérité; ne m'en demandez pas davantage et ne donnez pas lieu de me repentir de ce que je viens de faire". (p.127).
48. ibid., p.21.
49. One might justifiably apply the term 'Classical' here.
construction of the work enables us to analyse the significance of the term 'estime', together with its implied ideal. Prior to Clèves's marriage: "Il voyait avec beaucoup de peine que les sentiments de Mlle de Chartres ne passaient pas ceux de l'estime et de la reconnaissance...". He bewails this fact to his fiancée in the following terms: "Je ne touche votre inclination, ni votre coeur, et ma présence ne vous donne ni de plaisir, ni de trouble".

The sentiments expressed here are echoed in the confession scene, when the Prince once more refers to 'l'estime': "Vous me paraissez plus digne d'estime et d'admiration que tout ce qu'il y a jamais eu de femmes au monde; mais aussi je me trouve le plus malheureux homme qui ait jamais été".

The final statement, hyperbolic though it may seem at first glance, has thus been prepared from the outset, as has the reason for the prince's unhappiness, which he proceeds to give: "Vous m'avez donné de la passion dès le premier moment que je vous ai vue: vos rrigueurs et votre possession n'ont pu l'éteindre, elle dure encore; je n'ai jamais pu vous donner de l'amour, ...

The Prince de Clèves' attitude might perhaps be considered to permit of several different interpretations. All that we know of Clèves's character up to the present moment: his generosity, his admiration for sincerity, the very manner in which he expresses himself, might lead one to see merely a delicacy of sentiments on his part, as did those of Mme de Lafayette's contemporaries who made a cult of 'la délicatesse des sentiments'. But what is the significance of the Prince's reactions if not that the sentiments, the emotions are paramount? He mentions 'l'estime' and 'la reconnaissance', only to reject them as insufficient: they can never satisfy the demands of his passion. Thus a study of his character enhances our understanding of the tragedy of the

50. ibid., p.31.
51. ibid., p.32.
52. ibid., p.126.
53. ibid., p.24.
54. See, for instance, the chapter on Mlle Bernard.
Princesse de Clèves: that it is passion and not a concern for honour which is at the heart of the matter. This is the true sense of the prince's attitude, again expressed in delicate terms, when he describes his sorrow to his wife after her return to court - and after her confession: "Je ne suis affligé que de vous voir pour un autre des sentiments que je n'ai pu vous donner".  

It is to his feelings, rather than to his sense of conjugal honour that Clèves is referring also when, subsequent to his wife's return to court, he beseeches her to reveal the name of the man with whom she is in love: "Je ne le demande point comme un mari, mais comme un homme dont vous faites tout le bonheur, et qui a pour vous une passion plus tendre et plus violente que celui que votre coeur lui préfère". Once again, when the Prince de Clèves, a prey to jealousy, pleads again with his wife to make a fuller confession, he refers again to his passion in terms which bear definite superficial resemblance to the neo- précieux ideal of 'la délicatesse des sentiments': "Vous êtes ma femme, je vous aime comme ma maîtresse et je vous en vois aimer un autre. Je suis plus malheureux que je ne l'ai cru et je suis le plus malheureux de tous les hommes".

The dual reason for grief, that of a husband and that of a man passionately in love, which Clèves has referred to in this poignant scene, is a theme taken up by the writer in a comment on the mortal langour into which the prince falls when he imagines his wife to have been unfaithful to him: "... peu d'hommes d'un aussi grand courage et d'un coeur aussi passionné que M. de Clèves, ont ressenti en même temps la douleur que cause l'infidélité d'une maîtresse et la honte d'être trompé par une femme".

Having suggested that the Prince de Clèves's problem is essentially

55. ibid., p.132.
56. ibid., p.135.
57. ibid., p.161.
58. ibid., p.175.
an emotional one, we should implement this by stating that it is, more particularly, one of jealousy. He is consumed by a fundamentally unrequited passion, the depth of which he expresses movingly in his last scene with his wife: "(Ma passion) a été au delà de ce que vous en avez vu, Madame; je vous en ai caché la plus grande partie, par la crainte de vous importuner, ou de perdre quelque chose de votre estime, par des manières qui ne convenaient pas à un mari".59.

This is indeed refinement of feeling and delicacy of expression, but one which is motivated by a powerful passion. Clèves's self-control, his equilibrium, disintegrate under the emotional pressure, so that, for instance, the idea of Nemours seeing his wife - and declaring his passion to her 60 - is the factor which leads to the painful scene between husband and wife, in which Clèves admits the failure of the moral expedient to which they have had recourse. It is in the light of this jealousy that one should interpret such seemingly sophistic statements as: "Vous ne vous trouviez donc mal que pour lui? (Mme de Clèves for Nemours) ... Oseriez-vous refuser de le voir si vous ne saviez bien qu'il distingue vos rigueurs de l'incivilité? ... D'une personne comme vous, madame, tout est des faveurs hors l'indifférence".61. Here it is a wounded jealousy which speaks through the voice of neo- précieux refinement.

This surprisingly touching scene, in which a husband and wife of the integrity of M. and Mme de Clèves admit the emotional stalemate at which they have arrived, paves the way for final explanation, as Clèves lies dying. He asks, with some bitterness, the rhetorical question: "Fallait-il qu'une action aussi extraordinaire que celle que vous aviez fait de me parler à Coulommiers eût si peu de suite?" Adding, more bitterly still: "Que ne me laissez-vous dans cet aveuglement tranquille dont jouissent tant de maris?"62. Such sentiments, expressed at the

59. ibid., p.177.
60. p.160 "... qu'il (Nemours) lui pourrait parler de son amour lui parut dans ce moment une chose si nouvelle et si insupportable que la jalousie s'alluma dans son coeur avec plus de violence qu'elle n'avait encore fait".
61. ibid., p.161.
62. ibid., p.176.
outset of the interview, must of necessity modify the opinion which one might form of Clèves's subsequent statement: "... après m'avoir ôté l'estime et la tendresse que j'avais pour vous, la vie me ferait horreur", 63. and of Clèves's last words: "... ce me sera toujours un soulagement d'emporter la pensée que vous êtes digne de l'estime que j'ai eue pour vous". 64.

Although the prince may speak of the esteem which he felt for his wife, the real reason for his suffering was the sexual jealousy to which he was a prey. Mme de Lafayette renders, in her portrayal of the Prince de Clèves, a tribute to the power of love: a love which feeds on uncertainty to torture its victim. This understanding of the motivation of M. de Clèves's character resolves the apparent paradox that it was the delicacy of his sentiments which led him to realize the bankruptcy of his ideals.

The task of studying and assessing the Princesse de Clèves's character is a formidable one, rendered so in part by the wealth and diversity of critical opinion on the subject. The aspects of the work which attracted the greater part of critical attention from the outset were the confession scene and Mme de Clèves's adieu to Nemours. That opinion was sharply divided over these episodes is well-known; some applauding the illustrious princesse's extraordinary virtue, whilst others deemed her behaviour extravagant. Equally noticeable is the diversity of interpretations which have been put on the work. 65. The polemics concerning the moral significance of the Princesse de Clèves have raged unabated from Valincour until the present day. 66 A. Lebreton, confronting the moral question, has seen in the work an unresolved dichotomy of thought and act.

63. ibid., p.177.
64. ibid., p.179.
66. Valincour, Lettres a la Marquise xxx sur le sujet de la Princesse de Clèves, 1678.
Taking this as the starting point of our discussion, let us attempt, by considering the Princesse de Clèves particularly in relation to the other characters, to reach some conclusion concerning her — and therefore Mme de Lafayette's — conception of love.

We were at pains to show how nearly Nemours's character coincided with the ideal of a certain type of honnête homme. It cannot fairly be maintained that there is a fundamental disparity between Nemours's character and that of Mme de Clèves, when the very qualities which make him an outstanding courtier are those which endear him to the Princesse. This latter aspect has already been touched on in discussing Nemours: its importance is most fully revealed in the preparation of the final scene between the two. The sight of Nemours rekindles the widowed Mme de Clèves's passion, chasing from her thoughts considerations of what she owes to her dead husband and of her part in his death: "Ce prince se présenta à son esprit, l'aimant depuis longtemps avec une passion pleine de respect et de fidélité, méprisant tout pour elle, respectant jusqu'à sa douleur, songeant à la voir sans songer à en être vu, quittant la cour, dont il faisait les délices, pour aller regarder les murailles qui la renfermaient; ... enfin un homme digne d'être aimé par son seul attachement, ..." 67.

The reasons which Mme de Clèves gives to herself for her infatuation have all been mentioned before; his respectful attitude, the delicacy of his feelings in desiring only to see her without even wishing that she should know. 68. The emphasis which is placed here, as elsewhere, on refinement has considerable bearing on her last statement: that Nemours is worthy of her love. It is sufficiently self-evident that the worth to which Mme de Clèves refers, is not that of the Cornelian theatre, for no further comment to be required. The fact that Mme de Clèves herself enumerates Nemours's qualities as so

68. One is here reminded of Nemours's delight at seeing her in the garden of Coulommiers without being seen.
many reasons which render him worthy of her love, implicates her in the mondain mentality.

We have just suggested (implication) that the term 'digne' - worthy - as used by Mme de Clèves, is completely divorced from the Cornelian idea. Let us look at the terms in which love is envisaged by the heroine, in order to see more clearly how great is the gulf which separates Mme de Lafayette from the Norman playwright. In discussing the character of the Prince de Clèves we referred to the distinction made between 'l'estime' and 'l'inclination'. It is in terms of the latter that Mme de Clèves's love for Nemours is defined. The former, 'l'estime' - linked with 'digne' - is reserved for the husband. Looking for textual references in support of our argument, we find 'l'inclination' referred to explicitly with regard to the Princesse de Clèves's passion, as at a relatively early stage of the story: "L'inclination qu'elle avait pour ce prince lui donnait un trouble dont elle n'était pas maîtresse". The 'trouble' which Mme de Clèves feels and which her husband before their marriage had complained that she did not feel for him, beyond her control from the outset, is indicative of the involuntary nature of the love portrayed. The situation deteriorates when, after Nemours has stolen her portrait: "elle fit réflexion à la violence de l'inclination qui l'entraînait vers M.de Nemours; elle trouva qu'elle n'était plus maîtresse de ses paroles et de son visage.".

Thus, 'l'indépendence des inclinations', forms one of the central themes of the work. Mme de Clèves was as incapable of feeling this 'trouble' for her husband as she was of surmounting it - let alone preventing it from coming into being - for Nemours.

The fact that Mme de Clèves finds herself incapable of mastering her emotions leads one naturally to consider her passion in relation to her actions: to what has been termed a dichotomy between thought and

69. op.cit., p.77.
70. ibid., p.88. See also p.163.
71. See p.181, "... elle se faisait un crime de n'avoir pas eu de passion pour (son mari), comme si ç'eut été une chose qui eût été en son pouvoir".
act. Given the society in which the protagonists function, a society in which primary importance is attached to appearance, one might expect that the heroine must try to hide her emotions from prying eyes. She is thus forced to dissimulate, to affect an indifference after Nemours has been injured in jousting, to ignore him during the Dauphine’s courts. Thus, when she realizes the extent of her emotional involvement: "... sentant bien qu’elle ne pouvait s’empêcher de le trouver aimable, elle avait fait une forte résolution de s’empêcher de le voir et d’en éviter toutes les occasions qui dépendraient d’elle". After each encounter with Nemours, Mme de Clèves, admitting the enslavement of her emotions, reiterates her intention to keep her conduct in check: "Elle ne se flatta plus de l’espérance de ne le pas aimer; elle songea seulement à ne lui en donner jamais aucune marque." It is in the light of this profound division between act and sentiment, duty and feeling that one should understand the force of the Princesse de Clèves’s declarations. One hesitates to apply the term casuistry to her statements; and yet, in view of the portrayal of her passion, when she says: "Je n’ai jamais donné nulle marque de faiblesses et je ne craindrais pas d’en laisser paraître..." one is bound to remember that it is not so much her behaviour, the marks of weakness, but rather her emotions which are really important in the work.

We feel justified in making this assertion, partly on the testimony of Mme de Lafayette herself, who causes Mme de Clèves to add: "Je vous demande mille pardons, si j’ai des sentiments qui vous déplaisent, du moins je ne vous déplairai pas par mes actions." One is similarly bound to reject the idea of a Cornelian notion in a parallel scene between Mme de Clèves and Nemours, after her husband’s death, when she repeats: "...vous avez vu que ma conduite n’a pas été réglée par mes sentiments" (p.189).
This discrepancy between thought and action is untrue to the Cornelian ethic. Moreover, with regard to Mme de Clèves's final rejection of Nemours's love, her decision is based not only on the intention of remaining worthy of her position in society, but also on quite personal and intimate reasons.

She is portrayed as resenting her emotional dependence from the outset: "L'on ne peut exprimer la douleur qu'elle sentit de connaître par ce que venait de dire sa mère, l'intérêt qu'elle prenait à M. de Nemours". A theme which is taken up again immediately: "Elle ne pouvait s'empêcher d'être troublée de sa vue, et d'avoir pourtant du plaisir à le voir; mais quand elle ne le voyait plus et qu'elle pensait que ce charme qu'elle trouvait dans sa vue était le commencement des passions, il s'en fallait peu qu'elle ne crût le haïr par la douleur que lui donnait cette pensée." This trait of characterization calls for further examination. Could it be that Mme de Clèves feels this sense of shame and resentment at the loss of her integrity in the tradition of the 'Précieuses'? If we refer to a possible 'précieux' influence here, it is because of previous critical opinion which has so named it. In order to demonstrate our position on this question, let us look at the theme of 'la douleur', with the complementary one of 'la douceur', as it appears in the story of Mme de Clèves's love.

First of all, to present the evidence of the facts; the occasions upon which 'la douleur' is mentioned. When the Chevalier de Guise, whose jealousy has rendered him clairvoyant, indicates to Mme de Clèves that she has betrayed her passion: "Ce lui était une grande douleur de voir qu'elle n'était plus maîtresse de cacher ses sentiments et de les avoir laissé paraître au Chevalier de Guise". The statement

77. ibid., p. 53.
78. ibid., p. 55.
79. See O. Nadal, op.cit., p. 48, "Les Précieuses en mettant entre elles et l'homme, entre elles et leur propre désir, ces distances polies, ces formalités, ces joutes spirituelles ou tendres, prétendaient se garder de la confusion de la sympathie dont une âme fière, quand elle aime, ne peut retirer qu'humiliée."
80. op. cit., pp. 93-94.
which follows illuminates quite clearly the interest of the drama: "Elle en avait aussi beaucoup que M. de Nemours les connut, mais cette dernière douleur n'était pas si entière et elle était mêlée de quelque sorte de douceur". 81.

The opposition of 'douleur' and 'douceur' contains a vital key to the understanding of the Princesse de Clèves. Is not 'la douleur' essentially an emotion? And, further, is it not in this instance intimately linked with 'la douceur'? We may legitimately conclude that Mme de Clèves derives some pleasure from her love for Nemours - even from the suffering which it entails - a pleasure which exists in spite of the moral implications which might prove a major consideration. Such a conclusion would necessarily refute the thesis that the Princesse has anything of the true Cornelian in her character.

The notions of pleasure and suffering form a leitmotiv in the story and a study of them does, we feel, bring us nearer to understanding of the moral sense of the drama. Following swiftly the awakening of passion within Mme de Clèves, itself accompanied by suffering, is that of jealousy which would seem to be the inseparable companion of passion. Immediately after the scene in which Mme de Clèves involuntarily betrays her emotions in Guise's presence, comes the incident of the letter, which she supposes to have been written by Nemours. She herself is as yet unaware of the true nature of the emotion which she feels, seeking its cause in other reasons: "Mais elle se trompait elle-même; et ce mal, qu'elle trouvait si insupportable, était la jalousie avec toutes les horreurs dont elle peut être accompagnée". 82.

The theme of jealousy has already been prepared by that of suffering. We have, in addition, noted the importance of the rôle played by this passion in the drama, from the point of view of M. de Clèves. Only Nemours is shown as exempt from jealousy; perhaps because he is throughout essentially aggressive, basically

81. ibid., p.94.
82. ibid., p.97.
sure of his ability to capture Mme de Clèves's heart. The importance of jealousy has indeed been treated by critics of Mme de Lafayette's works, who have pointed Zange's role as a precursor in this respect.

The importance of jealousy in Mme de Clèves's story is shown by frequent references throughout the text. It is through the second sight which this passion confers that Mme de Clèves realizes her predicament: she is led to admit, in the interior monologue which follows the letter incident, that her 'douleurs' are caused, not by preoccupation with duty, but by an overwhelming passion. Finally, jealousy, which has opened her eyes to her emotional state, serves as an augury of future sufferings which will be hers while ever her emotions are involved. It is in this scene that the essential elements of the drama are expressed: the inexorable nature of the passions and the utter helplessness of the subject before them. Mme de Clèves must love Nemours, therefore she must be jealous; and as this jealousy exists in proportion to her passion, which is all-consuming, it must override all considerations.

Let us look at her 'prise de conscience', beginning "... elle regarda avec étonnement la prodigieuse différence de l'état où elle était le soir d'avant où elle était alors, elle se remit devant les yeux l'aigreur et la froideur qu'elle avait faite paraître à M. de Nemours, tant qu'elle avait cru que la lettre de Mme de Thémisnes s'adressait à lui; quel calme et quelle douceur avait succédé à cette aigreur, sitôt qu'il l'avait persuadée que cette lettre ne le regardait pas."83. Mme de Clèves analyses, one by one, the factors contributing to her situation. The difference which she finds between what she has been and what she is, what she has resolved and what she has done, reveal themselves with a disconcerting clarity. The final statement, however, is the most important of all: "Mais, ce qu'elle pouvait moins supporter que tout le reste, était le souvenir de l'état où elle avait passé la nuit, et les cuisantes douleurs que lui avait causé la pensée que M. de Nemours aimait ailleurs et qu'elle était trompée".84.

83. ibid., p.120.
84. ibid., p.120.
This, which has the weight and finality of a peroration and which sums up the essential element of Mme de Clèves's situation, shows unequivocally the importance which is attached to the emotions as opposed to moral considerations. The heroine's reflexions, previously quoted, prepare all that is to follow. She suffers shame—because love brings dishonour—but more important still, she suffers mental anguish, "la jalousie, avec toutes les horreurs dont elle peut être accompagnée".

It is at this moment that the psychological preparation for the dénouement takes place: the prospect of a lifetime of jealousy forces Mme de Clèves's decision to renounce Nemours: "Quoique les soupçons que lui avait donnés cette lettre fussent effacés, ils ne laissèrent pas de lui ouvrir les yeux sur le hasard d'être trompée et de lui donner des impressions de défiance et de jalousie qu'elle n'avait jamais eues".85

The same order, in the recapitulation of considerations which guide her choice, is repeated at the end of this monologue when Mme de Clèves expresses her belief that Nemours is incapable of forming a permanent attachment. She exclaims: "Veux-je manquer à M. de Clèves? Veux-je me manquer à moi-même? Et veux-je enfin m'exposer aux cruels repentirs et aux mortelles douleurs que donnent l'amour?"86

The theme of suffering and jealousy recurs at each successive stage of the drama. When Mme de Clèves discovers that her confession is known to Nemours: "De tous ses maux, celui qui se

85. ibid., p.121.
86. ibid., p.121. Here again, one may notice the careful construction of the drama. It is these considerations which prompt Mme de Clèves to make a confession to her husband. The terms in which she refers to such a confession are significant: "Si M. de Clèves s'opiniâtre à l'empêcher (her departure from the court) ou à en vouloir savoir les raisons, peut-être lui ferai-je le mal, et à moi-même aussi, de les lui apprendre." (p.121). The italics are mine.
présentait à elle avec le plus de violence, était d'avoir sujet de se plaindre de M. de Nemours et de ne trouver aucun moyen de le justifier." 87. That this is tantamount to a disregard for the Princess's moral duty towards her husband is indisputable. She would prefer that the latter, rather than Nemours, had been guilty of the indiscretion. When it is upon Nemours that her suspicions fix, she once again bewails the honour and peace of mind which she has lost, in the well-known passage: "J'ai eu tort de croire qu'il y eût un homme capable de cacher ce qui flatte sa gloire. C'est pourtant pour cet homme, que j'ai cru si différent du reste des hommes, que je me trouve comme les autres femmes, étant si éloignée de leur ressembler". 88. However, the scene concludes with this telling observation: "Ces tristes réflexions étaient suivies d'un torrent de larmes; mais quelque douleur dont elle se trouvât accablée, elle sentait bien qu'elle aurait eu la force de les supporter si elle avait été satisfaite de M. de Nemours". 89.

The claim that the incident of Mme de Thémines's letter marks the turning-point of the drama is borne out by the fact that Mme de Clèves, in her final scene with Nemours, after she has expressed the belief that men are by nature unfaithful, that passion must either wax or wane, but can never remain constant, 90. refers to Nemours's attractiveness and concludes: "Vous avez déjà eu plusieurs passions, vous en aurez encore; je ne ferais point votre bonheur; je vous verrais pour une autre comme vous auriez été pour moi. J'en aurais une douleur mortelle et je ne serais pas même assurée de n'avoir point le malheur de la jalousie. Je vous en ai trop dit pour vous cacher que vous me l'avez fait connaître et que je souffris de si cruelles peines le soir que la Reine me donna cette lettre de Mme de Thémines, que l'on disait qui s'adressait à vous, qu'il m'en est demeuré une idée qui me fait croire que c'est le plus grand de tous les maux." 91.

87. ibid., p. 147.
88. ibid., p. 147.
89. ibid., p. 148.
90. See p. 192, "Mais les hommes conservent-ils de la passion dans ses engagements éternels? Dois-je espérer un miracle en ma faveur et puis-je me mettre en état de voir certainement finir cette passion dont je ferais ma félicité?"
91. ibid., p. 192.
In order to complete our examination of the heroine's moral character, let us look at some of the epithets which Mme de Lafayette uses to describe her. First of all, let us define our position. Our primary and constant aim is to show the values of 1678 as relative to the underlying moral thought which inspired them. Consequently, just as we were at pains to stress the ineptness - in the context of this study - of terms of literary history such as 'précieux', we wish to stress that such terms of moral connotation as are still employed to-day must not be given the force of absolutes. They must be understood in the context - the morality of the reality portrayed by Mme de Lafayette.

The epithet most frequently applied to Mme de Clèves is perhaps that of 'sévère', a judgement echoed by many subsequent critics and admirers who see her as a very phoenix of perfection. However, in the light of foregoing comments, one would feel justified in asserting that hers is essentially a severity of speech and action, a severity relative both to her passions and to the somewhat corrupt society in which she lives.

Another trait of the Princesse's character often referred to is that of 'la sincérité'. That this is not sincerity in the sense in which we should understand it to-day is manifest in her fundamentally 92. See introductory section. The reason given for the ineligibility of this notion is primarily its latitude of meaning, to which the controversy which has never ceased to rage over it gives witness. It could mean a linguistic fashion, like that of the Précieuses Ridicules; it might also imply an underlying moral philosophy which in its turn could be Cornelian or Scuderian. We demonstrated, further, the heterogeneous nature of 'mondain' theories at the time. The evolutions which had taken place in accepted moral philosophies since the days of the Chambre bleue are sufficient to render such a term as 'précieux' alone inadequate to our purpose.
ambiguous attitude towards Nemours. It has already been shown how, although a married woman, she would suffer the direst pains, provided she might hold him to be worthy of her love. Typical of this 'sincerity' is her reaction on Nemours's stealing her portrait: "...elle fut bien aise de lui accorder une faveur qu'elle pouvait faire sans qu'il sût même qu'elle la lui faisait". 93

Not the least important aspect of these terms is that they indicate the nature of a society preoccupied with appearance rather than essence. If Mme de Lafayette's protagonists - like her contemporaries - were prepared to take actions at their face value, we should guard against imitating them in this respect, either by being misled by verbal similarities into applying the term 'précieux' or 'Cornelian', 94 or by assuming that they have the same sense for us as they had for the reader - and writer - of 1678.

This unconscious revelation of moral outlook on the part of the author is in accordance with her commentary on the heroine's actions. Here again, one should guard against seeing in Mme de Clèves's confession an act of heroism of a somewhat gratuitous nature. Eminently lucid at all times, she regards such a step not so much as glorious, as a protection against Nemours. It is, therefore, the efficacy - or what she hoped would be the efficacy - of a confession, rather than its singularity, which incites the Princesse de Clèves to undertake it. 95

We have shown that Mme de Clèves partakes of the general moral climate of the work: a climate in which morality is strictly relative.

93. op.cit., p.87.
94. G. Lanson, in L'Influence de la philosophie cartésienne sur la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, art. Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, oct.–nov. 1896, indicates one of the snares of criticism, that of presuming that verbal similarity implies a similarity of meaning.
95. op.cit., p.129. "La singularité d'un pareil aveu, dont elle ne trouvait point d'exemple, lui en faisait voir tout le péril. Mais quand elle venait à penser que ce remède, quelque violent qu'il fût, était le seul qui la pouvait défendre contre M. de Nemours, elle trouvait qu'elle ne devait point se repentir et qu'elle n'avait point trop hasardé."
The author herself shares this society's conception of 'la sincérité' and portrays a heroine whose conduct has a practical aim. This same morality is reflected in the Princesse de Clèves's passion for Nemours: her infatuation is matched by Nemours's pleasing qualities and, of a more profound significance, this love overrides all other considerations. These factors demonstrate that love is envisaged not only as an emotion - tendre sur inclination - but also as involuntary and supreme over will - l'indépendance des inclinations.

This latter element - l'indépendance des inclinations - forms an integral part of the moral fabric of the Princesse de Clèves. We have seen that Mme de Clèves was incapable of stemming the course of her passion, which was irreducible to reason. The defeat in this sphere is shown in Mme de Clèves's mistrust of her own resolutions. Such a statement, which may shock those who hold dear the ideal of Mme de Clèves's forbidding virtue, is based on such evidence as Mme de Lafayette's parenthetic note on her heroine's behaviour at Coulommiers: "Peut-être souhaitait-elle, autant qu'elle le craignait, d'y trouver M. de Nemours" - to which she adds: "... elle avait appréhendé de n'avoir pas toujours la force de le fuir".

This mistrust of human nature, or rather, this mistrust of the passions, systematically developed, is responsible for the particular moral quality of this work. If passion admits of no moral restraint and is constantly in a state of flux, then it follows that one may love many times. That such a conception is the antithesis of Mlle de Scudéry's ideal is self-evident. According to this view, the extinction of passion upon its fulfilment is inevitable: an event

96. We have referred constantly to this tone of mistrust, redolent of mondain moral thinking of the time. This restrained cynicism with regard to one's fellow men is found in Mme de Clèves's preceptress, her mother, Mme de Chartres.

97. op.cit., pp.169, 171.
for which the subject is in no way responsible. If Mme de Clèves has fallen in love with Nemours, others will do so after her.  

Just as this aspect of Mme de Lafayette's conception of love is diametrically opposed to that of love/estime, giving as it does free reign to unstable emotions; its corollary - that to experience love is to experience jealousy, deals another blow at faith in reason and belief in the supremacy of will.

Why should jealousy be regarded as the concomitant of love? The answer given by Mme de Lafayette in the Princesse de Clèves is that love is a passion which of its nature does not admit of requital. This represents the logical conclusion of the idea that the ineluctable fate of passion is to be extinguished on fulfilment. It is impossible not to love - as impossible not to feel jealous, which is the ultimate reason for Mme de Clèves's opting out of her emotional relationship with Nemours.

It is this paradox: that Mme de Lafayette writes what is in fact

98. ibid., p.192. "Vous avez déjà eu plusieurs passions, vous en auriez encore; je ne ferais plus votre bonheur; je vous verrais pour une autre comme vous auriez été pour moi. J'en aurais une douleur mortelle et je ne serais pas même assurée de n'avoir point le malheur de la jalousie".

99. According to this belief, to which both Mme de Clèves and the writer herself subscribe, non-requital is the necessary condition for the continuation of passion. See p.133, "... peut-être que des regards et des paroles obligeantes n'eussent pas tant augmenté l'amour de M. de Nemours que faisait cette conduite austère". See also p.192, "M. de Clèves était peut-être l'unique homme au monde capable de conserver de l'amour dans le mariage... peut-être aussi que sa passion n'avait subsisté que parce qu'il n'en aurait pas trouvé en moi."

100. This is stated quite unequivocally in Mme de Clèves's final interview with Nemours. She sums up her dilemma and the motives behind her decision thus, p.189: "... les raisons de mon devoir ne me paraîtraient peut-être pas si fortes sans cette distinction dont vous vous doutez, et c'est elle qui me fait envisager les malheurs à m'attacher à vous." - See also p.192; "Ce que je crois devoir à la mémoire de M. de Clèves serait faible s'il n'était pas soutenu par l'intérêt de mon repos."
a panegyric to the power of love, yet one which ends in the rejection of love by the heroine,101 which constitutes the originality of the Princesse de Clèves. The novel portrays a great passion, the issues involved are in the last resort more emotional than moral: its dénouement is brought about by Mme de Clèves's decision, not to cease loving Nemours, for it does not lie within her power to make such a decision, but to renounce all attempt to fix an emotional state which she believes from the bottom of her heart to be inconstant.102.

Let us briefly recapitulate points made earlier, in an attempt to understand the significance of the term 'sensible', applied to Mme de Lafayette's novel. In the first place, her conception of love represents an unqualified acceptance of the hegemony of passion, (would it be anachronistic here to say 'the senses'? ) as opposed to the old idea of the supremacy of will. If this conception of the motive force within the drama as being the emotions acting independently of the subject, contradicts the theories of the Scudéry school, then so do the criteria against which this passion is judged, both in the rationalization of Mme de Clèves's infatuation for Nemours and in her rationalization of her conduct towards her husband and society. In the heroic days of Artamène, love was acknowledged to be omnipotent: here too it is omnipotent in that questions of morality are measured by its yardstick. The essential difference between the two ways of thought is that in the case of Mme de Clèves the tribute which it exacts from its victims is as likely to cause their destruction as their good. It is Mme de Clèves's mistrust of the outcome of the passions — in fact her mistrust of human nature — which induces her to take the only course of action open to her and thus draw back from the precipice.

The implications of such a moral doctrine will vary according to how articulate it is, within a work. We have already discussed Nemours's

101. Reason plays a minor part within the work. The passion which Mme de Clèves feels is supreme, in every way diametrically opposed to the love, guided by reason, advocated by the theoreticians of honnêteté. It is a passion which both destroying the will power of its victim and renders him or her powerless to escape.

'délicatesse des sentiments' which so endears him to the heroine. The sensibility which he evinces here; a regard for gesture and attitude, is typical of the society in which he and Mme de Clèves function. The distinction which can be made between the two cases is that hers are the pains of loving.

If the lovers are united in this aspect of their behaviour they are also essentially united in a sensibility which we stated earlier to have stemmed from this original emphasis upon the sentiments. The scene of Nemours's solitary promenade and of his tears, which although of anguish, are not without holding a certain charm, is well known. We have also stressed that Mme de Clèves cherished her suffering so long as she cherished her passion, that indeed her pains were not unaccompanied by a certain pleasure.

Throughout this brief discussion on sensibility in the Princesse de Clèves it will be noted that we have related it to love, to the heroine's conception of love as being fundamentally founded on the senses. This conception, bound up with the consideration of pleasure as the primary aim of existence, is related to the consideration of the expression of sentiments - la délicatesse des sentiments - in so far as they were susceptible of giving pleasure. The development of this sensibility, that these refined and sensitive souls should thus react to their emotions, may be seen as a logical outcome of the foregoing facts.

In considering, however, the possible effect of Mme de Lafayette's conception of love, in so far as it informs her work, upon her contemporaries and successors in the novel, one is bound to take into account influences not represented in her work, but which were active in 1678. Enough has been written on the Princesse de Clèves for one to accept that it presented several features of a marked innovatory character. In examining favourable contemporary criticism, one realizes that the aspects of the work which received the critics' approbation: the Prince de Clèves's

103. G. Lanson, in an article in the Revue du Mois, Janv.-juin, 1910, discusses sensibility as being in the first place 'sensible' in love. These present references to sensibility describe the primary stages of its evolution. Sensitivity in love implies both an interest in the emotions themselves and in the expression of these emotions.
delicacy of feelings towards his wife, the singularity of her confession to him and her extraordinary virtue - essential aspects of Mme de Lafayette's particular moral conception - were hailed as belonging to the 'précieux' tradition. Indeed it was Sappho's successors, critics like Fontenelle, who acclaimed the work and who interpreted it after their own fashion. The fact that those who applauded the Princesse de Clèves, and who we should presume would be the most likely to imitate 'Féliciane', did not fully apprehend her moral outlook, that they failed to see the full significance of the exquisite language and apparently extraordinary situations, is of vital importance to the development of the novel. Thus, what we consider to be Mme de Lafayette's conception of love, of which 'la sensibilité' is an aspect, must be considered in relation to other ideas current in the novel. The Princesse de Clèves, looked at through the eyes of a late seventeenth century critic, imbued with the ideals of the 'grands romans', must of necessity appear in a different light from that in which it presents itself to the present-day reader and critic.

The major difficulty in examining the Princesse de Clèves would seem to be that of avoiding rendering confusion worse confounded. A final word on other critics' exegeses of the text would perhaps be helpful in clarifying the aims of this study as a whole.

A recent critic has expounded the view - perhaps in an attempt to explain the dichotomy which is felt to be present within the work - that the Princesse de Clèves is Cornelian in vocabulary and Racinian in inspiration. Conclusions reached earlier on the use of moral notions in the work render us sensitive to the difficulty - not to say the impossibility - of admitting the significance of Cornelian terminology divorced from its original context. One might still linger on the question of the Racinian

nature of the conflict. The familiar Racinian pattern of the triangle of unrequited love might seem at first glance to be repeated in the Princesse de Clèves. There is, however, one significant difference: M. de Nemours and Mme de Clèves are passionately in love, but the dénouement is brought about not so much through the agency of a blind Fate as through Mme de Clèves's disbelief in passion.

M. Fabre, in his analysis of the Princesse de Clèves, is at pains to stress what he considers to be its idealistic quality. Previous evidence has demonstrated the existence of certain aspects of Mme de Clèves's character which could not be termed idealistic in the present-day acceptation of the term. We do not mean, however, that the term should be unconditionally rejected: such an attitude would be both unrealistic and negative. It is very evident that Mme de Lafayette did not intend to write a 'realistic' work: a comparison with Bussy-Rabutin's Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules, for instance, should suffice to prove that the tone of the Princesse de Clèves, relative to some other works of the time, is one of surpassing virtue. However, once again, only a full examination of the text, both as an entity in itself and in relation to contemporary ethics, would render such a term as 'idealistic' significant. The terms of reference which are implied in an examination of moral standards such as form the subject of this study, must be established with caution.

In studying Mme de Lafayette's novel we have borne in mind the ideas current in the years during which it was composed. We have thus seen in her choice of material, her mode of presentation, the outward and visible signs of a moral doctrine which accepted pleasure as the aim of existence. The ramifications of the doctrine have also been exposed in part: the emphasis on feeling, both in one's own and those of others with the attendant emphasis on refinement in all spheres, as conducive to pleasure. The other aspect of Mme de Lafayette's work to which we have referred as being of primary importance is that

105. J. Fabre, op.cit.
of the power of the passions, which banishes reason and introduces —
although in a schematic form — the element of suffering and of a
resignation to suffering which is tantamount to pleasure.

It would be superfluous to re-identify these various elements
with the currents of mondain moral thought discussed in the opening
section of this work. More important is the task which now confronts
us, of assessing the influence of Mme de Lafayette in the feminine
novel, with special reference to moral standards.
CHAPTER 2.

ETHICS IN THE FEMININE NOVEL OF 1678: MADAME DE VILLEDEI.

The choice of subject, frequently nominally historical — evidence not so much of interest in history as in the 'honnêtes gens' and their pre-occupations — disregard for moral issues and concern for pleasure/love. Mme de Villedieu's conception of love — its sole aim, and that of the novel, as giving pleasure — the implications of this. The importance of 'la délicatesse' by virtue of its connexion with this conception of love — the 'honnête homme' and 'honnêteté' — the value of 'la raison' — the interdependence of these notions and the essential unity of Mme de Villedieu's work.

Although no work by Mme de Villedieu was published for the first time in the year which marks the beginning of this study, her importance as an influence in the novel is attested to by critics from Pierre Bayle onwards. The latter pays tribute to her continued vogue in the 1697 edition of his Dictionnaire, and, therefore in the middle of the period chosen for this study. He refers to her work in the following terms: "... elle en publia un fort grand nombre (de romans) et y réussit très heureusement. Elle

mit à la mode ces petites historiettes galantes, qui font voir bientôt le bon ou le mauvais succès de la tendresse, et fit tomber les longs et vastes écrits d'aventures héroïques, guerrières et amoureuses, qui avaient fait gagner tant d'argent aux imprimeurs de Cassandre, de Cléopatre, de Cyrus et de Clélie, etc. Le nouveau goût qu'elle créa, subsiste encore ... et sq. — This last statement is further substantiated by La Bruyère, who, in the chapter of his Caractères entitled 'La Ville', asks: "Qui prêtera aux femmes les Annales Galantes et le Journal Amoureux?" The value of her work has formed the subject of studies by critics of this century, complete works being devoted to her by E. Magne, H. Châtenet, and more recently by B.A. Morrissette.

If further proof of her popularity and therefore of the necessity to consider her as a possible formative influence be needed, it is to be found in the lists of the editions of works which may be reliably attributed to her.

1661 marks the appearance of her first work, Alcidamie, followed in 1669 by the Journal Amoureux. The initial date of the third work, which we shall have particular cause to refer to, the Désordres de l'Amour, is the subject of some controversy. Graesse

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5. B.A. Morrissette, The life and works of M.C. Desjardins..., Saint Louis.
6. It is not intended to give further examination to the question of the possible authorship of such aleatory works as Mademoiselle de Tournon, whose authorship is still imputed to Mme de Villedieu by E. Magne, but more generally attributed to D'Ortigues de Vaumorière. The student of late seventeenth century literature knows that the price of popularity for an author was the erroneous or deliberately false attribution of works to him or her.
maintains that it was first published in 1670, although his argument is considerably weakened by the fact that no copy prior to 1676 is extant; we should therefore incline to B.A. Morrissette's view that this marks the year of its publication. The Amours des Grands Hommes appeared in 1671, preceding by little the so-called autobiography, the Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière, which saw the light of day in 1672.

Mme de Villedieu produced several further works which were to know a considerable popularity, amongst them, the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste, which appeared in the same year as the Vie de Henriette-Sylvie... In 1673 there appeared the Galanteries Grenadines; and finally in 1685 came the Portrait des Faiblesses Humaines.

Quantitatively, the list is imposing; Mme de Villedieu may be presumed at least to have found the art of charming her audiences. It would seem justifiable, therefore, to study those of her works which are remarkable either for the aspect of novelty which they present, or for their general popularity; not as compared with other writers, but as an end in themselves. Mme de Villedieu preceded Mme de Lafayette, chronologically speaking, in the exploitation of sixteenth century themes, a field which had been opened up by the publication of Brantôme's Mémoires in 1665 and the mémoires of Marguerite de Valois. Mlle Raynal has hailed in Mme de Lafayette the innovator of the genre of the historical novel which was subsequently to be exploited 'à outrance;' Bayle, on the face of it, would seem to disagree: in view of her popularity, it is legitimate at least to regard Mme de

11. op.cit., p.102.
Villedieu as a potential influence; and therefore necessary to analyse her work.

In view of the importance which has been ascribed to Mme de Villedieu's novels, and particularly to her contribution to the historical novel, let us examine the actual subject matter of her works: what is the story which she purports to tell — or to re-tell — and how great a part does history actually play within her fictional creations?

A brief summary of the initial data of each work, the period — if this is specified — in which it is set, the incidents related, may act as a helpful introduction to this discussion. Ignoring strict chronological order, we shall compare the first work, Alcidamie, with the most popular of Dinamise's novels, the Mémoires ... de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière. The main reason for this course of action is that the same technique, in essence, is exploited in both. Alcidamie is considered by E. Magne to be a 'roman à clef', to be the story of the Rohan/Chabot affair rendered in literary terms. The Mémoires ... de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière are considered, again by E. Magne, to be a thinly-veiled account of Mme de Villedieu's own life. We should, however, disagree that either of these works may be deemed adaptations of reality. On the one hand, the affinities of Alcidamie to the 'heroic' novel are so striking that any similarity between its plot and actuality may be ascribed to coincidence. On the other hand, Mme de Villedieu's life, as far as can be ascertained,

17. For a list of the principal editions of Mme de Villedieu's works, see bibliography.
20. See E. Magne, op. cit., p.46 sq. The subject was a society scandal concerning the attempt of the Duchesse de Rohan to disinherit her daughter (who had married the dancing master, Chabot) by claiming that she had given clandestine birth to a son and heir (Tancred).
is as far from the literary convention of the Mémoires as the sordid Rohan/Chabot affair is from Alcidamie.

Having denied the existence of any genuine historical element in these works, on what basis do we then compare them? We do so because in both instances, Mme de Villedieu had adapted a certain element of reality, of actuality, which she has clothed now with the heroic, now with the picaresque garb. These two elements, the heroic and the picaresque, are sufficiently dissimilar to necessitate further comment, but let us first of all consider the themes chosen by Mme de Villedieu in the other novels under discussion.

In the Journal Amoureux, Mme de Villedieu began the pillaging of history which is doubtless mainly responsible for her being considered as a pioneer in the field of the historical novel. Here, as in the first and third anecdotes of the Désordres de l'Amour, she has chosen to re-tell certain anecdotes from the courts of the Valois and after, in which Diane de Poitiers, Henri II, the Vert Galant and their courtiers play leading roles. It may be remarked, in passing, that refinement and politeness were generally considered by the "honnêtes gens" of the second half of the seventeenth century to have begun during the periods which Mme de Villedieu has chosen to embroider upon; and this fact would doubtless account largely for her choice. Apart from that, the chief characteristics of these two works are related to the tone which reigns therein. Mme de Villedieu has chosen to relate the amorous intrigues of the highest in the land; the monarchs and the royal mistresses, those of elevated rank who are more generally known for their political activities. These frivolous narratives of amorous dalliance are related against a background, not, we should say, so much evocative of the late sixteenth century as in accordance with the atmosphere...
of 'galanterie' not unknown in the late seventeenth century.

If Mme de Villedieu chose a restricted period of history, of which she portrayed a restricted aspect, in the *Journal Amoureux* and the *Désordres de l'Amour*, she may be seen to have more frequently opted for Classical Antiquity in her subject matter. The *Amours des Grands Hommes* of 1671 and the *Portrait des Faiblesses Humaines*, which first appeared in 1685, both deal with the great men, the thinkers and warriors of Ancient Greece, sparing neither Solon nor Pericles; whilst the *Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste*, as the title would suggest, is set in the *Golden Latin age*, with Ovid as one of the chief protagonists. Sacrilegious as it may seem in some instances, although admittedly not in those of Ovid and Alcibiades—who are both held up as worthy objects for emulation—all are without exception shown in the posture of gallants of one kind or another. Whether Mme de Villedieu feigns to castigate the weakness of the amorous passion, as she does in the *Portrait des Faiblesses Humaines*, or whether she draws a complacent picture of the practice of the 'ars amandi', as she does in the *Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste*, she succeeds in rendering a comprehensive account of amorous dalliance.

The only work to which we intend subsequently to refer, which has not yet been mentioned, is the *Galanteries Grenadines*, of 1673, for which, as the title implies, Mme de Villedieu has chosen a nominally Hispano-Moorish background for further exploitation of the themes of court intrigue, from which love is never absent.

So much, then, for the actual topics chosen by Mme de Villedieu.21.

21. It will be noted that, with the exception of the *Amours des Grands Hommes* and the *Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste*, both dealing with Classical Antiquity, none of the titles of Mme de Villedieu's works has a particularly historical flavour. The emphasis seems, on the contrary to be on love, whether it be on 'galanterie' or on the disorders and weaknesses of this passion.
what do they hold in common? In the first place, one might be somewhat disappointed on ascertaining the relatively small place which her novels of a specifically historical cadre, such as the *Journal Amoureux*, occupy in the sum total of her fictional output. However, the use to which history has been put in the *Journal Amoureux* and the *Désordres de l'Amour* will be seen not to differ radically from that of her themes taken from ancient history. Alcibiades and Ovid were both considered as models of 'honnêteté'; the former in particular. Thus Mme de Villedieu may be presumed to have been attracted to the sixteenth century and to Classical Greece and Rome for the same reasons: she sought there what she imagined to be models of urbanity. She has portrayed a conception of love which she imagined to have been formulated and exploited by her heroes and which is in keeping with the doctrine to which she subscribes. Furthermore, she is attracted to the court atmosphere, whether it be that of the Valois or that of Imperial Rome, in so far as it embodies an ideal of refinement which she would seek to impart to her work. Baseness, in the sense of lack of material refinement, is excluded from her aesthetic conception.

Before passing on to a close analysis of Mme de Villedieu's work, it is necessary, however, to examine a little more carefully the background which she creates for her stories. It would be unreasonable to expect any elements of what the nineteenth century has taught us to consider as local colour. As early as *Alcidamie*, which purported to be an 'heroic' creation, there appear elements which come to characterize Mme de Villedieu's work. A representative example may be taken from a description of the *Isle Galante*: "À l'entrée (du cabinet) d'Amour, il y avait un superbe perron de marbre blanc, sur le haut duquel étaient représentés quatre petits Amours; dont les unes étaient des portraits et des lettres, et les autres des coeurs enflammés, et des bagatelles qu'ils semblaient offrir à ceux qui les regardaient; et sur le perron de celui des tristes
aventures, qui était de même forme que l'autre, il y avait quatre petits amours désolés qui brisaient leurs flèches, qui éteignaient leurs flambeaux et qui témoignaient autant de douleur par leurs gestes et par leurs postures que ceux de l'entrée du cabinet d'amour témoignaient de joie et d'allégresse."

Although the foregoing quotation is scarcely noteworthy for literary merit, it must be included in this discussion for other reasons. In the first place, it should be borne in mind that Mlle Desjardins was endeavouring, in her first novel, to create a work after the style of the Grand Cyrus. The tone of this description is as far removed from the Scuderian novel as it is from that of Mme de Lafayette. The allegoric tone of the description, which belongs to 'gallant' romance rather than to reality, is alien to Mme de Lafayette's work.

Elsewhere, Alcidamie's physical appearance is described thus: "sa robe, qui était d'une étoffe blanche toute simple, était retroussée à l'endroit du genou par une agrafe de pierreries, et laissait voir une jambe, qui n'étant couverte que d'un petit brodequin enrichi de perles, paraissait dans toute sa forme." 22

Although the blasé reader of to-day would find this description innocuous enough, its importance may be more fully apprehended if it is looked at in the context of the feminine novel of the time, as represented either by Mlle de Scudéry or Mme de Lafayette. This pre-occupation with a certain aspect of material reality, which forms an intrinsic part of Mme de Villedieu's works — a material reality which is mildly titillating to the senses, as in the latter description, or one where love is manifestly envisaged as a sort of stylized game — is thus present from the outset.

It will perhaps be argued that such a cadre is eminently

23, ibid., p.5.
suitable to Alcidamie, lacking as it does a specific historical context. Let us look at the works whose plots have greater historical pretensions. One is obliged to state, with regard to both the Journal Amoureux and the Désordres de l'Amour, that such details of background as do exist are redolent of that of the Court of Versailles in its most 'galant' aspects, as recorded by memorialists of the time. Diane de Poitiers is portrayed as receiving the Duc de Paré in a grotto indeed propitious to their amorous intentions. From neither work are descriptions of courtly pastimes, of fêtes galantes, ballets and banquets, absent.

If the novels set in the sixteenth century are in no respect vitally different from the nebulous Alcidamie, neither do they differ, as regards the cadre, from the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste and the Portrait des Faiblesses Humaines. In the former work particularly, Mme de Villedieu is at pains to create a convincing background — but it is incontrovertibly that of her contemporaries, the 'honnêtes gens', the courtiers of the Roi Soleil. Never could such anachronisms as she frequently commits in this work be more significant; such as for instance, when she describes a court spectacle thus: "... un ballet digne de la magnificence de César, suivit ce somptueux repas: et il fut dansé dans une salle lambrissée de miroirs." All in the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste, the language, the gestures, the setting, even the dress, betray Mme de Villedieu's interest in the 'mondain' society of her time.

The Galanteries Grenadines no more nearly represent the court of Grenada than does the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste that of the Emperor Augustus. On this occasion however, Mme de Villedieu

26. Perhaps the most egregious mistake regarding local colour is when one of the protagonists is reported as saying: "j'entrevis au clair de la lune une esclave qui me parût porter les livrées d'Aurélie", p.117.
indulges to the full, under the guise of exoticism, her taste for quasi-eroticism. An example of this is when a lover relates: "Ah! Seigneur, que je la trouvai belle, et que j'eus de peine à retenir les mouvements de ma passion! Elle venait de sortir du bain, et sans autre habit qu'une mante à l'arabesque, d'un tissu d'or, et de soie couleur de feu. Elle était couchée négligemment sur quelques carreaux de pourpre."\(^{27}\). Add to this such delightful anachronisms as: "... un jour à la Mosquée royale je trouvai le moyen de mettre dans le livre de prières de la Princesse ce que j'avais dessein de lui faire voir ...",\(^{28}\) and: "J'étais dans l'équipage d'un homme qui va en bonne fortune; c'est-à-dire seul, armé, le visage couvert d'un des pans de ma casaque, et je cherchais les rues détournées, ..."\(^{29}\) and one holds the essential, both of the background of the *Galanteries Grenadines* and of Mme de Villedieu's other works.

It remains for us to comment upon the background of the *Mémoires de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*. In truth, there remains little that one can add, regarding Mme de Villedieu's observation of cadre. The picaresque nature of this work dictates the type of reality which is depicted. Henriette-Sylvie passes — more or less unscathed — through as many vicissitudes, although of a different order, as the heroines of the old-time novels. An example of the reigning tone is, however, to be found at an early juncture of the story, when Henriette-Sylvie, immured in a convent against her will, plots with a fellow-nun and the Duc de Guise, an admirer, to escape during the diversion created by the visit of the court. Nowhere is the writer's complacent acceptance of a semi-scabrous reality and her determination to exploit the 'galant' aspect, more apparent. She resolutely ignores any moral implication of the facts she gives, choosing above all to amuse her readers.

\(^{27}\) *Les Galanteries Grenadines, oeuvres complètes*, vol.IV, p.460.
\(^{28}\) ibid., p.527.
\(^{29}\) ibid., p.538.
This brief discussion of the choice of material and background in Mme de Villedieu’s works should not be regarded as in any way extraneous to the main body of this study. The material chosen by ‘Dinamise’ is important, not only in that it may provide possible scope for imitation by her feminine successors in the novel, but also — and this is paramount — in that it can be proved to be of significance to our study of the writer’s ethics. This may appear to be an audacious assertion: in order to substantiate it, to some degree at least, let us review the findings concerning Mme de Villedieu’s works, which we have made to date.

Beginning with what may seem the most banal of facts, we should stress the essential similarity in all Mme de Villedieu’s works, even to the anachronisms. She may be presumed to be manifestly not interested in history for its own sake. The focal point of her interest would appear to be certain notions of ‘honnêteté’: her protagonists are eminently members of polite society, ‘honnêtes gens’; and their main pre-occupation — and therefore the writer’s — is the pursuit of the pleasures of love.

It is of supreme importance to the study of ethics in Mme de Villedieu’s works, to understand the nature and significance of the conception of love which does, in effect, make up the stuff of her novels.

Neglecting for a moment the method, adhered to previously, of comparing works akin in subject or treatment, let us examine in chronological order such aspects of Mme de Villedieu’s conception of love as reveal themselves in the texts.

In Alcidamie, we have in the main such a conception of love as was current when Mlle Desjardins composed this novel. The heroine permits the hero to love her on condition that he never declares his passion.
The reigning moral criteria are those of 'la gloire': affection is based on recognition of merit. Quite apart from such divergencies of tone from that of the heroic novel in general, represented by the passages of 'galant' description already quoted, there appears a phrase which is utterly alien to the Scuderian ideal. It is the writer who, soliloquizing on Zélide's passion, concludes: "Pour moi, toutes les fois que j'ai fait réflexion sur cette aventure, il m'a semblé que je ne pouvais assez admirer le caprice de la destinée, qui avait pris plaisir à se jouer de la fierté de Zélide, et qui de la plus ambitieuse de toutes les Princesses, en avait fait la femme d'un simple chevalier." 30.

"Le caprice de la destinée" — here a new note is struck: relatively unimportant from the point of view of the work as a whole, it has implications which are deeply significant.

It is fairly evident that the 'heroic' conception of love such as Mlle Desjardins strove — not very convincingly — to portray in her first novel, precludes passion such as that which informs the Princesse de Clèves. In the Journal Amoureux, the tone has already crystallized into that of polite society love. The exact nature and depth of such a love is hinted at in one of the opening paragraphs, referring to Octave Farnèse: "... et comme il est naturel aux sujets de suivre l'exemple du Prince; il savait que l'amour était le meilleur passeport qu'on pouvait avoir pour entrer dans les bonnes grâces d'Henri. 31.

This love is still based on esteem — but esteem for physical graces and a reputation which is not strictly correlated with moral worth. 32. The Amiral de Châtillon, in the second anecdote, makes this revealing statement: "... j'aurais pardonné à l'infidèle ... une surprise des sens, mais je ne puis souffrir qu'elle me préfère un homme moins jeune, et moins galant encore que je ne le suis." 33.

30. op.cit., p.117.
32. ibid., pp.90, 93.
33. ibid., p.143.
The senses are fully admitted into this conception of love; they have their allotted role, but it is a role which is eminently subordinate to that of reason. This is not the conception of love as a unique and all-consuming passion, but rather as a calculated pursuit of pleasure — the true end of existence. "Dites-moi de grâce, ce que vous appelez infidélité, laisse-t-il quelque trace de son passage? en a-t-on le teint moins beau, et les yeux moins brillants, pour avoir étendu les bornes de sa bonté jusques au nombre de deux Amants? Non, non, notre cher, au contraire la multitude des captifs est une marque de la valeur des conquérants: plus on est aimée, et plus on a de charmes; ...". 34.

If, however, a multiplicity of loves is condoned, it is on condition that such a state of affairs is the result of a conscious choice: the ascendancy of the senses over reason is a weakness worthy only of contempt: " ... puisque vos faiblesses sont les faiblesses d'un tempérament que vous ne sauriez surmonter, elles sont injures pour un homme de courage, ...". 35.

Such statements indicate sufficiently clearly the love which is portrayed and the gulf which separates this love from that of the Princesse de Clèves, to require no further comment. Mme de Villedieu's conception of love seems to achieve its full expression in the Mémoires de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière. On this occasion, she is most nearly concerned with the love to which she had previously referred without dwelling upon, the 'Tendre sur Inclination.' It should not be supposed that this latter conception of love is in any way opposed to that which she most often portrays. Given her belief in the existence of the senses, 36, it follows that such a love will be a

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34. ibid., p.92.  
35. ibid., p.93.  
36. This phrase is not as ridiculous as it might seem at first glance. The Précieuses' ideal was that of a love entirely divorced from all sensual pleasure.
potential danger to its victim — being of its nature rooted in the emotions — unless it is tamed by reason. The authoress exclaims, at the beginning of her Mémoires: "Qu’une femme est folle quand elle aime!... ou qu’elle est malheureuse quand elle a de la vertu et de l’amour!"\textsuperscript{37}

That it is indeed the 'Tendre sur Inclination' to which she is referring, is clearly indicated in this description of love as: "Cette puissance secrète qui enchaîne les coeurs, et qui les rattache toujours à ce qu’ils aiment, malgré toutes les ruses que la fortune emploie souvent pour les séparer, ..."\textsuperscript{38}

However, there is a second, equally important element in the Mémoires de ... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière, an element linked with Mme de Villedieu’s attitude towards reason: that is, a strongly realistic attitude towards the limitations of passion, which becomes, in this instance, a somewhat cynical attitude towards mankind in general. From denying the continued existence — and, by extension, the value — of passion, the writer goes on to deny human value, to deny the existence of virtue.\textsuperscript{39} An example of realistic observation is to be found subsequent to Sylvie’s marriage — after countless 'contretemps' — to Englesac: "Je ne sais si ces faux bruits réfroidirent le Comte d’Englesac, ou si le mariage fit seul ce changement, mais il se dégoûta comme c’est la coutume."\textsuperscript{40}

When we state that Mme de Villedieu is led, in the Mémoires, to refuse passion itself, we base this opinion upon Sylvie’s eventual rejection of Englesac; when, tired of his ill-treatment, she admits: "... j’avais poussé

\textsuperscript{37} Les Mémoires de ... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière, œuvres complètes, vol.VII, p.30.
\textsuperscript{38} ibid., p.68.
\textsuperscript{39} The female characters in the Mémoires de ... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière may be divided into two categories: the sympathetic ones, whose morals are as dubious as those of Sylvie herself, and the hypocritical, virtuous ones. For Mme de Villedieu, every prude was a false prude, see p.104: "Elle passe pour vertueuse, et ces vertueuses, quand elles ont risqué et mal-place leur secret, n’épargnent quelque fois rien pour le mettre hors de danger."
\textsuperscript{40} ibid., p.195.
l'amour assez loin, il n'y a point de cœur si constant, qu'un mépris opiniâtre ne puisse à la fin rebuter."

It is in essence this same attitude towards 'Tendre sur Inclination' which is the motive factor in the moral of the second anecdote of the Désordres de l'Amour, which has been compared with the Princesse de Clèves. The Marquise de Bellegarde herself qualified her infatuation as a 'caprice' -- the second occasion on which this term is mentioned in Mme de Villedieu's work: "... les folies que j'ai faites pour Monsieur de Bellegarde, ont peut-être persuadé le public que j'en serais capable pour quelqu'autre, mais ce fut un caprice d'Etoile, qui n'a jamais eu d'effet qu'en faveur de cet ingrat." Inspite of certain similarities between the story of Madame de Bellegarde and that of Madame de Clèves — that they both have generous husbands and that both are loved by men who share many qualities in common — apart from actual differences in the plot, the moral tenor of the two works is entirely dissimilar. Mme de Lafayette was primarily concerned with exposing an apparently indissoluble dilemma; for Mme de Villedieu, this dilemma does not exist. The heart-searchings of Mme de Clèves are absent from the latter's work: the haughty attitude of the Marquise de Bellegarde towards the man with whom she is living in open adultery is commented upon thus: "La Marquise, loin d'avoir quelque complaisance pour ses chagrins et de prendre avec lui le caractère d'une femme prudente et soumise, voulait conserver celui d'une maîtresse délicate et lui faisait un crime de la moindre rêverie."

If Mme de Villedieu may be said to hold any characteristic in common with Mme de Lafayette, it is surely this disbelief in the

41. ibid., p.219.  
42. see i.a., B.A. Morrissette, op.cit., p.106.  
43. op.cit., p.114.  
44. ibid., p.74.
permanence of passion. The gulf which lies between them, in the moral character of their respective works, is created by the fact that the former accepts human limitations; she thus ignores the moral potentialities of Mme de Bellegarde's situation and adopts, rather, a critical attitude towards the heroine who has ignored the dictates of reason. Again, taken at its face value, the moral of this second anecdote of the Désordres de l'Amour, 'Qu'on ne peut donner si peu de puissance à l'amour qu'il n'en abuse', may not seem diametrically opposed to Mme de Lafayette's view, as exposed in the Princesse de Clèves; but, once again, Mme de Villedieu, throughout this work, deprecates the effects of passion: never does she dwell upon them with sympathy or represent the victims of love as worthy objects of pity.

If Mme de Villedieu is loth to dwell sympathetically upon the miseries of loving in the works where such a theme would be permissible; so it is that she chooses, in the greater part of her works, to depict the pleasures of love, of the exploitation of the senses guided by reason in an emotion where the heart is scarcely, if at all, engaged. The Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste epitomizes the sort of love which is advocated; many of the comments upon this subject could very well be taken from the Ars amandif. A conception of love which is strongly physiological is expressed at the opening of the work: "Je comprends assez que la vue d'un objet qui plaît à nos sens, passe par eux jusques à notre âme, et lui cause ce trouble agréable que la convenance des humeurs, ou l'habitude convertissent en amour."46.

From the host of examples afforded by the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste, we have chosen first of all the following, referring to the sort of love which is permitted and indeed the discussion which forms the substance of the work: "... bien que Julie fût sa véritable passion, il ne croyait pas trahir son amour pour la princesse en

45. For instance, see op.cit., p.45.
46. ibid., p.4.
a further detail which places the novel at least as much in Mme de Villedieu's own time, in its attitude towards the royal sexual morality, as in that of Imperial Rome: "Il le plaignit d'un ton satirique d'avoir une épouse si peu fidèle. Passe pour César, ajouta-t-il; il est glorieux de partager quelque chose avec son maître, ...".48.

Not only does this tone, not so much of corrupt as of entirely 'insouciant' morality reign, but Mme de Villedieu paints here a picture of a love which, once the first ardour of passion has departed, is transformed into friendship:

La constance est une chimère
Qui ne fait qu'assoupir les plus ardents désirs.
En amitié tout amour dégénère
Si tôt que l'habitude en corrompt les plaisirs.

This is revelatory of the kind of love to which Mme de Villedieu subscribes and the aim which she gives it. Friendship considered as the natural end of a love which can no longer afford pleasure to the lover is reminiscent not only of an idea expressed in Mme de Villedieu's 'Epicurean' verse, but also of the attitude of the great Epicurean, of Saint-Evrémond himself.49. One is thus led to consider a question which must inevitably arise in studying Mme de Villedieu's works, that of whether the term Epicurean can be justifiably applied to them. E. Magne, in his study, claims that she was at one point a free-thinker, citing in defence of this assertion her reference to Desbarreaux in the

47. ibid., p.42.
48. ibid., p.69.
49. Mme de Villedieu expresses the same opinion thus:

Quand on voudra changer d'amant ou de maîtresse
Pendant un mois on le dira,
Et puis après on changera,
Sans qu'on soit accusé d'erreur ou de faiblesses.
Mais on conservera toujours de la tendresse.
On se rendra de petits soins
Car, entre deux amants, quand un grand amour cesse,
Il faut être amis tout au moins.

See also Saint-Evrémond, Oeuvres Complètes.
Mémoires de... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière. M. Magne later returns to the attack and qualifies Mme de Villedieu's prose fiction as Epicurean. What characteristics of Mme de Villedieu's work, which are the specific attributes of an Epicurean mode of thought, apart from those previously mentioned, are to be found? A close examination of the texts has brought to light no evidence other than of a general belief in 'sequi naturam', a vaguely hedonistic outlook which cannot be considered to denote a specific philosophical allegiance. That the doctrine of pleasure is everywhere implied; that it informs Mme de Villedieu's whole work, must be admitted: this does not, however, mean that the writer manifests any philosophical pre-occupations in her novels. We are thus led to reject the term Epicurean, whilst accepting the profound influence of the doctrine of pleasure generally associated with it, in the novels under discussion.

What then is the general significance of the references to love in Mme de Villedieu's work? Beginning with what is indeed the corner stone, an essential sense of unity is seen to be created by her attitude towards pleasure — a doctrine preached throughout. Next, it should be added that the tone in her works is never actively immoral: Mme de Villedieu's aim is not to dwell upon vice, such scabrous aspects as her novels may present seem to be quasi-unconscious. Her work thus presents an amoral aspect; as unmindful of the moral implication as it is indicative of a profound disregard for human excellence. Such a conception accounts for the lack of an element of struggle and inhibits the idea of destiny — the necessary corollary of Mme de Villedieu's acceptance of the emotions — which appears, and that briefly, but twice throughout her works.

50. E. Magne, op. cit., p.131. He might also have mentioned, in this context, the fact that Mme de Villedieu places a meeting between Englesac and a friend at the Temple, a centre of Epicurean thought, op. cit., p.200.

51. E. Magne, op. cit., p.353.

52. Bayle, Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, Oct., 1686, makes a comment which indicates the treatment which Mme de Villedieu accords to potentially risqué matters: "On est fort persuadé en lisant, que le Héros va beaucoup plus loin que le livre ne dit."
This belief in pleasure, both in the sense that it constitutes the prevailing doctrine in these novels; and also that it may legitimately be presumed to be the author's aim in composing them — the one being the logical outcome of the other — is admirably suited to the cadre. Not the least significant aspect of the eminently aristocratic choice of subject is that the underlying idea in Mme de Villedieu's work belongs to the aristocratic tradition of thought. As has been stated in the introductory section, the notions of 'honnêteté' themselves represent an adaptation, on the part of 'mondain' thinkers, of current modes of thought, to suit the exigencies of life in society: an essentially practical aim which precludes all systematic thinking. It is also indisputable that all modes of aristocratic thought, whether they be stoic or simply advocating 'honnêteté', imply a rejection of all that hinders personal liberty.

Let us now look at the notions which recur throughout the texts. It is quickly found that 'la délicatesse' appears most consistently in all discussions where something approaching a moral element is present. First of all, however, we should like to cite two instances in which this term is used in a way which sheds the most revealing light upon Mme de Villedieu's ethics. In the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste, there occurs the following conversation on love between two women: "Il y a de certaines marques d'amour après lesquelles un amant ne peut soupçonner sa maîtresse d'inconstance, sans l'offenser mortellement. Mais le don du coeur n'est pas de ce nombre, il n'a de prix effectif que dans l'imagination de l'amant qui croit l'avoir reçu, et comme il s'arrête bien loin en dehors du crime, il laisse toujours craindre aux amants sensés qu'une Dame ne puisse faire plus de chemin. — Ah! Tullia, s'écria la femme de Mécène, que je suis fâchée de vous trouver des sentiments si peu délicats!"
employed in such a context, one is struck by what is implied in the attitude expressed. Just as Mme de Villedieu had manifested a contempt for a use of the senses not guided by reason, so she here deprecates an attitude towards love which disregards what we are obliged to term spiritual values. This does not indeed imply a return to the ideal of spiritualized love held by the Précieuses. However, the heart as opposed to Man's baser nature, is accorded the better part, is regarded as the 'sine qua non' of love in that it is the finer instrument of pleasure. Mme de Villedieu, having fully accepted the senses, is led by a sort of paradox to disregard them.

This attitude manifests itself most clearly in the Mémoires de... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière, when the writer makes a distinction between the heart and the senses. For instance, Sylvie actually encourages Englesac to seduce a woman who has been causing her some embarrassment; she excuses her conduct on these grounds: "Peut-être même qu'on m'accusera dans la suite, d'avoir trop peu de délicatesse: mais franchement je n'ai jamais pu admettre de certaines jalousies qui me paraissent trop engagées dans les sens; l'assurance d'un cœur sans partage m'a toujours suffi et me suffira toujours." 53.

If an aside might be permitted here, one would be tempted to draw an analogy between the morality of this reasoning and that of a Manon Lescaut. Admittedly, the differences which exist, not only between the two works, but also between the character of the two women, are great. However, it is in essence the same sentiment which is expressed by Manon, when excusing herself before Des Grieux for having sent him a pretty girl as a consolation for her own unfaithfulness, she says: "... c'était sincèrement que je souhaitais qu'elle pût servir à vous désennuyer quelques moments, car la fidélité que je souhaite de vous est celle du coeur." 54.

53. op.cit., p.196
The importance of 'la délicatesse' in mondain thinking, and the significance of its being originally a term having an aesthetic connotation, has already been touched upon. The fact that such a term could not acquire such a strongly moral connotation as 'la gloire' in the Cornelian sense will be readily conceded. In view of Mme de Villedieu's lack of moral preoccupation, as already demonstrated, let us look at the use which she makes of this 'la délicatesse'.

In the Galanteries Grenadines, we find the opinion that: "une jalousie qui n'envisage que le coeur de la dame aimée, est une délicatesse inseparable de l'amour parfait." If this insistence upon a certain refinement — a delicacy of feelings — is thus regarded as an essential attribute of love, other instances — in the Exilés de la Cour d'Auguste for instance — are to be found where its use is strictly divorced from all moral connotation, thus: "Je suis surpris qu'Auguste dont l'âme est susceptible d'amour, ne s'est point avise d'éprouver quel ragout c'est pour un amant délicat que d'avoir à détrôner un époux du caractère de Mécène." However, it is in the Désordres de l'Amour that the most numerous examples of the use of 'la délicatesse' are to be found. This does not mean that examples are lacking elsewhere — they far outnumber any other term such as 'la raison' or 'la gloire' — or that their use here is different. If the greater number of the quotations are taken from the Désordres de l'Amour, it is for reasons of facility of quotation. Here, as elsewhere, the senses, without the fillip given by delicacy, are accounted as inferior. Thus when his mistress has been unfaithful, "... le Duc l'avait aimée avec trop de délicatesse pour être si facilement apaisé." — the enjoyment of such a love being considerable, its demands are proportionately great. It is the same idea which is expressed in the following light verses:

55. op.cit., p.557. See also pp.591, 607.
56. op.cit., p.173. See also p.28.
La sensible délicatesse
Suit toujours pas à pas la sincère tendresse.
Il faut, pour aimer ardemment,
Ressentir délicatement,
Tout ce qui part de ce qu'on aime. 57.

"Vous êtes assidu, fidèle et passionné, mais la pleine
cчрежance blesse ma délicatesse, et le parfait amour exige tant
de devoirs, que vous ne le connaissez point, si vous croyez les
avoir tous remplis." 58. Such a statement indicates once again
the quasi-spiritual quality — although the role which it is
assigned is not in itself 'spiritual' — as one has come to
associate with the 'précieux' conception of love. Indeed, this
illustrates the effect of a gradual change whereby notions are
put to a different use, according to their moral inspiration.

The preponderance of 'la délicatesse,' in strict accordance
with preceding statements concerning the fundamentally amoral —
but not immoral — character of Mme de Villedieu's work,
represents the pre-occupation with aesthetic values, the significance
of which has been described by M. Bénichou as the transposition
to the aesthetic plane of the ethical doctrine of the supremacy of
pleasure. 59.

We do in addition maintain that throughout Mme de Villedieu's
works, whether they treat the court of Pericles or Henri II, the
 cosmos is eminently that of the 'honnêtes gens'. Accordingly, it
is to be noted that reference to 'honnêtes gens,' together with the
epithet 'honnête,' occurs frequently. In Alcidamie, Lysicrate,
the descendant of Hylas, is in fact the prototype of the 'honnête
homme'. He is portrayed as being fickle in love, but: "ce n'est
pas qu'il ne rendit sa légèreté la plus excusable qu'elle pouvait
être, par la manière dont il en usait avec toutes les personnes qu'il
aimait ou qu'il avait aimées, car il était si discret, et il rompait

58. ibid., p.126. See also pp.122, 136. For other uses of 'la
délicatesse' similar to those already given, see the Portrait
des Faiblesses Humaines, pp.217, 227, 251, 292.
59. See introductory section.
si honnêtement avec ses maîtresses, qu'il en demeurait toujours l'ami, quoi qu'il n'en fût plus l'amant. This particular use of the notion of 'honnêteté' leads us to consider for a moment the question of the survival of the Hylas-theme in literature. Not the least of the reasons for the popularity of the inconstant lover, as compared with Céladon, is that he was in accordance with the moral climate of the time. Foregoing statements on the view that love should be transformed into friendship once its 'raison d'être' -- the pleasure derived from the gratification of the senses -- has passed, shared by Mme de Villedieu with the Epicureans of the Saint-Evremond school, come to mind.

The term 'honnête' is applied on various occasions in the Désordre de l'Amour. When, in the first anecdote, a lover breaks with his mistress, regarding her sufferings: "... il fit ce qu'il put pour les adoucir, il était naturellement honnête, et ne pouvait se résoudre à rendre aucun mauvais office à une femme dont il n'en avait point reçu." In the second anecdote, the thwarted lover is described thus: "Cette idée lui rendaient toutes les vengeances légitimes; mais comme il n'était pas moins honnête et moins raisonnable qu'amoureux ...".

If the term 'honnête' has been endowed in the last examples with a high moral tone, it must be added that on many occasions the sense is nebulous if not downright amoral. It is apparent from the use of 'honnête' that the term was intended to convey a meaning understood by the reader; it was intended to signify a pattern of thought and behaviour generally accepted in society. Thus when we read: "La Marquise répondait honnêtement à ces effets de la tendresse de son mari," or: "le tour que vous me faites est non

60. op.cit., p.172.  61. op.cit., p.9.  62. ibid., p.71.  63. ibid., p.64.
seulement d'un méchant ami, ... mais il est contre les règles de la parfaite honnêteté," the significance is implicit rather than explicit.

When we state that the term is often used other than with strictly moral connotation, we refer particularly to the term 'honnête homme'. It will be noticed that whereas 'honnête' had a fairly clearly defined moral tone in many instances, 'honnête homme' is fundamentally lacking in moral implication. There are of course, examples which might have been taken from such manuals of 'honnêteté' as were composed by Mère, such as: " ... il est d'un honnête homme de ne jamais chagriner une jolie femme." On the other hand, such examples as the following are much more frequent: "Deux ou trois des plus honnêtes gens de la suite du Roi lui firent un hommage de leurs désirs, ..." and: " ... il fit comme beaucoup d'honnêtes gens, qui n'estiment pas que ce soit un grand crime de mentir aux Dames." Plautie, in the Portrait des Faiblesses Humaines: " ... obligea Drusus à lui faire mille serments qu'il n'avait jamais aimé la jeune Princesse, et qu'il ne vivait bien avec elle que par une politique d'honnête homme." 67.

Having touched upon what we consider to be the major aspects of Mme de Villedieu's novels: the doctrine of pleasure which has as its essential attribute refinement — 'la délicatesse'; and the world in which such refinement exists, that of the 'honnêtes gens', let us cast a brief look at the notion which must inevitably accompany refinement and 'honnêteté', that of 'la raison'.

It must be inferred from the foregoing discussion of Mlle de Villedieu's ethics, that 'la raison' is an unseen presence in her works. Actual examples of its use are not particularly frequent. Such examples as there are do indeed sum up all that has been stated, or inferred, upon the subject. 'La raison' is assigned

the task, not of finding a way out of an emotional impasse as in the *Princesse de Clèves*, but of reconciling pleasure with utility so that both accord with self-interest. This is clearly defined in the *Journal Amoureux*: "si le plaisir s'efforce de nous faire écarter de la raison, l'amour propre sait bien le secret de le renfermer dans les bornes de la fortune et de l'utilité."  

As has been previously stated, love, in the sense of passion, is irreconcilably opposed to reason, whereas such love as is advocated in the majority of the novels takes reason as its guide: "Mais l'amour dont toutes les violences reconnaissent encore l'empire de la raison, a je ne sais quoi de noble, et de pur, qui ne souffre aucune bassesse, ...".

This survey of the ethics in Mme de Villedieu's works — albeit brief — leaves one in no doubt of her position. It would be as inopportune as it is futile to attempt to predict what effect she may have on her successors. However, the fundamental difference between the moral tone in her works and in the *Princesse de Clèves* is nothing if not striking. Mme de Villedieu's disregard for moral questions 'per se,' which manifests itself in her choice and treatment of material and which stems from the hegemony of pleasure in her ethical conception, creates a chasm between herself and Féliciane.

This difference is further accentuated by the underlying unity of Mme de Villedieu's novels. Pleasure creates an entity of which the composite elements are interdependent. Utterly unmindful of the moral aspect of a situation, the writer accords pride of place to refinement — the instrument of pleasure 'par excellence,' at least of the particular pleasure which is advocated and whose companion is reason. Thus there emerges the world of the 'honnête homme,' with all that it implies.

68. *op.cit.*, p.224.  
70. *Les Désordres de l'Amour*, p.80. "La Marquise n'était pas encore parvenue au degré d'amour qui détruit entièrement la raison, ...".  
CHAPTER 3

ETHICS AND THE NOVEL, 1678-1687: PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKS OF MEN NOVELISTS

Aim of this study — to ascertain the role played in the novel between 1678 and 1687 by men writers — a year-by-year study of works reliably attributed to men authors — a study of the various trends in these novels, their development and interrelation — an assessment of the contribution of certain authors — how far does the novel at the end of these nine years bear traces of the influence of the Princesse de Clèves? — how nearly does it resemble the works of Mme de Villedieu?

This very brief study of the works of men novelists from the date of the publication of the Princesse de Clèves until the appearance of the first known work by a woman writer, intercalated in the main body of this study of the feminine novel, does not mean that we have been infected by the fashion for intercalated stories, unrelated to the central plot, common in the works of fiction under consideration.

If we are to study the feminine novel with a view to ascertaining what, if any, are its peculiar characteristics — and therefore its particular contribution to the novel as a whole, we must also attempt, in order to create a term of comparison, to define the main trends in the contemporaneous masculine novel. The interval of nine years between the publication of the Princesse de Clèves and Eléonor d'Yvrée by Mlle Bernard is considerable. Considerations of chronology — indeed of logic — demand that a study of the works by men authors in these intervening years should precede that of the women novelists who were active during the last decade of the seventeenth century. It is our aim, not to present an overall picture of the novel,¹ but to see, in

¹ The very fact that we confine our remarks to the works of known authors precludes this possibility. The total annual publications were as follows, 1678: 28, of which 17 were anonymous, 1679: total 14, anon. 4; 1680: total 34, anon. 17; 1681: total 13, anon. 9; 1682: total 21, anon. 11; 1683: total 18, anon. 6; 1684: total 13, anon. 5; 1685: total 15, anon. 6; 1686: total 14, anon. 7. These numbers, quoted by R.C. Williams, Bibliography of the seventeenth century novel in France, are approximative rather than exact indications.
the first place how far literary productions of the years immediately following 1678 are related in moral inspiration to the Princesse de Clèves, and, secondly, to ascertain to what extent either Mme de Lafayette or Mme de Villedieu have a following amongst their male coevals and successors. This latter aspect is important both in showing how great is Mme de Lafayette's influence on her literary successors, as opposed to Mme de Villedieu's. It is important to us to see how far - if at all - the novels written by men authors during the years which preceded the advent of Mlle Bernard, contributed to the works of 'Cléomire' and 'Féliciane', or alternatively, how strong an independent stream of development is discernible.2

The method of this - necessarily schematic - study will differ both from that employed in studying the works of Mme de Villedieu and the Princesse de Clèves and from that to which we shall adhere in the following section. We shall begin by giving briefly a year-by-year study of the novels which span the years 1678 to 1687, in order to bring into relief the background against which the Princesse de Clèves was published; and subsequently to observe the fate of the various types of novel which emerge from this literary chaos, pointing out, where it is relevant to do so, features which may justifiably be attributed to the two women novelists already mentioned. Further, we shall refer to the individual authors who distinguish themselves from this motley crowd in an attempt to identify indications of a unity within their work.

It should be understood from the outset that this is a selective study in the sense that we shall treat only the novels which have some bearing on the objective proposed for this study - that of seeing how close are the links between the feminine novel in 1678, that of 1687 and the intervening years when women writers momentarily disappear.

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2. In no respect do we consider Mme de Lafayette or Mme de Villedieu as existing apart from the ideas of their times. In literature, as in other respects, 'no man is an island': certain elements which appear in the works of these two women may have been common literary currency at the time.
from the scene.

In default of being able to trace the history of moral standards in the works of men novelists from, say, the publication of the Princesse de Montpensier or the Mémoires de ... Henriette Sylvie de Molière, let us look more closely at the eight works of known authorship, which first appeared in 1678. Critical attention has already been drawn to the fact that nothing in these works would lead one to suppose the simultaneous existence of the work published by Claude Barbin and composed by a certain person or persons of quality. A feature which all have in common, however, is their relatively limited dimensions.

Of these eight works, three at least present striking resemblances one to the other: they are Préchac's Voyage de Fontainebleau and Brémond's Le Double Cocu and Apologie ou les véritables Mémoires de Madame Marie Mancini. In all three instances, the literary convention of a cadre distant either in time or space is rejected in favour of the here and now. The material realism of the background is matched by an observation of a refined but non-idealistic society. The interest in each of these novels is not upon questions of moral worth or upon a striving after perfection, but rather upon pleasure, with reason and refinement working to this end. This means, of course, that these manuals of amusement contain no element of drama or real tragedy. Love is an amusement par excellence - the factor in life most apt to dispel boredom, providing that the senses remain under the tutelage of reason and that the game is played according to the laws of polite society.

This complacent acceptance of human limitations is far more reminiscent of the tone in Mme de Villedieu's works than that in the Princesse de Clèves. This belief that love is a game which is over once the senses have been satisfied; where nothing remains but to

3. Having allowed ourselves the licence of studying Mme de Villedieu, who much preceded Mme de Lafayette historically, we must nonetheless observe in this respect the limitations imposed by the title of this study.
choose another partner and begin again — where inconstancy is regarded not as a mark of human weakness but as inevitable or even desirable, is even more articulate than in such works as the Journal Amoureux.

An axiom found in the Voyage de Fontainebleau sums up this mentality admirably as follows: "il est pourtant vrai que les amants les plus fidèles cessent presque toujours de l'être dès qu'ils sont heureux." This represents a mentality given to pleasure, where unpleasant truth is shunned together with morality itself: hence the final euphemistic phrase referring to a lover's satisfaction on possessing his mistress. If the writer is at pains not to shock the reader by an unpleasant truth — so that the overall pleasing effect shall not be marred, these works are, notwithstanding, characterized by an impartial observation of the effects of love, expressed thus in the Voyage de Fontainebleau: "Deux choses qui paraissent fort opposées font naître tôt ou tard, du dégoût dans le mariage; ce sont l'obligation et la liberté de s'aider. Nous sommes tous sujets naturellement à un libertinage du cœur, qui nous donne de la répugnance pour tout ce qui nous est permis."

Don Gabriel, who, although husband of a beautiful woman still seeks his pleasure elsewhere in Le Double Cocu, echoes this morality in his turn: "il n'est pas de femme que j'aimasse plus que la mienne, si elle était la femme d'un autre; mais c'est ma femme, et le titre seul est dégoûtant pour tous les maris de mon humeur. Ne croyez pas que ce soit caprice, la plupart des hommes en sont logés là, et je connais une infinité de dames qui les imitent."

That a vaguely hedonistic philosophy is preached in these three novels will be readily admitted. What of the other five which vied with them for the attentions of the public of 1678? L'Ambitieuse Grenadine by the same Préchac whose Voyage de Fontainebleau has

4. Voyage de Fontainebleau, p.59. For exact bibliographical details, see bibliography given at the end of this work.
5. ibid., pp.86-87.
already been referred to has already been the subject of critical 
comment. The interest of *L'Ambiteuse Grenadine* lies in the nature 
of its realism, that of psychological observation, utterly unrelated to 
the grosser realism of a Scarron and bearing close resemblances to the 
type of psychological analysis indulged in by the La Rochefoucauld 
coterie.

If these four works indicate, each in its own way, the current 
interest in reality, whether that of the senses or that of psychological 
motivation, according to the moral aim of the book (and the moral 
standpoint of the writer), the other works which remain to be mentioned 
hark back to earlier ideals.

First of all, the indefatigable Préchac, who, to borrow a phrase 
once applied by Boileau to Mlle de Scudéry, "suait l'encre à tous les 
poires", published yet another work in this year, *Yolande de Sicile*, 
which indisputably belongs to the précieux tradition through the rarity 
of the sentiments expressed" and the total lack of material realism. 
*Les Aventures de Renaud et d'Armide*, from the pen of the veteran Méré, 
joins *Yolande de Sicile* in testifying to the unabated - if somewhat 
restrained - life of the old précieux models. It should not be 
inferred from this that these works resemble in every detail 
*Le Grand Cyrus*. They are, however, consins-german to the Scuderian 
novel in that the chief preoccupation is with perfection and the 
love portrayed essentially pure.

Even such a schematic survey of this year's output as is possible 
within the bounds of this study, should be sufficient to demonstrate 
on the one hand the predominance of an interest in reality amongst 
works of known authorship. We do not presume, however, to attribute 
such an interest to Mme de Villedieu's influence - a study of the 
preceding ten years in the novel would be required to prove this.

7. *inter alios*, D. Dallas, op.cit.
8. *e.g. L'Ambiteuse Grenadine*, p.34, "... ils étaient l'un et l'autre 
   si occupés, le chevalier de son amour, et Sibille de son ambition, 
   qu'ils ne distinguaient pas la difference de leurs sentiments".
The conclusion which we are entitled to draw is that these works are much more akin in tone to her works than to the *Princesse de Clèves.*

In spite of the realistic trend of Brémond's and some of Préchac's works, the old idealistic novel beloved of the Précieux still remains in vestigial form. However, such a summary as this will doubtless have had the effect of attenuating the very real differences which existed amongst these works. The only feature which all have in common is a commendable brevity, compared with the prolix creations of twenty years earlier.

Of the eight works which we have consulted of the year 1679, none bears any appreciable trace of the influence of the *Princesse de Clèves.* So much has already been ascertained by previous critics, but what of the relative importance of the types of fictional creation which had appeared in the previous year? If we insisted, inordinately it might have seemed, upon the mondain 'realistic' type of writing produced by Brémond and Préchac, in order to point out both Mme de Villedieu's similarity to it and also its relative numerical importance, we should point out the continued existence of this sort of composition. Beaucourt's *Le Courier d'Amour* continues in this same vein of realism, stronger still, more explicit than in Mme de Villedieu's novel. The style of this work, together with the implied morality, is exemplified in the following passages: "Il était honnête homme, et avait pour maxime qu'il est permis de se plaindre des rigueurs de sa maîtresse, mais qu'on ne peut sans indiscrétion faire confidence des faveurs qu'on en reçoit." ¹⁰ So much for these suave heroes' code of behaviour, their morality is rendered thus: "Tous les soins que les hommes nous rendent sont intéressés et quand ils connaissent qu'une femme n'est pas d'humeur à faire autant de chemin qu'ils voudraient, ils la négligent, et ne lui donnent que leurs heures perdues." ¹¹

Diversity is indeed the key word of this year; no two novels could be accurately classified as being strikingly similar in theme and inspiration. Préchac, prolific and versatile as ever, continues to exploit the vein begun in *L'Ambitieuse Grenadine* with a further study of eminently bourgeois manners and morals entitled *L'Illustre Parisienne*.  

Bizarre is the only epithet which could be applied to *Le Triomphe de l'Amitié*, again by Préchac, which amounts to the practical illustration of a précieux 'question d'amour': should a husband suffer his best friend to share his wife's attentions? The answer is here resolved in the affirmative, hence the title.

For the first time during the period under discussion, there reappears a theme of marvellous fecundity and glorious lineage; what may for convenience be termed the précieux oriental novel, in this case *Bajazet* by one Rousseau de la Vallette or de la Valette. Who can forget Mlle de Scudéry's 'penchant' for the near-Orient? A taste for unrealistic situations and a banal intrigue — in fine, a rejection of material and moral reality — is here fully indulged in, for the first of many occasions.

If 1679 brought forth nothing but the most trivial examples of occasional literature together with the *vetern war horses*, the following year in its turn presents little that is of interest in indicating the paths which the novel was to take.

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12. For a criticism of this work, see D. Dallas, op.cit., pp. 73-76.
13. This author uses both forms indifferently in his dedicatory epistles.
14. R.C. Williams, op.cit., lists 17 works by known authors for this year. Examination has, however, proved that his classification of works as prose fiction is in many cases inaccurate. *Les Amours de Catulle* and *Les Amours de Tibulle*, works of history and not of fiction, are in any case not two works but one, published under different titles. *La Valise ouverte* is not in fact a novel but a collection of letters. *Alosie ou les Amours de Mme M.T.P.* is not available for public consultation and *Le Voyage du Chevalier errant* and *Suite des Voyages de M. Tavemier* cannot be found in any catalogue for this year.
What, if any, are the predominant types of fictional literature produced during this year? It would seem that the 'galant' mode enjoys an ascendancy — although a slight one — over the others. Préchac's Nouvelles galantes du temps et à la mode, Brémont's Mémoires galants, ou les aventures amoureuses d'une personne de qualité may be placed in this category as may also — albeit with certain reservations — Préchac's Le Gris de Lin, Histoire galante.

'La galanterie' has already formed the subject of discussion in a previous section and it will of necessity prove a recurrent theme throughout this study. One must bear in mind the significance of 'galant' and 'la galanterie' in the title of a work doubtless intended to act as a bait to prospective readers and promising the portrayal of the type of amorous dalliance that characterized the Journal Amoureux, for instance. If the term still retained its original meaning — referring to that which appertained to court-life — it had come particularly, as B. Quemada points out in his semantic study, to mean that which appertained to love, and by extension, that which appertained to illicit love.

Thus it is that the term 'galant' within a title may lead the reader to expect a story, not simply of love, but more especially of the sort of love which gravitated around the poles of sensuality and refinement. This latter element constitutes an essential feature of these works: 'la galanterie' as treated by the writers under discussion rarely if ever degenerates into the realm of the scatological.

These works represent to a considerable degree the world of polite society, with its own empirical laws regarding conduct. If pleasure is preached, corruption is yet absent and the works bear, in maxims scattered liberally throughout the texts, traces of this type of 'mondain' thinking.

15. B. Quemada, op.cit. It will be noted that the greater part of examples used for this study are taken from works in the tradition of the Journal Amoureux.

16. Examples of the maxims used by this society in their moral conduct abound in the texts, e.g. Le Gris de Lin, p.60, "... un honnête homme ne doit jamais faire de pareilles confidences à sa femme", p.197; "... une honnête femme ne doit jamais s'embrasser des amours de son mari". Both maxims refer to the fact that a husband has confessed (continued overleaf)
What of the other novels? The 'précieux' type of production such as Rousseau de la Vallette's Bajazet of the preceding year, reappears in diverse garbs, notably in Frédéric de Sicile, and Vaumorière's Adélaïde de Champagne. It may be noted here that the authors of these ultra-idealistic creations much affected the Middle Ages for the framework of their plots. Let it be immediately understood that the cadre of these works is, however, as spurious as the sentiments expressed. One remains as little convinced by the picture of France in the reign of Louis VII as by that of Sicily at a similar epoch. Whilst it would be dangerous to assert that all novels set in the Middle Ages are ipso facto in the tradition of Le Grand Cyrus, it will be noted that experience has hitherto shown the choice of cadre to be indicative of the ethics portrayed: thus an escape from material reality is matched by a representation of a moral ideal.

Finally, we have Préchac's Voyage de la Reine d'Espagne, Nouvelle galante, which neither has anything to do with the court of Charles II of Spain and his young queen, Marie-Thérèse, nor is it 'galant' in the sense discussed above. It is, briefly, an account of court life, imbued with the worldly morality which was then current.

The year 1687 is marked by no outstanding innovation amongst the novels now under discussion. Of the few works which gain a place in this study, Beaucourt's, Caprices de l'Amour, written in the same vein as Le double cocu, Bremont's work of 1678, presents a slight interest in that the morality preached therein may be considered a riposte to the question posed by the Princesse de Clèves. Beaucourt indicates his love for another woman to his wife and that she has vowed to help him, in the hope of winning back his affections.

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17. See Section II, chapter I. This work has also been attributed — erroneously, we feel — to Mlle Bernard.
18. Out of a total of 13 works listed for this year by R.C. Williams, 9 were published anonymously and have not been subsequently identified.
19. This work is erroneously stated by R.C. Williams to have first appeared in 1678. The first edition extant in the Bibliothèque Nationale is of 1681, privilège, le 24 mai, 1678. Achevé d'imprimer, le 31 avril, 1681.
the gulf which separates him from Mme de Lafayette in his handling of the theme of conjugal infidelity. One may detect an oblique reference to the work of 1678 in a telling paraphrase of the rhetorical question in which Mme de Clèves sums up her disbelief and anguish: "Vous allez voir, Mesdames, que les hommes conservent rarement de la passion dans les engagements éternels." 20

The indefatigable Préchac continues to exploit the vein of the précieux oriental novel in La Princesse de Fez to which he adds a somewhat unusual story of true love in an historical setting, Le beau Polonais. Finally, Marie d'Anjou, reine de Majorque represents an addition to the idealistic novel - which we have for convenience dubbed précieux - set in the Middle Ages.

If 1681 may be dismissed almost without comment, 1682 is more worthy of attention in that it sees the appearance of two works by Chavigny, who published all his works - or at least all which have come down to us - in Holland. His literary activities having been confined to the years 1682 and 1683, we shall discuss all his works simultaneously. 21 They are, L'Amante artificieuse ou le rival de soi-même and L'Amour parjure ou la fidélité à l'épreuve, of 1682 and La galante hermaphrodite, Nouvelle amoureuse and Octavie ou l'épouse fidèle, of the following year.

The works are interesting, not so much in themselves, although they are far from being amongst the duller literary creations of the time, but because they are, by any standards, 'irregular' novels. The themes treated differ from any in the novels previously discussed.


21. Attempts to discover further details relating to the Sieur de Chavigny's life and works have proved fruitless. It will be noted that the greater part of the works under discussion were published in France, with the royal permission. There appears to be nothing in Chavigny's novels which would oblige him to have them published abroad.
L'Amant parjure is a love-story ending in the Dutch East Indies, not with a final reunion but with the lover marrying a native woman. L'Amante artificieuse is not only a delicious comedy of manners, but also, one suspects, an accurate description of life in a garrison town. Octavie, ou l'épouse fidèle is a just and moderate plea for a young girl's disposing of her own hand and heart.

Lacking in artistic unity though Chavigny's works may be, his work has much in common, in its better moments, with that of Robert Challes, whose predecessor he was by some thirty years. Chavigny is essentially an independent writer, owing little to predecessors: Préchac's bourgeois novels, such as L'Illustre Parisienne, are much more self-consciously works of literature.

To return briefly to 1682, a work stands out amongst the ranks of nondescript hack writings. It is Le Napolitain, ou le défenseur de sa maîtresse, by one de Germont. If it merits attention, it is because it represents a divergence from the usual trend of composition of the time. In this period of rampant mediocrity in the novel, a genre still very much in its infancy, there appear to have been brief flashes of originality, of inspiration, which have extinguished themselves immediately, and of which this is one.

Thus, in this morass of 'histoires galantes' and of effete précieux productions, we find a work which although composed in the stylized metaphor of the seventeenth century, describes the sentiments in such a way as will not be heard again for many years to come. Two examples have been chosen to demonstrate the tone; first of all the lover's lament on the death of his mistress: "Que les insensibles sont heureux! Ils ne goûtent point le bien, il est vrai, mais qu'est-ce que le plus grand bien de la vie? Les plaisirs

22. The first edition of Les Illustres Françaises is of 1712.
23. Several of the works listed by R.G. Williams cannot be accurately classified as fiction, e.g. Préchac's Les Désordres de la bassette and his Querelle des dieux sur la grossesse de Mme la Dauphine. Le Fameux Voyageur, by the same author, is a comedy of manners, dealing with worldly clerics. Of Le Noble's Privilèges du cocuage, the title is self-explanatory.
languissent, ils rebutent s'ils durent plus d'un jour, et souvent ils sont mêlées de peines; ..."24 Further on, the unfortunate lover describes his amorous rêveries thus: "... il y en a quatre [heures] que je suis à ma fenêtre, jouissant de la plus belle vue du monde. Tout est tranquille dans la nature, et moi je pleure cette tranquillité bien heureuse, dont je jouissais aussi avant de vous aimer."25

A freak of literary creation? It would temerarious to assert that any work of literature can rise entirely from the void. One is reminded in these emotional outpourings of many of the passages of the Lettres Portuguaises, real love-letters written by an unfortunate nun who had been loved and subsequently deserted by a French officer, and published some years earlier. The same natural tone prevails, the same intensity of emotion, and we may very well suppose that this obscure author, de Germont, took the Lettres as his model. One might add, however, that only one copy of Le Napolitain exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and that study of the novels of subsequent years prove it to have had no immediate successor. May it not then be considered a final tribute to a work which has had a considerable impact on the refined reading public of a few years before, but which was not sufficiently in tune with current tastes and moral aspirations; which of itself had not sufficient power to act as a positive influence upon literary contemporaries?

The only work first published in 1683 which claims our immediate attention is Vanel's Divertissements de Cassandre et de Diane ou les nouvelles de Castillo et de Taleyro. As the subtitle indicates, the scene is set in Spain. Evidently inspired by Italian and Spanish models, these 'contes' are of a highly moral flavour and at the same time

25. ibid., p.85.
26. Of the other works listed by R.C. Williams as being published for the first time in 1683, Vénus dans le Cloître has not been consulted in view of the fact that it has been consigned to the 'Enfer' of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Courtilz de Sandras's Mémoires contenant divers événements remarquables arrivés sous le règne de Louis le Grand (Continued overleaf)
indicate both a continuing interest in things Spanish and a possible model for some of Mme d'Aulnoy's Spanish contes.

1684 is, again, a lean year for the novel. Once the ground has been cleared of such works as have been misleadingly classified as novels, there remains only Préchac's *Cara Mustapha*, where the Frenchman's conception of the harem, that is to say, the Frenchman who is writing for a refined audience and who is imbued with the teaching of the Scudéry school, is illustrated.

Passing on quickly to 1685, we are immediately confronted by Préchac's *Le Grand Sophi*, nouvelle allégorique and his *Seraskier bacha, Nouvelle du temps*. One may presume this increased vogue of tales of the Ottoman court to have been given a fillip by the war in which France and Austria were then engaged against the Turks. It would not, however, be unjust to state that Préchac's work, although quantitatively considerable, is qualitatively of minor importance. Eminently an opportunist, he would seem to have taken advantage of current interest in things Turkish to produce unconvincing stories of the seventeenth century 'honnête homme', on his best behaviour, masquerading under a turban. (cont.)

cannot justifiably be accounted as fiction. Préchac's *Le Secret, nouvelles historiques* and his *Relation d'un voyage fait en Provence* do not find a place in this discussion; the one because it is a moral treatise extolling the virtue of discretion, interspersed with pages of sycophantic flattery of Louis XIV, the other because it is simply a travel journal. As for Fontenelle's *Lettres galantes* de M. le Chevalier d'Her, although classified as fiction by R.C. Williams, is in reality the expression of an Epicureanism such as Saint-Evremond professed. Composed in epistolatory form, it contains many such maxims as the following, "L'art des conversations amoureuses, est qu'elles ne soient pas toujours amoureuses." (p.132)

27. Pélissier's *Histoire de l'origine de la royauté et du premier établissement de la grandeur royale* more nearly resembles an historical work than a work of fiction. Saint-Real's *Cesarion, ou entretiens divers* is a discussion on practical morality.

28. As the subtitle indicates, this work is an allegory on Louis XIV's assuming personal power.

29. The moral tone is admirably exemplified by the following passages. The first refers to the hero, who: "... se fit une délicatesse de l'épouser, et crut qu'il ne pouvait le faire sans trahir son ami, et se rendre indigne de son amitié." (p.237). The same type of sentiments are expressed again, thus: "Il fallut à mourir de douleur, lors qu'il fit réflexion qu'il avait perdu tout le mérite d'une longue et tendre passion, par une délicatesse mal fondée." (p.253)
At some earlier point in the year, 30 Préchac had already produced *L'Illustre Génoise*, nouvelle galante, having many features in common with *L'Illustre Parisienne* and of an eminently virtuous tone.

Vanel, whose *Divertissements*... had appeared in 1683, ventured into print once again with the *Histoire du temps, ou journal galant*, which set itself the highly commendable task of castigating vice and, more particularly, of punishing love. 31 However, one gains the impression on reading the work, that the author's aim, far from being that of edifying his public, is simply to amuse them with tales of love, where the emotions are happily guarded by reason. 32. The result is a study of considerable moral realism. The vices of the society which Vanel chose to portray are those of gaming, particularly amongst women; and, on the score of sexual morality, chevaliers who are willing to play the gigolo. Some of the anecdotes, particularly, indicate the reverse of the medal of late seventeenth century French society, with sinister tales of jealousy and vitriol-throwing. 33.

30. A fact which can be deduced from the author's preface to *Le Seraskier bacha*.
31. See, for instance, p. II, "... ce n'est pas de l'amitié conjugale... dont nous craignons le désordre,... nous parlons de l'amour qui peut naître entre deux personnes de condition libre."
32. The author subscribes to the conception of love of the 'honnêtes gens' thus: "... on peut dire la même chose de l'amour, ... il rend civils et galants, les amants qui ont les inclinations honnêtes, et devient la source de la plus infâme débauche quand il remplit le coeur d'un libertin ou d'un efféminé." (p. I23, see also p. 373.)
33. A typical example of the tone is as follows: "Il fut bien étonné d'y trouver sa femme, et encore plus quand elle le pria sans s'émouvoir d'entrer dans sa garde-robe, parce qu'elle attendait un banquier qui lui faisait du bien."
Not content with *Le Seraskier bacha*, Préchac returns to the attack in 1686, with *Le Comte de Tékéli*, where once again he exploits the theme, so ably expounded by *dame de Villedieu*, that love is the basis of all the great events of history— in this case, a pure love destined to be unrequited.

The last work from Préchac's pen to which we shall have immediate occasion to refer is *Les intrigues découvertes, ou le caractère de divers esprits*. Such reference as must be made is brief but damning; the work being a lamentable example of the would-be literary outpourings of a mediocre hack-writer bent on capturing official recognition and favour.

Having thus completed this summary account of the novels of known authorship which appeared between the years 1678 and 1687, let us now survey the relative importance, numerically speaking, of the different types which have been referred to. The importance of the 'historical' background is the most clearly discernible feature of fictional creation during this period. Apart from the works which, in their conception of history, follow in the footsteps of Mlle de Scéry, more recent history, both Oriental and European, is taken as subject matter.

34. A theme which he may probably have borrowed from an anecdote in Vanel's *Histoire du temps*.

35. Typical of the basest sycophantic tone is the following statement on the court: "... le séjour le plus agréable qu'un honnête homme puisse choisir... la cour de Louis le Grand est une école de vertu où chacun fait son devoir, à l'exemple du maître qui s'aquitte si dignement du sien." (pp. 24-25.)

36. The number of novels with a specifically historical background amounts to 24, more than half the total. Other works, difficult to classify, such is their irregularity, examples of occasional writings destined for the perusal of leisured readers, occupy a minor place.
The novels set in distant lands or at a point remote in time, testify to the tenacity of the idealistic cult. More important to us, however, is the growing use of recent history, indicating as it does an increasing interest in reality. History, whose primary function was formerly to satisfy the demand for nobility of subject, would now appear to satisfy the demand for a greater reality.

An analysis of the literary output, in order to fulfil a useful function, must, however, go beyond a mere assertion of numerical superiority. One may easily show how the novel, at this point in its development, revolves around the opposite poles of realism and idealism. These latter terms, however, require careful explanation. Let us, therefore, look more particularly at the significance of the term 'realism' in the context of this study.

First of all, there are the three novels by Préchac, L'Ilustre Grenadine, L'Ilustre Parisienne, and L'Ilustre Génoise, where the cadre is neither historical nor that of the highest society. Similarly there are the four works of the mysterious Chavigny, where the reality portrayed is eminently that of late seventeenth century France. These novels, clumsily constructed though they may be, portend the 'bourgeois' novel, both in their setting and tone — especially in their lack of moral pretensions demonstrated by the absence of such accepted moral notion as 'l'âgloire' and 'le mérite'.
More important to this study, perhaps, is the realism often portrayed against an historical background, or at least, a background of high society. The main conclusion which one reaches from studying these novels is the importance attached to pleasure: To love is attributed all power; the chief aim and function of love being that of giving pleasure: this is the significance of the hegemony of love in these works. We have already discussed the implications of such a conception of love, precluding passion: it remains only for us to draw attention to these indications of the motive forces of this society - an interest in reality and the pursuit of pleasure.

One may not from the evidence presented, assert that there is an appreciable sense of unity amongst these works, whose sole feature in common is the desire of their authors to please their public. The moral tone of these works may be invariably and accurately ascertained by studying the moral notions which are referred to: the use of such words as 'la délicatesse' or 'la bienséance', or the particular force of such words as 'le mérite' or 'la gloire'. The 'mondain' literature in which we are particularly interested is characterized on the one hand by a continued use of such notions, denoting a continuing - although qualified - interest at least in superficial morality; and on the other by the lack of moral significance of such terms as 'la gloire', denoting an interest in pleasure and refinement which is the hallmark of this society.

Having thus referred to what we consider to be the signs of an interest in reality - and more particularly, the polite reality which still observed certain conventions - it now remains for us to deal
finally and briefly with the question of historical novels. In view of the fact that both the *Princesse de Clèves* and Mme de Villedieu's works have a—more or less nominal—historical background, let us look at those works which have definite historical pretensions, apart from those which have already been discussed, in order to ascertain the respective influence of "Féliciane" and "Clémence".

In the first place, Courtilz de Sandras, apparently a still more energetic writer than Préchac, composed several works during the period under discussion, namely *Les intrigues amoureuses de la cour de France* and *Les conquêtes amoureuses du Grand Alcandre dans les Pays Bas*, of 1684; and *Les dames dans leur naturel* and *La Vie de l'Amiral de Coligny* of 1686. The most cursory examination of these works would be sufficient to render one conscious of the dissimilarity between them and those of Mme de Lafayette or Mme de Villedieu. Courtilz de Sandras, as critics of his writings have subsequently commented, adroitly mixes fact and fiction. His conception of history is eminently anecdotic history, court gossip, backstairs gossip: all that would be susceptible of pleasing his readers. If his aim is in this respect similar to that of Mme de Villedieu, the tone of his works is yet radically different. The element of truth, or what could pass off as truth, is strong; the factual tone detracts from the quality of the narrative in the sense that such love incidents as there are, although sometimes of a salacious nature, do not form the sole raison d'être of the anecdotes. If Courtilz de Sandras was interested in showing human baseness, particularly that of men— and women—in high places, he was nonetheless interested in human beings and in everyday events.

Although Courtilz de Sandras represents a mode of thought and an incipient literary genre whose debt to Mmes de Lafayette and de Villedieu is infinitesimal, there remain other 'historical' novels whose debt may be reasonably supposed to be somewhat greater. They are

Vaumorière's Mademoiselle de Tournon and La Comtesse d'Isembourg, by Saliez, published in 1678; Le Viceroi de Catalogne by Brémond and Casimir, Roi de Pologne, by Rousseau de la Vallette, of the following year; La Duchesse de Milan of 1682; and finally Mademoiselle de Jarnac of 1685.

These works have been singled out from the others principally because, in their treatment of history, they show a closer kinship to Mme de Lafayette's technique than all those discussed hitherto. However, examination of their contents is destined to prove disappointing. Although they represent an escape from the Soudéry tradition and, for the most part, treat history otherwise than as an excuse for a recital of amorous adventures, the particular truth of Mme de Lafayette — that of the heart — is nowhere repeated.

A feature which they hold in common, however, is an emphasis on virtue, and particularly upon virtue which brings sufferings in its wake. La Duchesse de Milan is perhaps the best example of this theme, as the duchess, married off for political reasons to a man whom she does not love and who is maliciously and wrongly accused of infidelity, calmly drinks the cup of poison proffered by her husband.

These works, few as they are compared with the general fictional output of the time, do in fact bear little resemblance to the Princesse de Cleves. Furthermore, it will be noted, the greater number of examples chosen were published at the beginning rather than the end of the period under discussion.

An important point, doubtless, in such an examination as this, where only works whose authors have been satisfactorily identified, are reviewed, is that of a sense of unity within each writer's work. Little space is required, however, to point out that if the novels appear to lack a sense of cohesion, this lack of precision is more than matched by the lack of evidence of a guiding principle or sense of purpose within the works of Fréchac, for instance, the most prolific of the men authors of the time. As we have seen, he was capable of writing two entirely dissimilar works within the same year.
We were led, in the first place, to adopt the somewhat pedestrian method of examining the novel year by year because we were confronted by a lack of tangible evidence of development towards a particular goal, a particular sphere of emphasis. In the very year in which the Princesse de Clèves was published, we encountered examples of almost all the types which recur with monotonous regularity between 1678 and 1687.

In these sometimes moderately successful, sometimes gauche, gropings, from this lack of direction or sense of unity, one is yet able to see some positive features. Whilst it would doubtless be incorrect to attribute the overall emphasis on pleasure to Mme de Villedieu's influence, it is still true to say that it is the features of her works, rather than those of Mme de Lafayette, which we can discern in these novels, reflecting as they do the aims and aspirations of polite society.
SECTION II


Interest in material reality in her works — lack of
symbolical realism such as was present in La Françoise
— the preoccupation of love as a involving, innocent — the

1 J. F. Delars, Le Roman Français de 1660 à 1680, Paris,
1932.
CHAPTER I.

ETHICS IN MADEMOISELLE BERNARD'S NOVELS: 1687-1696.

Lack of interest in material reality in her works — lack of psychological realism such as was present in La Princesse de Clèves. Conception of love as ennobling, innocent — the protagonists' purity modifies the moral dilemma — the relations between the protagonists and society indicates a strong didactic aim — the significance of 'le devoir', 'la raison' — the negative quality of the drama fosters the growth of a sentimental element — love is conceived of as 'Tendre sur Inclination'. Whilst pre-eminent virtue restricts the scope of the drama, it also evades the latent problem of 'Tendre sur Inclination' — the balance which is maintained in Mme Bernard's novels owing to her didactic aim, which causes her to present still militant protagonists and attenuates the sentimental aspect. Indications of psychological observation which, applied to the moral reasoning, modifies slightly the idealistic tone.

A critic of the novel from 1660-1680 has stated that Mme de Lafayette has no true literary following and that Mme de Villedieu is the true ancestress of the historical novel which was to follow. The implications of this assertion would be of profound consequence to this study, if it were true. Let us see, therefore, in the light of the foregoing examination, where the new generation of women writers, now appearing, most

2. For biographical details of the writers treated in this section, see appendix I.
nearly resembles 'Peliciane' and 'Dinamise.'

The writer whose first known work opens this section, Cathérine Bernard, a niece of the great Corneille, has been hailed by both Dr. Storer and, in more hyperbolic terms, by Eugène Asse as a worthy successor of Mme de Lafayette.

What of the actual intrigues which form the framework of Mlle Bernard's three novels, Eléonor d'Yvrée, Le Comte d'Amboise and Inès de Cordoue? Her maiden work, Eléonor d'Yvrée, is set nominally in the Middle Ages; nominally only, as local colour is completely absent from the story. Apart from a brief mention of a rebellion instigated by Eléonor's father, a factor which is responsible for the train of events, the only other historical detail is that of the meeting between the Emperor Henry II and Robert II of France: an event which is cursorily described in the language

3. Fédéric (sic) de Sicile, 1680, has been variously attributed to Mlle Bernard and to Pradon. The authorship of this work, composed in effete, précieux style and lacking any specific characteristics, would be difficult to establish. It contributes nothing to the novel.


7. Le Comte d'Amboise, Nouvelle Galante, La Haye, 1689, 2 t. en 1 vol. in-12.


applied to court spectacles of the late seventeenth century.\(^{10}\)

In her second novel, *Le Comte d'Amboise*, Mlle Bernard chooses the epoch which immediately followed that of *La Princesse de Clèves*; that of François II. The question of a deliberate attempt to re-create the tone of the latter novel inevitably arises in the brief outline which Mlle Bernard gives. Mlle Bernard may well have had her model before her when she wrote: "... sa cour était composée d'une partie de ces Hommes illustres, qui avaient formé celle de Henri Second; et les Dames avaient autant d'agrément, que les Hommes avaient de valeur."\(^{11}\) Similarly, the description of Sansac calls to mind that of Nemours: just as the latter was "... un chef-d'oeuvre de la nature; ce qu'il avait de moins admirable, c'était d'être l'homme du monde le mieux fait et le plus beau..."\(^{12}\); so Sansac is described as being: "né pour plaire, et ses plus belles qualités n'étaient pas d'être homme de la cour le mieux fait et le plus spirituel".\(^{13}\)

For her final novel, Mlle Bernard would seemingly have deferred to the taste of the time, pre-eminently in favour of things Spanish, choosing as setting the Spain of Philip II, Don Carlos and Elisabeth of France. Once again, however, the scene is set perfunctorily, thus: "... sa cour était devenue galante et les divertissements n'étaient pas bannis."\(^{14}\). Apart from a reference to Spanish shutters and a particular sort of lock which the authoress supposes to have been invented by the jealous Spanish husband, general local

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13. Both men, it will be noted, were destined to captivate the heroine to the detriment of the chosen suitor and husband.
colour is conspicuously absent. The atmosphere of the court itself is left vague: of its pastimes, we read of Elizabeth's taste for conversational groups à la française, a pretext for the inclusion of two 'contes de fées.' The redoubtable Duchesse d'Albe is mentioned in passing, as is Don Juan. If this scant information represents the sum of local colour in Mlle Bernard's works, we may justifiably presume that the centre of her interest lies elsewhere. An indication of this interest is given in her description of a court entertainment. "On ne respirait que la joie, et on ne cherchait que les plaisirs à la cour........ Si un cavalier se rencontrait dans la même pensée avec une Dame, il était obligé du lui donner une fête. On demanda des avis pour Inès; et Léonor .... conseilla à Inès d'aimer celui qui l'aimerait le mieux; c'était l'avis du Marquis; et selon les règles du jeu, il donna une fête à Léonor: la fête fut magnifique et galante; une partie de la cour y était, ....".15. What interested Mlle Bernard in the court fête was not its gallantry, but the underlying interplay of emotions: in this case the villainess of the piece, who, in love with the hero, is trying in vain to awake in him some requital of her passion. In the three works at present under discussion, detail of exterior description, wherever it exists, does so by virtue of its usefulness in painting the emotional drama.

In fine, Mlle Bernard's work is characterized, in the choice of material and mode of presentation, by a neglect of material reality which robs her writings of any true historical significance. In this, she subscribes to the literary convention of Mme de Lafayette, as indeed, in the essential feature of her choice of subject, its nobility.16.

15. ibid., p. 40.
Nevertheless, although the court is the constant background, whether it be that of the Emperor Henry II, of François II, or of Philip II, there are certain essential differences between the court-picture as presented by Mme de Lafayette and Mlle Bernard. Let us recall once more the opening phrase of *Le Comte d'Amboise*, previously compared with a similar description in *La Princesse de Clèves*: "sa cour était composée d'une partie de ces Hommes illustres, qui avaient formé celle de Henri Second: et les Dames avaient autant d'agrément, que les Hommes avaient de valeur." 17. Where is the 'galanterie', the 'ambition', evoked by Mme de Lafayette? We look for it in vain in Mlle Bernard's works, where not only is there a lack of local colour 'per se', but also a lack of the undercurrent of psychological reality of petty intrigue and refined corruption, the unseen presence in *La Princesse de Clèves*.

Before developing this theme -- of primary importance to this study -- let us look briefly at the plots in Mlle Bernard's works, which will be seen to be characterized by dramatic intensity and concentration on psychological detail.

Eléonor, in *Eléonor d'Yvrée*, 18. daughter of an unsuccessful rebel and a supposed orphan, falls in love with, and is loved in return by the Duc de Misnie: a love which is destined to be unhappy owing to conflicting family interests. The lovers are first separated by the Duke's mother, whilst Eléonor is subsequently promised in marriage to the Comte de Betelois, to whom her father was much indebted. Their love, innocent in its inception, is rendered further impossible by the fact that Misnie, during the misunderstanding, engaged himself to Matilde, Eleonor's friend and daughter of her protectress. Thus the dénouement of the story comes about when Eléonor renounces her love for Misnie in order to

17. op.cit., p.109.
fulfil the dual obligation towards Reteloiis and Matilde.

Some of the salient features of the moral characterisation of Éléonor d'Yvrée, the active nature of the protagonists, essentially aware of their moral obligations, are to be found in *The Comte d'Amboise*, as indeed, in *Inès de Cordoue*. The intrigue of Mlle Bernard's second novel differs as little in essential detail of moral construction from her first as it does from her last. In this instance it is the hero, *Amboise*, who must renounce his claim to Mlle de Roye, on no less than two occasions, because she has already met and fallen in love with his rival, Sansac. When, subsequent to having married Mlle de Roye — a marriage motivated by 'dépit amoureux' on her part — he receives an anonymous letter leading him to believe that she has contracted the marriage whilst still in love with Sansac, such is the sensitivity of *Amboise'*s feelings that he dies of chagrin. There follows an 'éclaircissement' between *Amboise* and Sansac, during which they discover that their fatal misunderstanding was contrived by a third party. However, before Mme *d'Amboise* can overcome her scruples, Sansac is killed in the religious troubles.

The intrigue of *Inès de Cordoue* follows the same pattern as that of *Éléonor d'Yvrée* in that Inès and the Marquis de Lerme fall in love whilst both are free to dispose of hand and heart. The inevitable contretemps occurs when — as Matilde with Msnie — Léonor de Silva falls in love with Lerme. Through the ascendancy which Léonor acquires over Inès's father (on his falling in love with her), she obstructs the marriage between the lovers. In order to save his life, Inès must renounce Lerme for ever and marry the ageing Comte de Las Torres. Finally, when Inès, upon

20. ibid., pp.3-102.
the death of her husband, is free to marry Lerme, she is prevented from doing so by social pressure. The story concludes on a sombre note with Inès's retirement into a convent, whilst the after-effects of a self-inflicted wound hasten the end of the inconsolable Lerme.

Even such brief résumés of the plot as are possible within the limits of this discussion should have been sufficient to demonstrate that, whatever the issues at stake, the protagonists are shown at grips with society in an all-absorbing conflict. One is reminded of Fontenelle's comment upon Eléonor d'Yvrée: 21 "C'est un petit sujet, peu chargé d'intrigues, mais où les sentiments sont traités avec toute la finesse possible. Or, sans prétendre ravaler le mérite qu'il y a à bien nouer une intrigue, et à disposer les événements de sorte qu'il en résulte certains effets surprenants, je vous avoue que je suis beaucoup plus touché de voir régner dans le roman une certaine science du cœur, telle qu'elle est, par exemple, dans La Princesse de Clèves." 22

Nevertheless, equally apparent in these résumés should be evidence of a fundamental difference in the moral dilemma in Mme de Lafayette's novel and those of Mlle Bernard: a difference which is attributable primarily — if not wholly — to their different conception of love. For Mlle Bernard, love is essentially innocent:

21. Fontenelle, also related to the Corneilles, was Mlle Bernard's cousin. The Abbé de Laporte, in particular, claims that Mlle Bernard and Fontenelle collaborated in the first and last works discussed here. The possibility of collaboration is of little interest to us: the works produced under Mlle Bernard's auspices being sufficiently different from the Lettres du Chevalier de Her for us to regard them as being from her pen. In addition, it should be remembered that Fontenelle was also a Precieux.
it is not without significance that on each occasion in her works, the protagonists fall in love before they are engaged elsewhere. It is this very conception which endows her writings with a quality of pristine purity. With what care she traces the first hesitant steps of incipient passion: in *Éléonor d'Yvreé*, for instance: "Leur liaison était presque toute formée, et ils n'avaient plus qu'à se dire qu'ils s'aimaient quand ils se le dirent". When Mlle de Roye meets Sansac for the first time in the summer house: "leurs yeux se rencontrèrent plus d'une fois d'une manière qui la fit rougir, et qui lui fit ensuite éviter ceux de Monsieur de Sansac." Similarly, when Inès has been saved from drowning by Lerme, to whom she has as yet scarcely spoken: "... elle songea que c'était apparemment lui qui l'avait tirée du péril, la joie d'être obligée à un homme qu'elle avait tant de penchant à aimer, fut son premier mouvement; mais cette même pensée lui donnait de la crainte." If Mlle Bernard conceives of love as being essentially pure and noble — within the breasts of the noble — she must, and does, believe it to be capable of self-abnegation. To what must we ascribe the renunciation which Éléonor effects of Misnie, the Comte d'Amboise of Mlle de Roye; and on two occasions again, Inès de Cordoue of Lerme, if not this? It is, in fine, this theme of inviolable purity which orders the tone of her works. Where, in the texts, is to be found the tone of mistrust, of disillusionment which dictates Mme de Clèves's decision? Examination has revealed no such tone. On the contrary, Éléonor writes to Misnie to swear eternal fidelity. Amboise states explicitly to Mlle de Roye that if he renounces his claim to her, it is because it is her very passion which he respects: "Je vous aime. Je vous aimerai toute ma vie. Je n'ai pu être le maître de ne vous point parler une fois.

23. *op.cit.*, p. 240
de Sansac; mais je ne vous en parlerai plus. Je vous respecte assez pour respecter même votre passion."26. Similarly, on the occasion of Amboise's second renunciation of Mlle de Roye, when she has fallen into a mortal languor: "Il sentait alors qu'il l'aimait assez pour ne la disputuer pas aux dépens de sa vie."27.

One is emboldened to compare Mlle Bernard's conception of love with that of Le Grand Cyrus,28. because of the eminently aristocratic quality of the morality in her works and the insistence upon the 'heroic' ideal, particularly in Le Comte d'Amboise. It is indeed remarkably apt that Le Comte d'Amboise is subtitled, in the English translation, which appeared in 1689, The Generous Lover.29. The 'heroic' nature of Amboise's behaviour is the principal theme of that work: his superiority over other men in his strength to stifle his love for Mlle de Roye is referred to explicitly, as in the following passage: "Il se désespérait de ce qu'il allait faire, sans néanmoins s'en repentir. Il est des moments, où l'on semble agir par une force supérieure: ce qu'il faisait tenait plus d'un héros que d'un amant."30.

It is the same aristocratic virtue — in this case loyalty in friendship — which inspires Éléonor to finally renounce her claim to Misnie, thus: "Il se fit une révolution subite dans son esprit: elle se sentit le courage d'exécuter ce qu'elle avait projeté; enfin l'amitié et la reconnaissance achevèrent dans ce moment de

26. ibid., p.166. 27. ibid., p.155.
30. op.cit., p.157. See also p.231.
The tone of heroic purity which is dominant in Mlle Bernard's work further distinguishes her from Mme de Lafayette in that a sombre element of the latter's picture — the black cloud of jealousy — is absent. If Mlle Bernard's protagonists are truly noble — and therefore a little above human — as they are, they will regard jealousy as a weakness. Thus the idyll of the nascent love between Eléonor and Misnie is unclouded by jealousy: when they must separate, they plight an eternal troth and dare to swear that they will never know what it is to be unfaithful. Only the weaker character, the fundamentally despicable Matilde, is a prey to this base passion.

For the same reason, Amboise struggles and overcomes his jealousy of Sansac, who has won Mlle de Roye's love: regarding such a passion as unseemly. The behaviour of Mme de Toumpon, the villainess of Le Comte d'Amboise, is motivated by jealousy, as is that of Léonor de Silva, playing a similar role in Inès de Cordoue. As far as the main protagonists are concerned, however, the overall picture is one of a moral beauty which precludes a degrading passion whose effect is to inhibit personal liberty.

What are the exact terms in which Mlle Bernard renders the passion of love in her works? It is understood that it is based upon worth: the pure and noble inspiring a pure and noble passion in the breast of kindred spirits. However, it is conceived of essentially as being a force irreducible to reason: 'l'indépendance

31. ibid., p. 310.  
32. See ibid., p. 288.  
33. One cannot dispute the logic of this Cornelian conception. See Le Comte d'Amboise, op.cit., p. 235.
des inclinations,' the very phrase being used throughout the texts. The pre-occupation with liberty and personal integrity accounts for one of the most powerful motives for the behaviour of Mlle Bernard's heroines. How else can one interpret their fear lest their feelings be revealed to prying eyes? Mlle de Roye, when she thinks that her infatuation with Sansac has been discovered, is overcome by a sense of shame and confusion: "(elle) ... pensa que peut-être Madame de Joye avait découvert ses sentiments pour lui; et elle était dans une honte et dans un accablement extrême." Placed in a similar dilemma, Inès de Cordoue wishes to hide her grief, wishes to conceal her emotions from public gaze: "... sa douleur avait honte de paraître aux yeux d'autrui, avec tant de violence."

Précieux? Cornelian? Racinian? All these epithets have been applied to such modes of moral thought as are implied here. The difficulties and limitations of such nomenclature have already been exposed in the preliminary chapter of this study. It is as indisputable that Racine systematically expressed in his works a belief in 'l'indépendance des inclinations,' as it is that Corneille's theatre represents 'l'éthique de la gloire.' Once more, the whole question is bedevilled by the role of the Précieuses — and their indisputable pre-occupation with moral worth. In preference

34. See Le Comte d'Amboise, op. cit., p.169: "Mais quand elle faisait réflexion sur l'indépendance des inclinations ...". Also ibid., p.172: "Vous n'êtes point coupable ... personne n'est exempte des passions; il suffit de les combattre ...".
35. op. cit., p.134.
36. ibid., p.60.
37. Again, the sense of shame, 'la pudeur', may be equally termed précieux or Racinian. See O. Nadal, op. cit., pp.47-48: "Les Précieuses, en mettant entre elles et l'homme, entre elles et leur propre désir, ces distances polies, ces formilités, ces joutes spirituelles ou tendres, prétendaient se garder de la confusion de la sympathie dont une âme fière, quand elle aime, ne peut retirer qu'humiliée."
to embarking once more upon a discussion destined to be abortive, we prefer to opt for a more comprehensive classification; to see in Mlle Bernard a writer whose work bears the imprint of a pre-occupation with worth and perfection common to mondain thinkers of the time.

These foregoing remarks may be equally aptly applied to a consideration of the relation of Mlle Bernard's morality to that of Mme de Lafayette. Where the former most nearly resembles the latter is in that wherein they both partake of aspects of the spirit of the time. In this respect, it is interesting to note that La Princesse de Clèves won Fontenelle's approbation — and an enthusiastic approbation — from the outset. The very fact that Fontenelle ranges himself amongst the Princess's ardent supporters is relevant to this study, in view of the opposition which certain aspects — those applauded by Fontenelle, in fact — encountered from critics, on the grounds that they ran counter to the dictates of good sense and reason. What he admires is the severe virtue of the Princess, her distinction from the vulgar herd, what he conceives to be the esoteric quality of the work. Regarding Clèves, Fontenelle professes to be much in admiration of his delicate feelings towards his wife. In fine, the précieux Fontenelle admires La Princesse de Clèves because he sees in it a 'précieux' work, in all

38. Fontenelle contributed an appreciation of La Princesse de Clèves in the extraordinary edition of the Mercure Galant, March, 1678, an appreciation which has a special significance both in view of Fontenelle's supposed literary collaboration with Mlle Bernard and his statement comparing Eléonor d'Yvrié with La Princesse de Clèves.

39. A full account of the polemics which raged concerning Mme de Clèves's confession to her husband, etc., has been given by J.W. Scott, La Princesse de Clèves devant la critique, (Ph.D. Thesis, Leeds, 1957).
that this term implies concerning the search for refinement and distinction.

Logically enough, it is these aspects and these situations, seen through the eyes of Fontenelle/Mlle Bernard, which find their replica in the three works under examination. Le Comte d'Amboise contains several reminiscences of Mme de Lafayette; for instance, when Mlle de Roye and Sansac meet for the first time, they feel irresistibly drawn to each other,^40 as were the 'extraordinary' Princesse de Clèves and the equally 'extraordinary' Nemours at the fateful ball. A reminiscence more precise still is the jealous despair of M. d'Amboise and the touching death-bed scene in which his wife declares her innocence.

These textual similarities, due to contemporaries' or near-contemporaries' seeing Mme de Lafayette only a 'précieuse' writer, do not mitigate the essential disparity between the message — if such it can be called — of La Princesse de Clèves, and that of Mlle Bernard's works. What in fact does not find its replica in Mlle Bernard's works is the unique element of Clèves's tragedy, the conception of love. Mlle Bernard may well portray Mlle de Roye as having two suitors of equal merit, as were Clèves and Nemours; it does not alter a whit the fact that the one love is irrefutably innocent whilst the other is as irrefutably guilty.

It is this difference of conception which alters the whole moral tone of the works, and in particular, the significance of the renunciation theme, which Mlle Bernard tried in vain to imitate.41 Let us examine, briefly, the significance of the renunciation which is present in all three of Mlle Bernard's works. Bearing in mind

40. op. cit., p. 113.
41. See Max von Waldberg, Der empfindsame Roman in Frankreich, 1er Teil, Strasbourg, 1906, pp. 91, 92 sq.
preceding remarks upon the conception of love in her novels, it should be noted that in fact Éléonor d'Yvrée and Inès de Cordoue are both morally blackmailed into renouncing their love. That they are able to make the supreme effort shows that they are 'âmes d'élite,' but their decision is none the less forced upon them by society. Further, it is not love itself which they renounce, but simply the possibility of being united with the men they love, a decision which is much attenuated in both Le Comte d'Amboise and Inès de Cordoue, where one heroine wavers and the other admits that her emotions will finally triumph.

Love, then, is conceived of as being whole and inextinguishable. The protagonists, especially the heroines of the first and last novels, are active. Given these two circumstances, it follows that the moral dilemma is conceived of in terms of the individual against society. The struggle which was, in the last resort, waged within the soul of Mme de Clèves, takes place on the external level in Mlle Bernard's novels. What is the logical conclusion of this moral attitude, if not that her protagonists are more sinned against than sinning? In spite of her insistence upon 'les malheurs de l'amour;' according to her conception of love, it is not so much the passion itself which is accursed — this is, in essence, Mme de Lafayette's view — but circumstances, society, which renders it so.

It has already been stated that the works under discussion partake of the moral climate of their time. The heterogeneous nature of this moral climate having been previously exposed, it is incumbent upon us to ascertain what other elements are present. Accordingly, an examination of the texts reveals the role which reason plays in dictating the protagonists' conduct. What is the nature and function of this reason? When Éléonor is torn by doubt and anxiety, she nonetheless obeys the dictates of reason with regard to her conduct: "Elle fut toute la nuit dans cette résolution,
ou plutôt, dans cette incertitude: mais quand elle en vint à l'exécution, elle ne suivit que ce que la raison lui inspira."42.

The true force of reason as a moral criterion is revealed in the crucial scene between Eléonor, Matilde and Misnie; Eléonor addresses the last-mentioned thus: "Vous allez épouser mon amie,... il n'y manquait que mon consentement; la raison veut que je la donne."43.

The exact sense of reason as used in these novels, is amplified in Le Comte d'Amboise, when Amboise feels that, unable to win Mlle de Royes's affections, he cannot marry her: "Il lui était désagréable d'épouser une personne prévenue d'une autre inclination: la raison s'opposait à ce dessein."44.

The reason which is cited here is in fact that which is the most nearly in accordance with the protagonists true interest: it may run counter to his desires, and therefore to his immediate happiness, but is nonetheless in accordance with more far-reaching considerations. It is, therefore, the reason discussed in the preceding section, à propos of Mmes. de Lafayette and de Villedieu, the reason of the theoricians of honnêteté.

It is important here not only in that it modifies the tone which we shall for convenience term heroic — that which is primarily concerned with the values of nobility — but also in that this reasoned self-interest plays an important role in the moral characterization of Le Comte d'Amboise.

The didactic aim in Mlle Bernard's works previously referred to, responsible as it is for ordering the tone, the moral character, is further demonstrated by the use which she makes of the notion of duty. It is, it is true, sometimes accorded the lesser part only, as for instance in Eléonor d'Yvre, when the heroine grants Misnie an interview: "son devoir et son dépit s'opposaient à cette

42. op.cit., p.268. 43. ibid., p.298.
44. ibid., p.127. See also Inès de Cordoue, op.cit., p.58.
entrevue; mais l'amour vainquit le dépit, et trompa le devoir. But, when she bids farewell both to Misnie and Matilde, she gives as her reasons: "Le devoir, l'amitié, la nécessité m'arrachent à vous." However, the true significance of 'le devoir' in Mlle Bernard's works is indicated in a comment on Eléonor's behaviour: "Elle suivait son devoir, comme si elle n'avait pas eu de passion, mais elle sentait malgré elle, que sa passion était aussi violente que si elle n'avait pas été combattue par son devoir."

The same sense is found in Inès de Cordoue, when the heroine laments: "Voici le dernier jour qu'il m'aimera ... et cependant je ne puis souffrir la moindre diminution de sa tendresse: c'est bien assez que mon devoir me fasse combattre la mienne." The high sense of moral duty which characterizes Mlle Bernard's heroines particularly, is rendered in Inès de Cordoue by references to 'le devoir'. "Ce fut encore un nouvel obstacle pour Inès, que la facilité de manquer à son devoir." When the Comte de Las Torres is dead, his widow has qualms of conscience at seeing Lerme again: "... malgré son penchant, elle craignit que cette démarche ne fût trop contraire à son devoir: son mari lui avait témoigné tant d'amour et tant de bonté, qu'elle était engagée à lui sacrifier ce reste d'inclination.

However, this didactic aim, with its attendant emphasis upon duty and virtue, has, we should maintain, consequences which are not entirely expected. Briefly, if the protagonist is essentially innocent and therefore essentially wronged — although this same didactic aim tends to lead the writer to ignore the role of society as the instrument of the lovers' misfortunes — the protagonists, in spite of the active nature of their morality, are essentially objects of pity. Let us look at passages in Mlle Bernard's works which might substantiate this last statement. The very use of

45. op.cit., p.292. See also pp. 288, 301.
46. ibid., p.315.
47. ibid., p.269.
48. op.cit., p.64.
49. ibid., p.62.
50. ibid., p.88.
'le devoir', as for instance: ".... cependant je ne puis souffrir la moindre diminution de sa tendresse; c'est bien assez que mon devoir me fasse combattre la mienne," implying as it does a comparison between the demands of passion and those of the moral code, leads one to consider the protagonists' plight rather than their moral struggles.

The theme of unhappiness and of suffering virtue is already clearly outlined in Éléonor d'Yvrée. The heroine is forced by her brother to plight her troth to Retelois before he leaves her: "et elle obéit sans résistance, quoique ce ne fût pas sans désespoir." 52.

One cannot stress too strongly the importance of innocence in Mlle Bernard's conception and depiction of her protagonists' love. Re-orientating as it does the whole moral structure of her works, from the position in Mme de Lafayette, for instance, the theme of unmerited suffering and sorrow is bound to come to the fore: emphasis, taken from the theme of guilt must of necessity fall upon suffering. Hence these new elements: "Matilde ne lui répondit rien, et elles gardèrent là-dessus un profond silence, qui fut suivi d'un torrent de larmes qu'elles versèrent l'une et l'autre." 53. "Un torrent de larmes," this surely marks a new departure, as when, at the end of the work, Éléonor, in preparation for her wedding, goes to the Comte de Retelois's estate: ".... (elle) y alla le jour précédent, pour jouir de sa douleur avec quelque liberté." 54. The novelty of this attitude to sorrow is sufficiently apparent to obviate any further comment here. A final detail, complementary to the nascent theme of suffering virtue: these sufferings are referred to as the work of "... sa malheureuse destinée." 55.

The rigorous insistence upon the generous quality of true love in Le Comte d'Amboise, together with the 'reasonable' nature of

52. Éléonor d'Yvrée, p. 282. 53. ibid., p. 285.
54. ibid., pp. 312-313. 55. ibid., p. 296.
the protagonists would tend to inhibit the development of the theme of destiny in this work. However, the crucial confrontation between Mlle de Sansac and Mlle de Roye is the signal for a further display of emotion: "Mademoiselle de Sansac ne put continuer un tel discours; et jettant un torrent de larmes, elle contraignit Mademoiselle de Roye à lui parler."\(^{56}\).

Similarly, during a touching scene between Amboise and Mlle de Roye, when he realizes that, as her heart will never be his, he must give her up: "D'Amboise se souvint des premières fois qu'il l'avait vue: il fit un profond soupir, et il la regarda avec des yeux mouillés de larmes."\(^{57}\).

The theme of destiny re-appears for a brief instant in *Inès de Cordoue*,\(^{58}\) whilst the scene between Inès and her husband, when he supposes her to be guilty, is the occasion once more for touching sentiments and tears; urging him to put an end to her life, she declares: "'Il y a moins de cruauté à m’ôter la vie, qu’à me la conserver.' Elle ne put retenir ses pleurs en disant ces paroles."\(^{59}\). The 'explication' continues thus; it is Las Torres who speaks: "Pour moi, je ne sais si vous me trompez; mais je ne le puis penser, et je ne vous veux plus de mal."\(^{60}\).

However, these are no more than indications, more important perhaps in the context of the feminine novel as a whole during this period than in themselves.

It has already been pointed out that Mlle Bernard's debt to Mme de Lafayette lies in elements of the latter's work already exploited by writers who have been termed 'précieux'. Treating

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56. op.cit., p.181.
57. ibid., p.188. See also p.136.
58. op.cit., p.86: "... une si cruelle destinée, ..."
59. ibid., p.83.
60. ibid., p.84.
this epithet with due caution, it may, however, be noted that Mlle Bernard's work also bears considerable traces of psychological observation — related in its origins to a search for the quintessence, 'le fin du fin', 'le je ne sais quoi' — which has also been qualified as 'précieux'.

Examples throughout the texts are to be found of this subtle analysis, this concise observation of the first stages of love, before it has fully declared itself, together with a study of half-conscious states and the interplay of emotions, the impact of events upon the psyche. Of the last cited, an instance may be found when Éléonor is borne off by her brother to become the wife of Retelois: "Éléonor était si accablée de sa douleur, qu'elle ne la sentait plus: tout ce qui se passait lui paraissait un songe," a theme which is taken up again later in the story: "Éléonor fut frappée d'une surprise qui suspendit tous ses mouvements. D'abord elle ne conçut pas ses maux dans toute leur étendue, mais enfin elle les envisagea distinctement." A similar observation is found in Inès de Cordoue: "Lors qu'Inès eut épousé le Comte de Las Torres, et qu'elle se vit hors d'état de pouvoir jamais être à Lerme, ni même de penser à lui sans scrupule, elle fut surprise de s'être jetée elle-même dans cet abîme".

On the effects of love, the authoress has some interesting observations to make, for instance: "Matilde fut charmée de faire ce voyage, seulement parce qu'elle le faisait avec le duc de Misnie,... et elle sentait si vivement ce plaisir, qu'elle était insensible à tous les autres." Love as a sub-conscious motive and

61. This has already been referred to in discussing the portrayal of love in Éléonor d'Yvrée.
62. op.cit., p.271.
63. ibid., p.288.
64. op.cit., p.60.
65. Éléonor d'Yvrée, p.279.
as a state which leaves its victims blind to themselves, is expressed in the following quotations: from Le Comte d'Amboise: "Mademoiselle de Sansac eut d'abord quelque peine à rendre de méchants offices à un homme pour qui elle avait une estime singulièreet mais cette même estime la porta insensiblement à agir contre son mariage." (that is, Amboise's marriage to Mlle de Roye). And, from Inès de Cordoue: "Comme le Marquis de Lerme était galant, et que Léonor était belle, il lui disait sans cesse des choses flatteuses, qu'elle expliquait si favorablement, que par avance elle prit les sentiments qu'elle désirait de lui inspirer." Finally, the almost imperceptible first manifestations of love, as it is experienced by Sansac and Mlle de Roye in Le Comte d'Amboise: "Sansac remarquait tous les jours de petits effets de la passion de Mademoiselle de Roye, qui le charmaient: cependant dans les termes où elle était avec Monsieur d'Amboise, il n'osait lui parler ouvertement, de peur de perdre ces marques de sa tendresse, s'il la forçait de les démêler." This latter tendency to dwell on the dawn of love and to analyse its first manifestations, familiar as it is, has a considerable bearing on Mlle Bernard's works as a whole. But the writer's powers of psychological observation are exercised not only in this sphere. Her portrayal of the effects of emotional disturbance, whether that of love, jealousy or unhappiness, already represents a development of this spirit of observation.

More significant, however, is an observation which gradually becomes discernible, now applied not only to the nature and effects of love, but also to the ratiocination which accompanies emotional involvement. This spirit of observation is discernible even in the

66. op. cit., p.125.
67. op. cit., p.5.
68. op. cit., p.125.
characterization of the impeccably virtuous Eleonor. In view of the austere code of conduct to which she claims to adhere, it would surely be more reasonable for her not to see the Duc de Mismanie again after she is betrothed to the Comte de Retelois. She overcomes such scruples, arguing that: "... il ne fallait point porter au Comte de Retelois un coeur irrité contre un amant; et (qu')elle serait plus tranquille, quand elle aurait reproché du Duc de Mismanie sa légèreté." 69

The element of casuistry, so discreetly expressed as to be scarcely perceptible, exercises a not unimportant influence on Mlle Bernard's subsequent novels. It is this specious reasoning which Inès de Cordoue employs to excuse her seeing Lerme again after her marriage to the Comte de Las Torres. "Les malheurs où Lerme était réduit pour l'avoir aimée, demandait qu'elle les adoucit, et par pitié, et par justice..." 70. The writer herself adds: "... il méritait cette faveur, autant par ses malheurs, que par les sentiments qu'elle avait pour lui; il avait des lettres d'elle qu'elle se dit qu'il était de son devoir de redemander. Enfin elle sut trouver des raisons de vertu dans ce que l'amour seul lui faisait entreprendre." 71.

It is in essence this same reasoning which Mlle de Roye uses as a weapon to defend her love in Le Comte d'Amboise. Unable to love the Count and in despair at the idea of losing Sansac for ever, she persuades the former, with a refined cruelty, that he can never be happy with her, once having conceived suspicions regarding her integrity. "Elle lui représenta avec douceur, qu'il lui était désormais impossible qu'il fût content en l'épousant; que puisqu'il avait eu des soupçons une fois, il en aurait toujours, et qu'elle l'estimait trop pour vouloir le rendre malheureux." 72.

69. op.cit., p.292.
70. op.cit., p.62.
71. ibid., p.63.
72. ibid., p.120.
More important, however, is the effect of this reasoning upon the renunciation motive in *Le Comte d'Amboise* and *Inès de Cordoue*. In the former, Mme d'Amboise decides first of all to act according to the high standards set by her husband, to render herself worthy of his love, but it is not long before she realizes that the demands of her passion outweigh those of her virtue. When Sansac is killed, she retires into a convent, not daring to reflect upon her sufferings lest she should discover which is the greatest. Thus her renunciation, which has been previously described as gratuitous, acquires an even more provisional quality. Whereas Mme de Lafayette's heroine rejected love because she mistrusted it, Mlle Bernard's heroines employ the most sophistical reasoning in order to realize their love with their virtue, in order to realize their love.

The hesitation in *Le Comte d'Amboise*, where Mme d'Amboise is overtaken by events before she can inform Sansac that she has relented, is resolved in *Inès de Cordoue*, where the heroine seeks to inform Lerme, but too late, that she is free to marry him. In this latter instance the veil of pretence is thrown off. Having, in common with Mlle Bernard's other heroines, acted throughout the story, believing or half believing that her actions are justified by the demands of reason and virtue, she is led to admit that those of love were, after all, paramount.

What does this portrayal of psychological states imply? Firstly, although a certain place is accorded to sentiment, Mlle Bernard's chief interest would seem to lie in the interplay of the emotions in general. This latter characteristic, shared by mondain thinkers and writers of the time and often qualified as 'précieux', has as its effect a slight modification of the tone of rigorous virtue which the

73. ibid., p.247.
74. See *Inès de Cordoue*, p.88: "... elle était engagée à lui sacrifier de reste d'inclination; mais après tout, elle ne pouvait la vaincre, et elle cherchait seulement à l'accorder avec sa vertu."
writer strives to create. Psychological observation must of necessity tend to emancipate itself from the shackles of literary convention.

The sentimental aspect of these three novels, which manifests itself in place of genuine moral dilemma, is attenuated by Mlle Bernard's very pre-occupation with virtue, or, more precisely, with her definite didactic aim. This virtuous tone would seem to place the works at the crossroads: the author aims to present an edifying picture of love as a noble passion -- and in this she is in essence diametrically opposed to Mme de Lafayette -- yet it is 'Tendre sur Inclination and not 'Tendre sur Estime' which she panegyrizes.

Thus the elements which constitute Mlle Bernard's moral creation, disparate, borrowed from various sources, may be expected to re-appear separately or together and each time with a different effect, in the works of other women writers.
CHAPTER 2.

ETHICS IN MADAME D'aulnoy's NOVELS: 1690-1703.

Cadre, nominally historical, removed in time and space -- obscurity of protagonists -- an initial rejection of reality -- emphasis on external movement -- a return to the 'grand roman' with its implied ethics? -- the 'epic' quality of the novels orders their moral effect. Use of 'la gloire', 'la conscience', 'la raison', 'le devoir', negatively or positively indicates the novelist's aim -- 'toucher'. Mme d'Aulnoy's conception of man, passive, but eminently virtuous -- her conception of love, omnipotent -- emphasis on the virtue of man/love with a view to its touching effect -- complementary aspects of this conception of love -- but impossibility of too systematic an interpretation.

Let us now turn to Mme d'Aulnoy, perhaps the best-known of the women writers of this period, on account of the 'contes de fées' composed by her, which rank amongst the finest in French literature. Leaving aside for the moment the various Mémoires which have been attributed to her, some -- those which she really did write -- because they have been proved by M. Foulché-Delbosc ¹ to enter into the realm of history rather than fiction, others

because their attribution is spurious, we shall study a trio of her works published between 1690 and 1703: \textit{Histoire d'Hypolite}, Comte de Duglas, \textit{Histoire de Jean de Bourbon}, and finally the \textit{Comte de Warwick}.

All three works, as their titles indicate, purport to be the story of a personage who existed in history, together with actual historical events. What epoch has Mme d'Aulnoy chosen to represent in each of these cases? In the first instance, the England of post-Reformation times provides the background of \textit{Hypolite}, Comte de Duglas. Mme d'Aulnoy delves further back in time in the second of her novels, \textit{Jean de Bourbon}, where she describes, nominally,

2. Mme d'Aulnoy herself gives a list of the works of which she claims authorship, in a prefatory note to the \textit{Comte de Warwick}, first published in 1703. The \textit{Mémoires des Aventures Singulières de la Cour d'Espagne}, which first appeared in 1692, are treated exhaustively by M. Foulché-Delbosc, op.cit., pp. 25 sq. Apart from a supposition of motives and presentation of certain hypotheses as actual fact — a technique which does not differ essentially from that of Voltaire in the \textit{Siècle de Louis XIV}, when his avowed aim was to present "les grands hommes et les petits faits" — these \textit{Mémoires} may legitimately be considered as belonging to the realm of historical accounts.


6. For convenience, it is intended to use abbreviated forms of the following titles, thus: \textit{Hypolite}, Comte de Duglas, \textit{Jean de Bourbon}. 

...
Spain and Italy of the fourteenth century. Finally, she returns to England for the cadre of the Comte de Warwick; the England of Warwick the Kingmaker, who gives his name to the title of the book.

On every occasion, the background is schematic in the extreme and such local colour as exists is eminently that of late seventeenth century France. Neither the national climates of England nor Spain — of any period — no detail of custom, dress, nor even a recognisable historical event, appear in the volumes which make up these stories. It should be noted that all three stories have in common a separation, either in time or space, from Mme d'Aulnoy's contemporaries. Equally, it should be noted that the writer is manifestly not concerned to overcome these geographical and historical barriers. It might seem indeed that she had deliberately chosen a background of which her readers were ignorant and upon which, far from enlightening them, she rendered the shadows deeper by setting the scene at an obscure period of time.

The first point which one can make from these introductory remarks, and a recurring one, is that of the danger of assuming that the 'historical' novels of this period had anything more in common than a general pilfering of somewhat nebulous history. Furthermore, although Mme d'Aulnoy's stories, like Mme Bernard's, are fundamentally lacking in local colour, it must be stressed that the emphasis of interest — with all that this implies — in the former's work differs vitally from that of the latter.

These differences may best be rendered apparent, first of all by a brief exposé of the plots. Hereupon one is, however, immediately

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7. England, at the time when Mme d'Aulnoy was writing, was still practically unknown to the French public.
confronted with a problem similar to that of outlining some of Mme de Villedieu's works; for Mme d'Aulnoy, like Mme de Villedieu, adds a rich profusion of intercalated stories to already complex intrigues, in a manner which would have delighted Madelon's précieuses. A thousand-and-one peripetia are introduced to plague the young lovers before they are eventually united at the end of the statutory two volumes.

If, therefore, we attempt to give a brief outline of the three novels, it is primarily to demonstrate the diversity of the external movement. The chief protagonists of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, Julie and Hypolite, having been brought up together and still believing that they are brother and sister, fall in love. Hypolite's parents, strongly disapproving of the liaison, for family reasons (Julie is the daughter of a disgraced nobleman), separate the lovers by exiling Hypolite to Italy, forging letters to make each believe the other is unfaithful; and marrying Julie off to the Comte de Bedford. Hypolite returns -- too late -- to learn the truth; and as a result of his disguise adopted in order to see Julie, he is attacked and imprisoned, whilst the unfortunate Comtesse de Bedford is carried off by her husband to a convent in France. Hypolite follows, fights a duel with Bedford, adopts another disguise to see Julie in her convent: they plan an escape which misfires and as a result of which Julie wanders in Italy disguised as a man. It is only after such disguises, coincidences and fate errors that the lovers are finally united.

The intrigues of Jean de Bourbon and the Comte de Warwick follow the same incredible pattern as this first work, except that

8. For convenience, we shall adhere to Mme d'Aulnoy's orthography.
in neither of these latter cases does the story end happily: in Jean de Bourbon, the heroine is stabbed by her rival; and in the Comte de Warwick, the Kingmaker having been killed in battle, he is quickly joined in death by the beautiful Comtesse de Devonshire. The only feature which distinguishes the intrigues one from the other is the degree of 'romanesque' details — corsairs, shipwrecks, intercepted letters, moonlight meetings, abductions, fatal misunderstandings — which make up the fabric of the works. It should, however, be added, in all justice, that this type of creation reaches its apogee — if such a term may be applied in this context — in Jean de Bourbon, which begins in Constantinople, where Jean is a prisoner of the barbarous Turk and where the intrigue embraces the greater part of the Mediterranean basin before it is done. Indeed, these meanderings remind one of Fontenelle's comments on Mlle Bernard's work, when he claims: "Enfin on voit bien que la personne qui a fait ce Roman, a plus songé à faire un bon ouvrage qu'un livre; car comme on se propose d'ordinaire pour un livre, une certaine étendue et même un certain volume, on n'a pas accoutumé d'être plus avare de paroles que de pensées."9.

Reverting for a moment to questions of terminology, Mme d'Aulnoy's works may be more accurately classified as novels — romans — than as short stories such as have been previously discussed.10. This is not a trifling distinction and indeed holds the key to some of the essential features of the ethics in Mme d'Aulnoy's novels. The movement which characterizes all three works precludes to a great extent the psychological interest which had been a feature of both Mme de Lafayette's and Mlle Bernard's work, as we have seen. By psychological interest, we mean that not only is even such rudimentary trait of 'court

10. Mlle Bernard's work notably fits into this latter category.
atmosphere' as was found in Mlle Bernard, absent, but also that the moral dilemma must of necessity be radically modified by a multiplicity of incidents. On the one hand, a swiftly-moving plot is not normally conducive to psychological analysis; and on the other, the dramatic impact of a tragedy is attenuated by constant repetition of misfortunes. The protagonist must share pride of place with the events which befall him: he is no longer at the centre of the cosmos.

We have already hinted at the significance of the term 'roman' as applied to Mme d'Aulnoy's works. The rejection of reality, the sum of the qualities of her work as referred to in the preceding paragraph, leads one to consider it in relation to the epic notion, important in view of the fact that the earlier conception of the novel — 'le roman' — was that of an epic poem in prose. The Grand Cyrus, which is perhaps the supreme example of this conception of the novel, could easily have been taken as a model by Mme d'Aulnoy. She shares with the Scudérian novel a fast-flowing action, but, above all, a disregard for material reality, a predilection for an ideal which bears no relation to facts, which colours the whole of her literary creation, and orders to a great extent the moral tone in the artefact.

Before proceeding to the argument proper, however, reference to the 'epic' quality of Mme d'Aulnoy's work leads us to consider for a moment the question of 'préciosité' as it presents itself in this study. In so doing, we must refer to critical opinion which claims to see in such works as Mme d'Aulnoy's a recrudescence of préciosité.11 If we quote the opinion of M. Cherel at length, 

11. e.g., Chérel, Histoire de la Littérature Française, ed. Calvet, Paris, Gigord, 1933, vol. VI, Chapter VII. "En 1678, La Princesse de Clèves semble un essai de roman classique, racinien: Mme de Lafayette pourtant ne fit pas école. Et vers 1680 déjà se forma la seconde préciosité: les femmes, en qui Boileau discernait justement les ennemis de bon goût, accroissent leur pouvoir sur les Belles-Lettres, le roman repartit de plus belle, et sous les formes les plus diverses reconquit le public français: contes de fées, récits historiques ou mémoires romanes, romans d'aventures et de sensibilité, romans anglais adaptés ou traduits."
infra, it is because it would seem that he himself exposes the weakness of the argument of a second 'préciosité.' In the first place, as has been already pointed out in this study, modes of thought, particularly mondain thought, were particularly heterogeneous at the end of the seventeenth century. The term 'précieux' had so far lost its original tonality that it cannot be adequately defined for the needs of this study. Further, the inadequacy of the term is indicated by the very manifestations which M. Cherel qualifies as 'précieux.' Does it then mean no more than a rejection of reality? In order to ascertain the true ethical nature of Mme d'Aulnoy's novels, it behoves us to examine the texts; to find out what is presented in place of reality.

An essential part of this study is the examination of moral criteria. Having invoked the term 'epic', we may begin by looking at the importance in Mme d' Aulnoy's works, quantitatively and qualitatively speaking, of such moral notions as once had a specifically 'heroic' connotation.

Taking the terms 'généreux' and 'générosité', one might conclude, from an examination of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, that Mme d'Aulnoy began, at least, with the intention of re-creating the heroic atmosphere. A generous spirit was surely the essential attribute of the Cornelian hero. This epithet is duly applied to the main protagonists and, more especially, to the heroine of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas. At a crucial point in the drama, the inviolable steadfastness of Julie's character is referred to in the following terms: "il ne fallait pas qu'une âme grande et généreuse telle qu'était la sienne, se laissât si fort accabler au poids des afflictions."12.

12. The references throughout this discussion are taken from the following edition, Histoire d'Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, Lyon, chez Jacques Lions, 1699, vol.I., p.198. See also vol.I, p.25, when Hypolite's father is described as "... un homme fort généreux .....". Also vol.I, pp.119, 142.
The term, however, to enjoy but a brief hour of glory. In Jean de Bourbon, it is mentioned on one occasion only, when one of the protagonists refers to the quality which he would require in order to prove himself superior to circumstances: "J'aurais eu besoin de toute ma générosité, pour me résoudre de combattre en faveur de la plus perfide personne du monde." Its importance in this instance is lessened by the fact that it is not applied to one of the central characters; and, by 1703, the eclipse is complete, nowhere are the terms 'généreux' or 'générosité' to be found in the Comte de Warwick.

One is thus incited to examine the twin concept of 'la gloire' as it is used in Mme d'Aulnoy's works. The notion, although less frequently used in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, is yet employed in a more meaningful sense than subsequently, as we shall see. It assumes some importance as a moral criterion in the second volume, when the hero and heroine have already passed through several vicissitudes. Hypolite proposes a solution to their present dilemma, to which Julie concurs, with the following proviso: "Laissez venir mon Père, je lui obéirai dans toutes les choses qu'il me commander, pourvu qu'elles ne soient ni contre ma conscience ni contre ma gloire:" an intention which she re-affirms a little later, thus: "Ce sont des idées bien éloignées que celles de faire casser mon mariage. Que sais-je meme si je le dois vouloir, si ma conscience et ma gloire n'y seraient point intéressées?" A final occasion upon which Julie invokes 'la gloire' is when Hypolite, after languishing for several hundred pages without having made any appreciable progress, proposes that she should flee the convent: "Ma gloire, cher Hypolite; ma gloire ... que voulez-vous qu'elle devienne?"

In Jean de Bourbon, Benawidez, the villain, speaking of Léonide to Jean, admits: "Je ne sais rien d'elle qui puisse intéresser sa gloire." Dona Blanca refers to her honour, in the sense of chastity, in the following terms: "... la crainte de perdre ma vie et peut-être ma gloire; ...". The Prince de Carency is obliged by his rank and reputation to follow a pre-ordained mode of conduct: "... la nécessité où sa propre gloire le mettait de chercher une personne avec qui il avait de si grands engagements ...". Léonide, the heroine, refers on two occasions to this notion, first when she is discoursing on the nature and effects of love: "... je comprends que l'on peut aimer même au-delà de ce qu'il est permis, mais je ne comprends point que l'on puisse manquer à sa propre gloire et à son amie." Later, she confesses: "ma gloire en souffre, j'en rougis, j'en ai la dernière honte, mais je suis toujours amante, et amante désespérée." The weakening of the term, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in that Léonide alone in Jean de Bourbon uses it significantly, is accelerated in the Comte de Warwick, where the meaning becomes more diffuse and flaccid. Warwick's concern for Mme de Devonshire's reputation, in accordance with the laws of 'honnêteté,' is referred to thus: "... les plus cruelles menaces n'arracheraient pas de sa bouche un mot qui pût intéresser la gloire d'une personne si chère, ...". An attitude which the Count himself subsequently expresses to his

beloved: "... mais si ce bonheur, le plus grand de tous, m'arrivait aux dépens de votre gloire, je serais capable d'y renoncer."²³.

On the final occasion upon which 'la gloire' is employed — not often, it must be conceded, in view of the volume of the Comte de Warwick — it has a slightly different meaning: and one which we shall encounter elsewhere, thus, referring to the king, portrayed as something of a 'vert galant': "Plus la conquête (d'une dame) lui paraît difficile, plus il la désire; plus il y trouve de gloire."²⁴.

One is well-acquainted with 'la gloire' as it was understood in Corneille's theatre;²⁵. and also in the Grand Cyrus, when it forms the prime motive of the protagonists' actions; for instance: "... résolvons-nous plutôt à la mort, que de rien faire, de rien dire, ni même de rien penser, qui ne soit juste; qui ne soit vertueux: et qui ne satisfasse pleinement, l'amour que nous avons pour la gloire."²⁶.

That the term progressively falls into desuetude in Mme l'Aulnoy's works is evident. Even in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, when it is most significantly used by Julie, it is accompanied by a moral consideration not previously referred to — 'la conscience.' This latter criterion is worthy of comment not only in virtue of its eminently emotive quality, as compared with 'la gloire', but also because it is indicative of a trend — rudimentary yet nonetheless discernible — in these novels, towards a certain religious sentiment. Those who have criticized the Princess de Clèves for its purely secular morality might perhaps be more favourably impressed by Julie and Léonide de Velasco.²⁷. One cannot, however, accord an appreciable

²⁷. Apart from the 'references'which Julie makes to her conscience, her religious faith twice comes to her aid when she contemplates taking her own life. See Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, vol.I, p.179.
place in this discussion to evidence of religious sentiment in Mme d'Aulnoy's work, owing to its eminently embryonic nature.

If we maintain that 'la gloire' falls into neglect, it is because, from Jean de Bourbon onwards, 'la gloire' in the sense of reputation, one's good name in society, increasingly prevails, to the detriment of the Cornelian sense. Furthermore, we should submit that the attenuation of the moral dilemma, previously referred to, is responsible for this. If the drama is robbed of its immediacy, the natural consequence is that 'la gloire' will tend to become a convention rather than a motive force.

Having seen how little of the old heroic quality, once associated with the epic, exists in Mme d'Aulnoy's work; and having noted how such heroic character as there is suffers a diminution in the three successive novels, let us turn to a notion as associated with 'mondain' morality as 'la gloire' was with stoicism -- 'la raison'. How important a place is it accorded by Mme d'Aulnoy? From a quantitative point of view alone, it will be noted that 'la raison' is of minor importance. Significant uses are to be found but rarely throughout the three formal novels. The two instances which occur in the first volume of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, are eloquent by default, so to speak. At the outset of the drama, when Hypolite and Julie declare their unhappy love, the latter remarks somewhat ineffectually: "mon cher frère, votre raison vous rappellera à votre devoir, ..." whilst she herself declares at a somewhat later juncture: "mon cœur ne veut point croire les conseils que ma raison lui donne." The final instance in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas is to be found in the second volume, when once again Julie opposes her heart to her

28. As has already been noted, there is a distinct difference between 'la gloire' as invoked by the protagonist, and as referred to by a third party, when it invariably intends to denote reputation. See Jean de Bourbon, vol.I, pp.70,160; vol.II, pp.120, 128, 245, 252.
reason: "mon coeur) vous seconde et il sera plus fort que ma raison ... que l'on est faible dans ces sortes d'occasions." 31.

There is an even greater dearth of examples in Jean de Bourbon, the only one which is valid being that which occurs in the letter addressed to Jean, where his unknown admirer declares that: "mon coeur révolté contre ma raison m'a fait soupirer mille et mille fois." 32. The alternative example in Jean de Bourbon presents an effect of quasi-bathos; when Jean proposes that he should spend the night hidden in Olympe's room, she rebukes him by saying: "ce que vous me demandez ... n'est pas raisonnable." 33.

As one might expect, the Comte de Warwick is at least as sterile in telling examples. We have been able to extract no more than two phrases of moral reasoning where 'la raison' plays a part, in the whole two volumes; and both being of relatively minor importance. The first is when Mme de Devonshire is a prey to temptation owing to her -- much repressed -- infatuation with the Count. She decrees that: "tout ce que le Comte tenterait à l'avenir deviendrait inutile, parce que la Comtesse profitait de son absence pour écouter sa raison." 34. The authoress does not expatiate upon the dictates of the Countess's reason, nor is the subsequent course of events in any way modified, as though by some effective moral force. 35.

The paucity of examples alone is significant, but is in itself less so than the actual connotation of reason in Mme d'Aulnoy's work. Reason was conceived of as being the faculty by which one steered one's

34. op. cit., vol. I, p. 270.
35. A final citation -- one which carries little weight, being the utterance of one of the minor characters -- the king asks the following rhetorical question concerning the Countess: "Est-il possible qu'une personne de tant de mérite et de naissance égare sa raison jusqu'au point de consentir à se perdre pour jamais." ibid., vol. I, p. 368.
course of action; this statement holds good to varying degrees for Mmes de Lafayette, de Villedieu and Bernard, as we have seen. To what does reason apply in Mme d'Aulnoy's novels? Certainly not to 'le repos de la vie' which is the cornerstone of the Princesse de Clèves; and which is given pride of place in Mme de Villedieu's works. Apart from the first example given, 'la raison' appears in a much atrophied form, divorced from its usual context, or rather, it is, in the majority of cases cited, opposed to the heart, to the emotions.

One might, at this juncture, begin to consider not only the effect, but also the possible cause of the emasculation of these notions. In the first place, the indefinite role which they are ascribed tends to blur the outlines of the moral dilemma. One is left unsure as to whether a solution is being sought in the drama, when it is proposed but diffidently, if at all. The protagonists, lacking precise directives, tend to assume a passive quality. These factors in their turn incite us to look for a cause in terms of Mme d'Aulnoy's underlying moral aim. Let us for a moment bear in mind this indeterminate quality, both in the protagonists and the dilemma, and look further for a fixed star in the firmament of 'Clio's' moral creation. 36.

It is to be found, unerring throughout, in the importance which is attached to 'le devoir' — duty — used both substantively and verbally, especially in the first and third novels. Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, especially, is fertile in examples, as when, at the outset Julie declares to Hypolite: "... je ne manquerai de courage, ni de constance: mais mon devoir m'est encore plus cher que ma tendresse." 37. When all seems lost, she bewails her fate thus: "... les reproches secrets que l'on se fait à soi-même, les remords qui suivent le tendre

36. Mme d'Aulnoy was named Clio by the Académie des Ricovrati.
souvenir d'un Amant encore aimé, le désir de faire son devoir et d'arracher de son coeur une inclination qui n'y doit plus être sans crime". 38.

On each occasion, it is Julie who invokes her duty, a constantly recurring theme, as when she opposes her duty and her love: "Ce que je dois à mon devoir, et ce que je sens pour lui, ne s'accordent point assez bien," 39. and when she demands of Hypolite: "Accordez mon devoir avec votre passion." 40. The term is used verbally and with much force in Julie's soliloquy which follows upon this last-cited dialogue: "Elle n'hésitait pas sur ce qu'elle avait envie de dire: mais elle hésitait si elle devait le dire, elle pensait que puis qu'elle était mariée, elle devait rester avec son époux ..." 41.

The notion of devoir disappears temporarily in Jean de Bourbon, where only the following example can be cited -- it is Léonide who speaks -- "Mon seul devoir pourrait me faire souhaiter d'être aimée de lui." 42. However, it re-emerges in the Comte de Warwick when Mme de Devonshire employs it in stating her moral attitude, first towards the king's advances: "Non sire, non, ... personne n'aura mon coeur que celui à qui je le dois." 43.

She determines to repress her passion for Warwick, taking her duty as she conceives of it, as her guide: "Comme je n'aurai jamais de commerce avec lui, que je le fuirai, et que mon seul devoir sera la règle de toute ma conduite, je me prépare à souffrir des peines infinies." 44. Finally, it is her duty which prevents her from marrying Warwick when other obstacles -- notably her husband -- have been swept away .... "Ne voulant point vous découvrir jusqu'où va mon malheur, quand je me trouve forcée par le devoir, et par la bienséance de refuser un époux qui peut faire la félicité de ma vie." 45.

A final example of this notion, taken from Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, relates to Julie's attitude to the ever-faithful Hypolite: "mais elle aime plus la vertu et son devoir qu'elle ne vous aime, et qu'elle s'aime elle-même."46. This quotation seems to be particularly pregnant in that it sounds as a distant echo — but with a significant difference — from the Grand Cyrus, when Mandane explains: "je vous déclare, que j'aime la gloire, beaucoup plus que je n'estime Artamène, quoi que je l'estime beaucoup: et que quand j'aurais pour vous toute la tendresse imaginable; je la combattrais et la vaincrais, plutôt que de consentir que vous m'entraînssiez d'une passion, qui me doit être suspecte."46a.

This change of emphasis — now upon 'le devoir' — would seem to corroborate conclusions, hitherto tentatively stated, concerning the passive quality of the protagonists. The heroine manifests a desire to obey, her head bowed before the winds of adversity. A sense of moral compunction is still present, but the sense of moral initiative is undeniably lessened. Further, we regard as significant that, just as reason and the emotions were opposed, duty is represented as inevitably accompanied by suffering.47.

Let us return for a moment to the question of the epic conception of Mme d'Aulnoy's work. Discussion of the principal moral notions should have been sufficient to render a comparison between the moral tone here and in the Grand Cyrus, for example, otiose. Nonetheless movement, fast and furious, is undeniably a characteristic of all three of Mme d'Aulnoy's novels. What is the effect of this — as of all — movement in the artefact? Surely it is to stir the reader. What then is the effect, if to this movement is added a tone of unimpeachable virtue, whereby the immaculate heroine and faultless hero are shown as the innocent playthings of fate? It is, surely, to move profoundly to tears. It is just such an aim which we see in Mme d'Aulnoy's work

and for which view we shall claim the support of textual evidence. But, first of all, why do we say that she wishes to move — 'toucher' — rather than to edify — 'instruire'? It is in part because it would seem that the latter motive is more nearly compatible with the compact and intense psychological studies exploited in the short story, than with the sprawling compositions of Mme d'Aulnoy, where the psychological interest is relatively neglected.

What, then, is Mme d'Aulnoy's conception of Man, what role is ascribed to him in her dramas? To say that Man is essentially passive is in fact tantamount to saying that he is essentially weak. A corollary more important still is that the acceptance of Man's passive role implies the abnegation of moral responsibility. That is, if Man is seen as suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune rather than himself taking up arms against them, he cannot logically be held responsible for his fate. Before pursuing this particular argument further, one should pause to consider the similarity of this doctrine to certain aspects of that of Mme de Villedieu. She, too, denied Man's responsibility for his fate. Wherein does the essential difference between the two writers lie? It lies, quite simply, in the supremely virtuous nature of Mme d'Aulnoy's protagonists, a virtue which struck her contemporaries, for instance, an unknown critic in the Mercure Galant, who wrote of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas: "cette histoire est un vrai chef d'oeuvre en son genre; il n'est pas possible de la lire sans être attendri jusqu'aux larmes; tout y annonce l'amour de la vertu et l'horreur du vice; malgré la passion réciproque d'Hippolite (sic) et de Julie, ils ne s'écartent point de leur devoir." Why should this virtue be the sine qua non'of a touching tale? Not the least of the reasons, surely, is the morality of the day, according to which happiness was the reward of merit. By this same token, undeserved unhappiness should surely be a spectacle of pity.

49. See introductory discussion.
The opinions advanced here may best be substantiated by an examination of the nature and effect of love, as portrayed by Mme d'Aulnoy in her novels. This should be the final test of the truth of the statements regarding her conception of Man, as love is the sole 'raison d'être' of the protagonists. It has been stated that an insistence upon virtue is a primary feature of Mme d'Aulnoy's works: thus it is that the respectful nature of true passion is emphasized. It is in this respectful nature that the justification of the hero's passion lies. In Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, Hypolite's words are: "la plus forte et la plus respectueuse des passions;" and elsewhere: "Une passion si juste et si innocente ..." The sense is elsewhere enlarged to include the lover's attitude towards his beloved, as, in Jean de Bourbon, "il la regarda d'une manière tendre et respectueuse." The quality of inspiring such a passion lies within the heroine - from her inviolate virtue. Thus she may fill the breast of such a traitor as Benavides, in Jean de Bourbon, with pure and noble feelings; he assures Léonide that: "ma respectueuse passion n'aurait jamais éclaté ...".

The same sense prevails in the Comte de Warwick, when, for instance, Mme de Devonshire refers to a love-letter addressed to her: "Dont le caractère passionné et respectueux conservait tout ensemble les égards qui étaient dûs à une femme de son mérite et de sa naissance, avec les témoignages de la plus grande passion et de la plus vive ardeur."

The conception of love as being noble still prevails, in essence,

50. It is not suggested that Mme d'Aulnoy alone insisted upon the respectful nature of passion: it was, of course, common currency. We are simply demonstrating its role and significance in the writer's moral outlook.


55. op.cit., vol.I, p.211.
in Mme d'Aulnoy's work. It is thus conceived of as being unique and inviolable: whatever misfortunes befall the hero and heroine, whatever the vicissitudes through which they must pass, they remain faithful the one to the other. Listen to their words as they swear an eternal fidelity: "croyez ... que la mort seule pourra séparer (nos coeurs), je suis résolue à tout ... ce n'est point que j'ignore ce que l'on va me faire souffrir, mais mes peines me seront chères tant qu'elles me donneront lieu de vous conserver votre Julie:"

and again, she swears:"qu'est-ce qui pourrait me rendre infidèle, pas même la mort ...". Vows of fidelity feature in Mlle Bernard's stories, but not, as we have seen, so strongly worded as in this present instance. Here, love is felt to be a power over life and death. Mme d'Aulnoy would seem to conceive of it as a force which is not reducible to reason: not once in her works do the terms 'mérite' or 'estime' occur with reference to love. They are absent even in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, where Mme d'Aulnoy seems to have made a consistent effort to re-create the heroic image. On no occasion does the heroine or hero suggest that their love is the just tribute paid the one to the other; if it is essentially innocent, it is nonetheless violent and impetuous. In fine, it is a blind mysterious force which takes no account of human reasoning: what in modern French would be termed the 'coup de foudre.'

That love assumes an active quality, that it is the motive cause of Mme d'Aulnoy's dramas is the necessary corollary of the abnegation of human responsibility, previously mentioned. It is indeed omnipotent: exacting its tribute when and from whom it pleases. The protagonist himself denies responsibility for his predicament, seeing in it the work of some external force; thus Hypolite explains how it is that he seeks in vain a cure for the ill which nothing can assuage:

58. Innocent in the sense that it incites its victims only to acts of virtue.
"l' Astre fatal sous lequel je suis né s'est opposé fortement à ma guérison". To which Julie, whom he, at this juncture, still believes to be his sister, replies: "Hélas! ... hélas mon frère! cet Astre duquel vous vous plaignez ne m'a pas fait moins de mal qu'à vous, connaissez tous vos malheurs et tous les miens." The star under which the unhappy 'victim' was born is invoked again, in the Comte de Warwick: "Hélas! c'était bien la fatalité de mon étoile qui m'y conduisait ..." and further on: "Enfin l'Astre fatal qui prèside à ma destinée, vous réservait le don de me plaire."

'L'Astre fatal' -- this phrase rings new and yet, accustomed as we are to Prevostian tragedy, it seems familiar. We do not presume to see in Mme d'Aulnoy a forerunner of Prevost, because what is the guiding force in the author of the Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité, is but an element in the somewhat indeterminate whole. Nonetheless, we are forced to accord such elements a place in the discussion because they are as so many straws in the wind. As we shall see, 'l'étoile', 'la destinée', 'l'Astre', will all recur in the novels we shall discuss, but never with the same superstitious intensity as in the works of 'Clio'.

If love is the work of fate and if this fate or destiny is essentially malevolent, as is in keeping with the touching spectacle of wronged virtue which Mme d'Aulnoy strove to portray, then love itself will be regarded as a misfortune, hence the references to 'malheurs' scattered throughout the texts. The role of fate, and its terrestrial agents, the villains, whose function it is to thwart the lovers' hopes, is admirably summed up in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, referring to Hypolite and Julie: "mais ils avaient trop

62. See also Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, vol.II, p.22. If this love has an eternal quality, it is because it is brought into being by supernatural forces.
Undeniably, the emphasis upon the emotive power of the drama, with all that it implies, is what most distinguishes Mme d'Aulnoy's works from those of her contemporaries. It is this aim which accounts for the systematic exploitation of unhappy love and the sorrows — 'les malheurs' — which are the work of an unkind fate. Although both Mme de Lafayette and, to some extent, Mlle Bernard refer to the sorrows of loving, the emphasis in their work remains on finding an issue — if this is possible — out of their afflictions, even if the issue is sought in a renunciation of love. This concentration upon moving the reader accounts for the ending of both Jean de Bourbon and the Comte de Warwick, particularly in the former, when the hero and heroine, about to be united after countless tribulations, are finally separated by Léonide's death at the hand of her rival.

It is the possibility of creating such a moving spectacle, afforded by the lengthy novel rather than the short story, which may be presumed to have influenced Mme d'Aulnoy's choice, or rather to have suited her inclinations. Those who would term her work 'précieux' do little to advance an understanding of its moral character. It would be more apposite to look at the beginnings of the sentimental novel, as shown by G. Reynier, where the role of the early novel of adventures in the formation of the genre, is indicated.

Finally, it is this emphasis upon moving the reader which may be said to account for emotional states being rendered by a description

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64. ibid., vol.1, p.107.
of attitude, as well as by freely-flowing tears. Particularly
telling examples of both these characteristics are to be found in
Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, as, for instance, when the hero learns
that his beloved has been abducted: "Hypolite, croisant les bras,
et levant les yeux au Ciel, lui répondit d'une voix basse et mal-
articulée ...". And when he hears that she has been abducted
for a second time: " ...joignant ses bras, (il) laissa aller sa
tête sur sa poitrine sans prononcer une seule parole.".

Similarly when Julie is being carried off by her husband against
her will to France, her anguish is rendered thus: "elle était couchée
sur le tillac, sa tête appuyée sur sa main, le visage couvert d'un
grand voile; et les yeux tournés vers son pays, qu'elle quittait
avec mille et mille regrets."

Of a tearful episode, we have an interesting example, when
Julie is saved from drowning by Hypolite, whom she still believes
to be her brother: she lies in a swoon: "mais les brûlants soupirs
et le déluge des larmes dont il lui mouillait le visage, la tirèrent
bientôt d'un état où la seule frayeur l'avait jettée."

Once again, it should not be concluded from the passages quoted
that they are indicative of the whole tone of the work: their
importance lies essentially, not in their numerical frequency, but
in their adumbrative quality.

If Mme d'Aulnoy's view of love remains consistent throughout
her work, then it should be presumed to order to a great extent its
tone and to create a certain sense of unity within the whole.

66. See v. Waldberg, Der empfindsame Roman in Frankreich, p.43.
V. Waldberg points out the use of action to interpret an
emotion, in the earlier 'epic', novels, which he attributes
to a lack of skill in describing psychological states on the
part of the writer. But could not this too be attributed in
part at least to a desire to arouse the pity of the spectator/
reader?
68. ibid., vol.II, p.48.
69. ibid., vol.II, p.35.
70. ibid., vol.I, p.34.
In ordering the tone of the work, it should surely impinge on the protagonists' relations with society, as presented in the novel. Eminently virtuous and worthy of our pity by their sufferings, victims of an invincible passion, the protagonists are presented in the moral dilemma which exists, albeit in a somewhat vestigial form in Hypolite, Comte de Douglas, as being sinned against by, rather than trying to conform to, society. A new note is struck when Julie, during an altercation with Hypolite's parents, declares: "il est vrai ... que ma fortune est bornée: mais ce n'est pas toujours les grands biens qui décident de la douceur et du repos de la vie; et j'ai entendu dire que l'union des cœurs est indispensablement nécessaire dans un établissement qui ne doit finir qu'avec la vie."

'L'union des cœurs' — this ideal which has Mme d'Aulnoy's (implicit) suffrage is strong enough a motive to render the step-parents, the Count and Countess of Douglas, antipathetic, when they set out to traverse Julie's and Hypolite's love.

Whereas in Éléonor d'Yvree, for instance, paternal wishes were paramount, here the parent/child relationship is presented in a different light. At the beginning of the book, the Count and Countess are portrayed as eminently sympathetic figures, receiving Julie with emotion from the hands of the dying Comtesse de Warwick. The Count of Douglas is described on that occasion as being "... un homme fort généreux, ... un bon parent et ... un parfait ami." The characterisation of the Count and Countess undergoes a transformation as from sensitive, they become self-interested and scheming; for the Count: "il était devenu insensible pour elle, et ses intérêts particuliers avaient étouffé les sentiments de tendresse qu'il devait à cette belle personne."

71. ibid., vol. I, p. 79.  
72. cf. the treatment of an analogous situation in Éléonor d'Yvree.  
73. op. cit., vol. I, p. 5.  
74. vol. II, p. 55.
Their views on filial submission and gratitude are, one feels, portrayed as harsh and unsympathetic; as when for instance the Countess points out the path of duty to Julie: "Je ne pensais pas qu'une fille si bien née dût disposer de son cœur sans l'aveu des personnes de qui elle dépend." 77 The same sentiments, in effect, are expressed when the Countess exclaims: "Car encore qu'elle ne soit pas notre fille, elle dépend assez de nous pour pouvoir faire le bonheur ou le malheur de sa vie." 78.

If Mme d'Aulnoy was content, in her first work, to refer to the omnipotence — and in consequence, the inviolability — of love, she exploits this theme more fully in Jean de Bourbon, where the effects of love both in the breasts of the noble and the ignoble are portrayed. The potentiality for evil of this tyrannical passion, ignored in Hypolite, Comte de Douglas, is here stated quite explicitly: "... les crimes que l'amour fait commettre sont les plus excusables de tous; considérez qu'il nous ôte notre libre arbitre; lorsqu'il s'est rendu maître d'une âme, il ne dépend plus d'elle d'aller contre ses volontés." 79. It is Mme d'Aulnoy who refers to the tyrannical nature of passion, levying a tribute which none can refuse to render: "... (que l'on n'a point encore ressenti les premiers feux de) cette malheureuse et tyrannique passion qui nous détache de nous-mêmes." 80.

This represents a far cry from the beliefs of the Précieux, who, although they acknowledged the suzerainty of love, so conceived of it that it was identified with themselves, with their gloire, being thus a factor of unification rather than alienation. Although for both Mme d'Aulnoy and her illustrious predecessors, the protagonist

77. ibid., vol. I, p. 73.
80. ibid., vol. I, p. 94.
must be represented as being the very incarnation of virtue, the former's conception of this quality has changed radically from being active to passive. Therefore, as this love is conceived of as being an independent force, it may be represented as acting against rather than in harmony with the protagonist.

Thus it is that it is considered to be a redoubtable enemy, in league with the essentially volatile forces of the emotions, the eventual victor over, rather than the companion of, reason. The only difference between its effect on the strong -- the virtuous -- and the weak -- the villains, is that the former, although they lose their peace of mind, resist the voice of their passion to the extent that they render themselves guilty of no moral transgression. This distinction is made clearly during a moral debate between Casilde and Léonide, when the former exclaims: "... que vous connaissez peu les effets d'une grande passion; tout est permis pour posséder le coeur d'un amant", drawing upon herself Léonide's angry rejoinder: "Dites plutôt ... que l'on se permet tout, et que l'on a une indulgence pour soi-même, qui ne laisse pas d'être fort condamnable."SI.

The assertion that Jean de Bourbon presents an unequivocal testimony to the power of love is perhaps most clearly borne out by the moral characterisation of the heroine, Léonide. Whilst...
her heart is still free, she calmly asserts that her sense of duty alone would suffice to make her wish to win her husband's love.  

However, love, an insidious enemy, creeps into her heart in disguise, to declare itself only when it holds the keys of the city: "Léonide, qui n'avait jamais ressenti d'empressement pour personne, fut touchée d'une si grande pitié, que sous ce nom de pitié, il entra dans son coeur des sentiments plus dangereux, plus vifs et plus tendres."  

Hereupon she is led to take up a point of view diametrically opposed to that of Mlle de Scudéry's heroines; she is led to acknowledge her own weakness: "Que l'on est faible quand on aime: qu'aurait-il pensé de cette faiblesse, ne devrais-je lui marquer mon indignation par un air de mépris et de colère?"  

The correlation between love and esteem is shown here as having entirely disintegrated: "Il m'est cher, je n'en puis disconvenir, mais je l'aime sans l'estimer, je l'aime malgré moi."  

One is thus entitled to draw some conclusion regarding the moral aspect of Mme d'Aulnoy's novels. The sense of unity in her conception of love is attested to by the very fact that it evolves throughout the three novels under discussion. It enjoys a vigorous life, expanding, ordering the course of events and therefore the tone of the works; shown now in this aspect, now in another. Further, the emphasis in Mme d'Aulnoy's novels, indicative of her moral aim, that of portraying passive/suffering virtue by reason of its emotive appeal, remains a constant factor. 

82. ibid., vol. I, p.109"mon seul devoir pourrait me faire souhaiter d'être aimée de lui."
84. ibid., vol. II, p.280.
85. ibid., vol II, p. 282.
If, however, we refer to the unity within Mme d'Aulnoy's work, we are far from seeing there any systematic element. Its tenuous nature cannot be too strongly stressed: a quality which is at the same time difficult -- not to say impossible -- to render in such a study as this. If we have seized upon the aspects of Mme d'Aulnoy's work which distinguish it from that of other women novelists of the time, it is in order the better to apprehend the elements which constitute her particular moral creation.
CHAPTER 3.

ETHICS IN MADEMOISELLE DE LA FORCE'S NOVELS. 1694 - 1703.

The aristocratic setting: historical veracity neglected in favour of an interpretation of refined and unhappy love -- variations in plot construction. The importance of 'la gloire', 'la raison': demonstrating the general lack of moral dilemma as well as indicating individual differences in moral tone -- 'la délicatesse' contributes to the moral atmosphere of virtue and refinement and indicates an interest in the emotional aspect of the dramas. Mlle de la Force's conception of love: not based on merit -- love is omnipotent, hence a fatalistic outlook, expressed by 'le destin', 'le ciel' -- given the virtuous nature of the protagonists, the true interest lies in touching spectacle of sufferings -- 'les malheurs' -- the protagonists, although essentially passive, are still 'illustres' -- her doctrine is thus essentially aristocratic in conception and expression, the effect of the drama being ordered by an implicit denial of personal responsibility.

The years between 1691, the date of the publication of Jean de Bourbon, and 1703, that of Le Comte de Warwick, were marked by prolific literary activity. Mlle de la Force published five novels between these dates, the first four appearing between 1694 and 1697. What of Mlle de la Force as a writer? She is described by Mgr. Grente as another Mme de Lafayette, lacking neither imagination nor talent, but without genius. Grente does not, however, specify in which respect she is like 'Feliciane'.
We have already indicated that we do not consider imagination to be Mme de Lafayette's most marked characteristic, whereas it is true that imagination, wild and disordered, has left its imprint on Mlle de la Force's work — as it did on her life.\(^1\)

It may also be noted that all Mlle de la Force's novels were written, or at least published, after she had been ordered by the monarch to retire into a convent. This fact is relevant in that the reason for our heroine's banishment was that so-called Epicurean works, attributed to her, were circulating in manuscript form. It should be stated immediately that close examination of the texts has produced no evidence even of such Epicurean traits as were present in Mme de Villedieu's work. One may presume then that, for literary purposes, Mlle de la Force's Epicurean days were over.

What epochs did Mlle de la Force choose as a background for her dramas? Her first novel, the *Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne* of 1694, takes as its setting the court of one of the most famous dukes of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. Inspite of the fact that Michaud claims a basis of historical fact for Mlle de la Force's works,\(^3\) apart from the names of some of the protagonists, we would insist that one looks in vain for a portrait of life in the Burgundian court which reached the zenith of its brilliance at this period — the mid-fifteenth century. What does the *Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne* teach us of political intrigue, rife at this time? The tone is rather that of the court which Mlle de la Force knew so well — that of Le Roi Soleil.\(^4\)

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1. See biographical note, Appendix II.
4. She even commits such crude errors as to make the courtiers of Charles the Bold wear powdered hair. *op. cit.*, p.186.
Her following novel, the *Histoire Secrète de Henri IV, Roy de Castille, Surnommé l'Impuissant*, 1695, is once again, somewhat remote in time, set as it is — nominally — in the mid-fifteenth century; and as lacking in local colour as the first. Nothing of Spain — of any century — appears in this the shortest of Mlle de la Force's novels.

The *Histoire de Marguerite de Valois*, of 1696, marks a rapprochement both in time and space, being set in the time of François I, whose sister is the heroine. Does Mlle de la Force accordingly dwell at greater length on the factual basis of the plot? The answer must remain in the negative, the only advance being that the cadre, with its description of 'fêtes galantes', is more convincing in that its similarity with that of Mlle de la Force's own time prevents it from striking too anachronistic a note.

*Gustave Vasa*, the last of the quartet of novels to be published in four successive years, does, however, mark a break with tradition — at least, with the tradition to which Mlle de la Force had previously subscribed. Instead of the French or Spanish courts, the latter of which being particularly popular at that moment owing to the success of Mme d'Aulnoy's *Voyage en Espagne*, Mlle de la Force situates her plot in the barren North — Sweden — less familiar than ever to her readers (and the details of which they would be even less able to verify). The novelty of the decor coincides with a new element in Mlle de la Force's work, an appreciation of nature. Whereas nature has been

most perfunctorily treated in her earlier novels, it is not only represented as being in perfect harmony with the mood of the protagonists, but occupies a place in its own right, thus: "la Déliecarlie est un pays plein de forêts, et il est commun d'en trouver de trente lieues de longueur, dont les arbres sont plantés sur une mousse Céladon. Ils s'élèvent orgueilleuse-ment jusqu'aux nues, ils semblent avoir vu l'enfance du monde, et l'éternelle verdure qu'ils conservent brave la rigueur des hivers".

8. It is completely absent in Henry IV, in accordance, as we shall see later, with the partially 'realistic' tone of the cadre on the one hand, and a concentration upon psychological detail on the other. This is the most schematic of Mile de la Force's novels, with regard to background. The gentler plots and more romanesque detail of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne and Marguerite de Valois lend themselves to a certain description of nature, e.g. Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, p.113 "... et prenant Comines par la main, ils furent s'asseoir tous deux sous une touffe d'arbres qui leur faisait une agréable fraîcheur, et justement à un détour de cette petite rivière qui rendait ce lieu solitaire et si propre aux secrets dont ils s'allaient entre­tenir". For stylized descriptions of nature and 'fêtes champêtres', see Marguerite de Valois, Vol. I, pp.195-196, Vol. II, p.46.

9. Although M. Hervier, in Le Sentiment de la nature au XVII^ Siècle, Revue Universitaire, 1937-1938, discounts all descriptions of nature which bear the précieux stamp, their significance could perhaps be better assessed if one bears in mind their total absence in some works, those of Mme de Lafayette and Mile Bernard, for instance. See also R. Adam, Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études Bibliothèque de Campagne, Geneva, 1749, Vol. 1, p.326. This description doubtless bears the imprint of novelty but it is the only one of its kind in the work. Further, the restraint of the vocabulary and such phrases as "une mousse Céladon" would incline one to modify the view of Von Waldberg, op. cit., p.231, who sees in it a lyrical description of nature.
It is in her last novel, the full title of which is *Anecdote Galante, ou Histoire Secrète de Cathérine de Bourbon, Duchesse de Bar et Soeur de Henri le Grand*, which appeared in 1703, that Mlle de la Force, choosing the court of the last of the Valois and that of the young Henri IV as her cadre, pays the most attention to actual historical details. It should not be inferred from this, however, that Mlle de la Force is immediately concerned with the broader outlines of history; it is the anecdotic reality of manners and morals which is presented — and in a convincing fashion.

So much for the actual epochs which Mlle de la Force chooses to provide the back-cloth of her stories. Back-cloths which are at least as precise and convincing as those of Mlle Bernard or Mme de Lafayette — and radically different from those of Mme d'Aulnoy's novels.

Let us look a little more closely at the use which Mlle de la Force has made of history in her novels.

The story of the *Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne* is briefly thus: Marie, daughter of Charles the Bold, is married off for political reasons to Audefphè de Gueldres, who is unworthy of her and whom she cannot love — partly because of his unworthiness and partly because her affections are already engaged to the Comte d'Angoulême. Each chance of happiness for the lovers is thwarted, either by conflicting political interests, as when she is betrothed to Maximilian, the Emperor's son, or owing to a fatal misunderstanding, as a result of which Marie is married to Maximilian. There is, indeed, little romanesque element in the *Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne*, in the sense of abductions, disguises and duels such as were scattered

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through Mme d'Aulnoy's texts. The lovers are left to pine, to examine the principles of their conduct — and to pine once more. If there is little romanesque detail, there is also little or no moral dilemma in the work. Marie de Bourgogne, victim of a passion which was innocent at its inception, is never called upon to renounce her love: she does no more than to express her incorruptible virtue.

The Histoire Secrète des Amours de Henri IV marks a certain divergence in tone from that of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne. For this novel, Mlle de la Force claims in a foreword the quality of truth, or naturalness: "La plupart des romans sont peu naturels, et pour le style et pour les sentiments; au lieu qu'ici on trouvera la nature toujours représentée telle qu'elle est sans qu'on ait cherché à en flatter et à en déguiser la faiblesse et la bizarrerie". Mlle de la Force is presumably referring to the action itself; and it must be conceded that the romanesque elements previously referred to, colourful incidents and bye-plots are absent. Apart from the initial datum however, that of the King's impotence, it will be noticed here, as in Mlle de la Force's first work, that the title bears little or no relation to the plot. In both instances, it would seem to promise much, but gives little. The hero, or at least, the central male character, Alphonse de Cordone, is portrayed as being torn between his love for two women, the Queen and Cathérine de Sandoval, so that his dilemma might be summed up in the words from The Beggar's Opera - 'How happy I could be with either ......'!

Inspite of the realistic feature of the story, previously referred to, the central theme, that of the love of Cathérine de Sandoval for Alphonse, cannot be similarly classified. Having fallen in love with him, she is capable of such perfect love that

12. Avis au lecteur, to be found in the first edition, that of 1695, Paris, but not those of 1695, The Hague; and 1736, Villefranche.
not only can she give him up, but she also endeavors to further his interests to the extent of pressing his suit with the Queen. Even when she has ceased to love him — as she must do when he has proved himself unworthy of her — she continues to help him. What is this but the ideal of a love based on esteem — the antithesis of passion as conceived of by Mme d'Aulnoy? The drama, which takes in a comparison between the more sensual and interested love of the Queen with the pure and lofty love of Cathérine, to the latter's advantage, ends with the execution of Alphonse for treason.

The Histoire de Marguerite de Valois is — in more modern dress — the same story as the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne. Marguerite, having fallen in love with the Connétable de Bourbon is married, for political reasons to the Duc d'Alençon, who is unworthy of her. The Constable, for his part, is married — for reasons of convenience — to a woman whom he does not love. The malice which continues to separate the lovers, even after the death of their respective spouses, is caused by the passion of Marguerite's mother for the Constable! Thus it is that, subsequent to François I's imprisonment following the battle of Pavia, she is promised to Philip II; and owing to a mésintelligence between herself and the Constable, she is married to the King of Navarre. It is because of the Constable's frustrated passion that he turns his sword against his monarch and his country. We have, in fine, the now-familiar pattern of events, where the hyper-virtuous lovers bewail their lot and where the intrigue is given a fillip by the inclusion of quite extraneous bye-plots. The generally accepted picture of Marguerite, sister of François I, known as Marguerite de Navarre, ¹³ brilliant patroness of letters and defender of the advocates of religious reform, has been replaced

¹³. Not Marguerite de Valois, as given in the title of this work.
by an utterly spurious account of her love-life, which is founded for the major part on supposition. Mlle de la Force has

attempted on the flimsiest of pretexts in order to construct a story of virtuous and unhappy love, to which she gives greater verisimilitude by relating it to historical events.

If our authoress presents the love interest of Marguerite d'Angoulême's life in a much hypertrophied form, she seems to have invented the love-story of Gustave Vasa out of whole cloth. Romanesque elements are accentuated, introducing an 'epic' quality into the work. The story begins at the court of Sweden, where the Princesse de Sudermanie, heiress to the throne, falls in love with Vasa — a love which is not reciprocated. As a result of the Princess's abduction by Christierne of Denmark, Vasa finds himself at the Danish court, where he proceeds to fall in love with the king's daughter. After the lovers (Christine of Denmark and Gustave Vasa) have been separated by a reverse of fortune, Gustave returns to Sweden, where he undertakes — with success — the reconquest of his country from the Danish oppressors. Being unable to requite the Princess de Sudermanie's passion, he instead places the crown upon her head — and her death is announced shortly after. Subsequent to Vasa's ascending the throne, at the behest of the people, he meets a beautiful woman with whom he falls in love — only to discover that it is the Princesse de Sudermanie, who had caused the false news of her death to be spread abroad because she knew that Vasa did not love her. At last, love's fatal hour having struck, the lovers are united. Such a résumé cannot conclusively render the romanesque nature of the plot, the countless deeds of bravery on the hero's part, interspersed with highly-stylized declarations of love. There are, in addition, two intercalated

14. It was, however, true that she was unhappy in her first marriage.
stories of considerable importance: that of Radivil, illustrating
the theme of the generous husband; and that of Colombine,
illustrating that of pure and disinterested love.

We have claimed that the love theme in Gustave Vasa is
entirely a figment of Milie de la Force's imagination. Indeed,
it is impossible to recognise the Gustavus I of history; the
soldier, and politician, who forged out his country's destiny
with the blows of his sword. Milie de la Force has chosen two
incidents: that of Vasa's abduction to Denmark and that of his
reconquest of Sweden, around which she weaves her fiction.
Historical fact is for her a mere pretext: she does not seek to
re-create history but rather to use it as an excuse for the ex­
ploration of a particular theme.

A first glance might lead one to believe that in the Anecdote
Secréte ... de Catérine de Bourbon Milie de la Force has reverted
to the theme of her first novel; but further examination shows
that this is not particularly true. Granted, there are superficial
resemblances: the framework upon which the action rests is that of
the unhappy love of Catérine and the Comte de Soissons. As on
the two previous occasions, each time the lovers are about to be
united, they are frustrated either through the personal spite of
a third party — one of the lovers is invariably loved by a morally
lesser, but politically greater mortal — or by political intrigue.
And, of course, when this fails, there is always the expedient of
intercepted letters. On this, even more than on previous occasions,
however, the moral dilemma is attenuated. Here more than elsewhere
does Milie de la Force concentrate upon court intrigues and pays
special attention to the amorous intrigues of Henri de Navarre.
Here, as never before in her works Milie de la Force presents a
record of historical events, especially the wars of religion.
Before proceeding to an examination of the ethics in Mlle de la Force's novels, we should examine, briefly, the significance of her treatment of history. In the first place, she at least differs from Mme d'Aulnoy in her insistence upon the court setting, constant throughout her works. More than to an interest in a particular period in history, this choice should be ascribed to Mlle de la Force's aesthetic pre-occupations. She chose to portray above all a love which was pure, in accordance with the nobility of the protagonists: this nobility being further enhanced by the barriers of time which separated the protagonist from the reader.

If, therefore, the cadre in her first four novels appears to us unconvincing, it is not only because Mlle de la Force — with all her generation — lacked an historical sense, but also that her true interest lay in the presentation of pure love. Cathérine de Bourbon demonstrates two things: the first is that any attempt at rendering history was incompatible with such idealized portrayals of love as were current at the time. This distinction may be noted in the respective treatment of historical fact in the works of Mmes de Lafayette and de Villedieu. As we have seen, moral realism in the latter's works is accompanied by a certain material realism: the morals of Diane de Poitiers are described in conjunction with the court spectacles. Mme de Lafayette, who concentrates on a study of love, uses the background simply as a means and not as an end in itself. The chief function of historical accounts was to be that of amusement, of satisfying the readers' considered curiosity. In Mlle de la Force's last work, where historical fact is most present, it inhibits the development of the love theme: love is displaced, and when it appears, it is regarded essentially as an amusement. This is of course another way of saying that all

15. The court atmosphere varies not a whit from book to book.
attempt at what was regarded as historical accuracy was incompatible
with the aim to edify on the part of the writer — hence the dis­
appearance of all moral dilemma from Catherine de Bourbon. This
novel approached, more nearly than any other by Mlle de la Force,
the 'roman de moeurs' as it was beginning to develop in the hands
of men-writers. For her contemporaries, history was essentially
a study of manners; lacking all sense of the philosophy of history,
they concerned themselves with its anecdotic aspect.

Finally, the futility of attempting to refer to 'the historical
novel' at this time should be stressed once more. We must, rather,
confine ourselves to the conclusion that, from the evidence, there
would seem to be a number of women novelists, writing on nominally
historical subjects, who are concerned with making a study of the
noble aspects of love. Mlle de la Force, in her first four novels,
chooses this latter path, whilst in her last work, the term 'histoire'
would seem to have a different significance.

Let it be understood from the outset that the variation in
tone, already apparent from the expositions of intrigue in Mlle de la Force's work, is not without significance to this study:
differences in the plot-construction are matched by differences
in moral characterisation. But first of all, for an examination
both of such moral criteria as we have already encountered in the
novel and of such new ones as may present themselves. Their
significance, or lack of it, has already been proven eloquent:
innovations, introduction of new criteria has been seen to be
important in indicating the writer's outlook. Although an
examination of moral notions is not the final test of ethics in
a writer's work, it is indispensable as an introduction.

17. See the various pseudo-mémoires of the time, especially the
works of Courtilz de Sandras.
18. See discussion of moral values in Mme d'Aulnoy's works.
As on previous occasions, let us look at the use which Mlle de la Force makes of that most venerable of moral notions, 'la gloire'. Here an interesting revelation is made at the outset: inspite of the eminently virtuous tone of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, 'la gloire', entirely devoid of its former power, receives but indifferent treatment. The only occasion on which 'la gloire' is used in a sense approaching the Cornelian, is at the end of the work, regarding the heroine: "Un vif sentiment de gloire l'affligea de se voir en but des calomnies du roi".19. It would, perhaps, be pertinent to give other examples of the use of 'la gloire' in this the first of Mlle de la Force's novels, to demonstrate the loss of impetus which the notion has suffered. As on previous occasions in the works of other women-writers, it has come, on the one hand, to signify only reputation: ".... je trouverais bien les moyens de vous ôter au Dauphin, sans que votre gloire y fût intéressée".20. On the other hand, it would seem to be conceived of as appertaining to love and to winning a requital of one's passion: "J'aimais seulement la personne de la Duchesse, je me faisais une gloire de l'aimer ...." 21. and: "(ma passion) toujours tendre et désintéressée, elle ne prétend d'autre gloire, que celle qu'elle tire de sa malheureuse fidélité".22.

If an examination of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne has proved that 'la gloire' has been deposed from the position which it occupied in the moral hierarchy of the Scuderian novel, one is, perhaps, surprised, in view of foregoing remarks on the austere moral tone of Henri IV, to find only an isolated significant reference to it here. This occurs when Catherine, seeing the unworthiness of Alphonse, ceases to love him: "on peut connaître qu'elle n'avait jamais eu que des sentiments héroïques puis qu'elle aimâ Alphonse tant qu'elle crut qu'il y avait de la gloire à lui être fidèle .......".23.

Marguerite de Valois, notwithstanding its being more fertile in examples, does not mark a re-instatement of 'la gloire' to its former position of importance. In the main, 'la gloire' has in this present work the same force as in the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne. It is used to refer either to love or to military glory, as the following examples, chosen at random from the many which offer themselves, will show. "Ah, Madame, qu'un coeur qui n'a jamais aimé donne avec plaisir et gloire quand c'est à une divine personne".24. 'La gloire' referring to military glory seems to be particularly frequent, as, for instance, when 'la gloire' is opposed to love: "Il croyait que ce n'était que des désirs de gloire qui le mettaient en cet état, et il vit bien ensuite que c'était des pressentiments d'amour".25. Finally, of course, it is used, as elsewhere, in the sense of reputation.26.

The observations made regarding the use of 'la gloire' in Mlle de la Force's previous works, are equally applicable to Gustave Vasa. The protagonists do, it is true, refer to 'la gloire' when speaking of their moral resolution, but such references, owing to their infrequency, lack the power to convince. The hero and heroine express themselves in the following terms: "en quelque état que le sort me réduise, j'aurai toujours ma gloire devant les yeux".27. And: "... it aurait été capable de prendre quelque funeste résolution, si le souvenir de sa gloire et de ce qu'il devait à la Princesse de Dudermont ne l'eussent retenu".28.

The search for examples of 'la gloire' in Catherine de Bourbon has proved fruitless. We may thus be allowed to draw a tentative

27. op. cit., p.168.
28. ibid., p.343. For other examples, see pp.178, 210, 346, 365, 395.
conclusion, to be substantiated by further evidence throughout this discussion of Mlle de la Force's works, on the role of 'la gloire' in her novels. Whilst it must be conceded that it has lost its former dignity, it may, by its very presence, be assumed to represent, on the writer's part, an attempt to convey a particular moral tone, a preoccupation with virtue and with a certain conception of moral dilemma. This moral dilemma being entirely absent in Catherine de Bourbon, 'la gloire' is accordingly neglected.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the elements of moral characterization which have replaced 'la gloire', let us look, for a moment at a notion which claimed close kinship to the former in Comelian ideology: and which, having been absent from the works of Mlle Bernard and Mme d'Aulnoy, re-appears in the pages of Mlle de la Force's novels, that is: "faiblesse", referring to love. Do we infer that Mlle de la Force has been shown to regard love as a weakness? Examination of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne might almost lead one to such a conclusion. However, all examples have in common that the heroines refer to the love which they feel as a weakness, because this love does not permit of a happy solution. Thus Louis XI's queen admits: "vous dirai-je ma faiblesse? ..... cet inconnu a fait une terrible impression sur mon coeur".29. When Duclos, the famous warrior, becomes a victim of love: "... ce fut en grand homme, ce fut sans faiblesse si on la peut séparer de l'amour".30.

The notion continues to thrive, although to a somewhat modified extent, in Henri IV. If one may disregard the fact that it is Alphonse, the fickle lover, who deems love to be a weakness, if not justified by the merit of the beloved, then the two examples of the

29. op. cit., p.309. See also p. 315. "La jeune Princesse ... résolut de cacher toute sa vie sa faiblesse ....".
30. ibid., p.443.
use of 'faiblesse' in *Henri IV* are in exact accordance with the old conception. For instance, when Alphonse realizes that he has fallen in love with Cathérine: "le caractère de son esprit semblait plus solide que n'est celui de la plupart des femmes: aussi Alphonse ne regardait plus sa passion comme une faiblesse".31.

In the following two works in which 'la faiblesse' appears, *Marguerite de Valois* and *Gustave Vasa*, there are to be found the three connotations of 'la faiblesse': regarding love itself as a weakness; regarding a love not justified by the other's worth as a weakness; and finally regarding an impossible love, especially one where the emotions are allowed to conquer reason, as a weakness. Examples, although not particularly frequent, are still sufficient to have some influence on the moral tone of the works. For instance, when Marguerite de Valois realizes that her love for the Constable is as ineradicable as it is hopeless: "...ne pouvant arracher de son coeur le penchant invincible qu'elle avait pour le duc de Bourbon, (elle avait obtenu d'elle-même) de ne se livrer à nulles faiblesses dont il pût tirer quelque avantage".32.

The Princess of Sudermanie, heroine of *Gustave Vasa*, feels bitter shame and mortification that she has fallen in love with Gustave and that he does not return her affections: "...M. chère Cécile ... ne m'abandonnez pas, faites-moi bien honte de ma faiblesse".33.

Briefly, what conclusion is one entitled to draw from this use of 'la faiblesse' in *Mlle de la Force's* works? In the first place, it may be noted that this moral awareness is the property of the virtuous, such protagonists as the Duchesse d'Angoulême, mother

31. op. cit., p.40. See also p.31.
32. op. cit., p.171. See also p.224.
33. op. cit., p.167. See also pp.241, 395.
François I, and later, Sigibrite, the depraved mistress of Christiern of Denmark, in Gustave Vasa, are blind to their own weakness and moral turpitude. It will be readily conceded that 'la faiblesse' is used more to refer to a love rendered unequal by circumstances, than to love itself. Re-stating, then, the question of whether Mlle de la Force regarded love as a weakness, the answer must be in the negative. The significance of the notion is that, in the first four of her works, it serves to characterize the love which is intended to edify the reader.

Having relegated the notions of 'la gloire' and 'la faiblesse' to the (still not unimportant) role of indicating, rather than directing, the moral tone, let us now attempt to ascertain the importance of 'la raison' in the moral reasoning of Mlle de la Force's protagonists. As with the notions previously discussed, the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne contains, quantitatively speaking, an important number of examples of the use of 'la raison', together with its adjective, 'raisonable'.

At an earlier juncture in the discussion of moral notions in the works of women writers, we took up the position that 'la raison' was most effectively employed as referring to the solution of the protagonist's dilemma. On one occasion alone in the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne is 'la raison' used in an analogous context. At the outset of the story, one of the repining lovers describes his state thus: "au bout d'un longtemps je trouvai mon amour si augmenté, que toute ma raison ne me put empêcher d'en donner de visibles marques à la Duchesse". It may be alleged, with some justification, that this example lacks force, that it has lost the tonality which it had in Mme de Lafayette's work, for instance. And yet it is the most noteworthy example in the book.

34. op. cit., p. 120.
35. For other examples, see pp. 353, 365, 469, 337.
For the rest, 'raisonnable' is an epithet which Mlle de la Force applies liberally to character and to action: the Duchess of Burgundy is endowed with: "une vertu raisonnable, solide et humaine ......".36 The latter describes love as: "un dérèglement qui assomme la raison, et où je ne puis imaginer qu'un esprit raisonnable puisse se soumettre".37 Admittedly this is a somewhat extreme view; the writer also preaches: "... cet amour désintéressé, ... cet amour raisonnable qui ne se trouve presque jamais".38

Thus the notion would seem to have acquired a somewhat secondary place. Its use understood and accepted by the reader, it no longer applies specifically to the solution of a problem, but rather to the nature and conduct of the protagonists.

In Henri IV, essentially an exposition of two kinds of love, the noble and disinterested on the one hand; and the essentially reprehensible on the other, it is interesting to note that the latter is qualified as being the enemy of reason, whilst the former is portrayed as being illuminated by it. Cathérine, although she had ceased to love Alphonse: "...... avait toujours conservé assez de raison pour ne chercher que les véritables intérêts de celui qu'elle aimait".39 Conversely, her lover made: "... des résolutions d'autant plus folles, qu'Alphonse n'écoutait plus que son amour et que la Reine commençait à ne plus guère écouter sa raison".40

So much for the importance, from the point of view of explicit use, of 'la raison' in Mlle de la Force's second work. Marguerite de Valois will necessitate more prolonged attention, by virtue of the importance which is given to 'la raison' here. When, for

36. ibid., p.121. 37. ibid., p.175.
38. ibid., p.271. 39. op. cit., p.191.
40. ibid., p.167.
instance, Marguerite realizes that love has become master of her emotions: "Elle rappela toute sa raison, et voulut lui redonner le même empire auquel son âme s'était si souvent soumise". The difference between this and the conception of reason as the concomitant of true and noble love, expressed in Henri IV, will be quite apparent. For a moment, we approach the conception of love as the natural enemy of reason. If, however, the virtuous Marguerite is prey to the passion of love, it is her reason which proves victorious. She had previously boasted: "mon coeur a toujours suivi ma raison, et il n'a été rempli que de ce qui me pouvait conduire à de grandes choses". Her anguish is subsequently described in the following terms: "La Princesse poussa des cris, versa des larmes, voulait mourir; mais sa raison reprenant bientôt un empire qui lui était naturel ...."

Disregarding other examples of 'la raison' in Marguerite de Valois, principally because they add nothing to what has already been stated on the subject, the next point of interest is the absolute disappearance of the notion in Gustave Vasa. On no occasion, significantly or indifferently, is it referred to.

Finally, perhaps contrary to expectations, one notes that in Catherine de Bourbon, 'la raison' is once more invoked to combat the passions and to illuminate the path of virtue. Its use is not, however, frequent: Catherine alone shows herself pre-occupied with questions of conduct and virtue: "Ne savez-vous pas, que les mouvements de mon coeur se régleront toujours sur la raison". And further on, when her love has been thwarted: "On ne revient pas facilement d'un premier choix, ... il faut que le temps me guérisse, et que la raison referme une plaie qu'elle a aidé elle-même à me faire".

Some comment on the moral notions present in Mlle de la Force's work, which have been discussed up to the present, is now indicated. First of all, it will be seen that the moral tone of the work, referred to in general terms at the outset of the discussion, is indicated and may be largely ascertained by a study of the exact value of these notions. Certain patterns have tended to become apparent, even from this somewhat schematic examination. The emphasis in the first and third works being upon a virtuous love, which is destined to be unhappy, the notions of 'la gloire' and 'la raison' appear to sustain the effect. Similarly 'la raison' is absent from Gustave Vasa, as 'la gloire' is absent from Cathérine de Bourbon. Nonetheless, such an examination is apt to pose almost as many questions as it tends to solve. What is the exact moral tone — implicit in the nature of love portrayed — in these two works? Fresh material which will subsequently be analysed, should implement our understanding of Mlle de la Force's moral creation.

Before proceeding to the next stage of this discussion however, and as a preparative to this, one should emphasize once more the fact that the lack of moral dilemma, again referred to in the opening remarks on Mlle de la Force's choice of subject, may be seen to account for the general tenor of the moral notions just reviewed. Once again, whilst these notions are not of paramount importance, their role is not negligible: their main function being to create the tone of refinement and virtue which reigns. 

Refinement: a notion which we have not had recourse to deal with in Mme d'Aulnoy's works. The significance of 'la délicatesse' has already been discussed — briefly, as the occasion warranted — in studying the works of Mme de Lafayette and Mlle Bernard. One therefore recognizes it as belonging to the pattern of thought.
which prized highly intellectual values. What use does Mlle de la Force make of this term within her work? The heroine of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne refers to it at an early stage of her misfortunes, when she laments: "ces expressions tendres ne sont jamais dans la bouche d'Adolphe, son coeur n'a jamais connu de telles délicatesses." One may argue that the very presence of this notion is in itself significant; but let us look at further examples to see what is its exact sense and upon what occasions it is employed. When Marie de Bourgogne's lover is parted from her, he: "Le Comte de Rivière sentit cette séparation en Amant délicat et sensible." Again the term is used substantively in the following example, "... vous n'ignorez pas qu'une tendresse languissante serait peu propre à satisfaire toute la délicatesse de mon coeur," as it is on an ultimate occasion at the close of the story: "... mais un moment après, elle eut honte d'avoir voulu s'éclaircir: il n'était plus temps d'avoir ces délicatesses."

Having stated the positive quality of 'la délicatesse' as shown in these examples; the ethical connotation of the originally aesthetic notion; it must be added, on the negative side, that these examples are not vitally more important than were 'la raison' or 'la gloire'. The somewhat minor role of 'la délicatesse' makes discussion — as opposed to mere demonstration of its existence — difficult to sustain. Indeed, its frequency decreases with each following book.

There are, however, two significant examples of its use in Henri IV, the first when one of the heroine's rivals: "avait assez de délicatesse pour souhaiter qu'on l'aimât pour d'autres

47. See introduction. 48. op. cit., p.36. 49. ibid., p.41. 50. ibid., p.79. 51. ibid., p.523.
raisons que celle du dépit d'Alphonse". And the second when Catherine de Sandoval: "se retira plus convaincue que jamais que personne n'était capable d'aimer avec la délicatesse et la constance dont elle aimait".

If one applies here the principle, previously expounded, that moral notions either expressed by or applied to the main protagonists, have greater weight, in that they affect more closely the conception and interpretation of the drama, then the importance of 'la délicatesse' falls off sharply in Marguerite de Valois. Two minor instances only may be cited en passant, the first: "Allez, seigneur, allez guérir un mal si tendre et si délicat;" and another, more anodyne still: "Vous connaissez, comme moi, la délicatesse de son coeur".

Examination of the text of Gustave Vasa has proved almost entirely negative. On one occasion alone it is fleetingly referred to, thus: "... que feriez-vous de votre délicatesse?".

The appearance of 'la délicatesse' in Catherine de Bourbon is of interest in view of its somewhat special character as an historical novel. The two occasions upon which it is used are strongly reminiscent of similar examples of usage in Mme de Villedieu's novels. Henri de Navarre's betrayal of his mistress's secret to her rival is reported in the following terms: "le sacrifice qu'il lui faisait était la marque la plus délicates qu'il pût lui donner de son amour". And, further on, a scorned mistress exclaims:

52. op. cit., p.35.
53. ibid., p.129. For a final example of the term, see p.247, "Si la Cuéva avait un peu de délicatesse, il aurait aisément donné au Roi le conseil qui convenait à sa gloire et à l'état de sa fortune".
55. ibid., vol.II, p.74.
56. op. cit., p.158.
57. op. cit., p. 66.
"Moi, Madame, qui depuis six ans goûtais les douceurs d'un commerce tendre et délicat, je me croyais à l'abri d'une si cruelle disgrâce." 58.

This survey of the use of 'la délicatesse', albeit brief, has served to establish two facts pertinent to this study. In the first place, the examples taken from *Catherine de Bourbon* bear out a point made earlier: that the moral notions recorded in a work devoid of moral pre-occupation, reflect the amoral nature of this work. The difference between these latter examples and those of the *Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne*, even in the context of this slight discussion, should be apparent. That 'la délicatesse' could accommodate to works of differing moral tone is due in part to the fact that it was particularly applied to the expression of mood or emotion.

Once again, the role of 'la délicatesse', although confined, is still not negligible. The idea of refinement which it conveys forms an intrinsic part of the moral tenor of Mlle de la Force's first four works. Nowhere does the tone approach the heroic, it is eminently that of virtue and delicacy. Conversely, if the notion of 'la délicatesse' is absent from Catherine de Bourbon, it is because the author's aim does not seem to have been so much to edify the reader by presenting a spectacle of virtue, as to amuse by a relation of incidents where true moral dilemma has no part.

The aspect of 'la délicatesse' which is of primary concern here, however, is its application in the first four novels. It will have been noted that, on more than one occasion, it is coupled with the adjective 'sensible', or used in the phrase 'la délicatesse de mon coeur'. It is, in fact, equated with 'la sensibilité'. It might seem presumptuous to invoke the term 'sensibilité' in this context. Let us look, first of all, at Mlle de la Force's...
conception of love and the position of the protagonist in her cosmos, as it is revealed in the texts.

In discussing her conception of love, we must simultaneously deal with the presence of fatality in her work, such a joint treatment being justified principally on the grounds that love being the primum mobile of Mlle de la Force's novels, the events, the handiwork of Fate, are inextricably bound up with the lovers' passions.

From the outset of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, love is referred to as "ce penchant invincible". Logically, if one acknowledges one's own impotence against the forces of love, one may consider this passion to be a force outside oneself, which in its turn becomes identified with fate. Thus Marie de Bourgogne foretells her future and bewails her lot: "... je sais que je ne suis pas née pour être heureuse, une inclination violente donne tous mes désirs au Comte d'Angoulême, je sens une fatalité qui me bornera toujours à ces inutiles désirs". Unlike Mme d'Aulnoy, Mlle de la Force does on occasion refer to this external force — la destinée in the former's work — as 'le Ciel'; thus: "L'inclination que j'ai pour lui, ... est trop extraordinaire, elle ne peut jamais être partagée, et le Ciel, pour rendre ma peine éternelle, a voulu me faire voir l'objet d'un si fatal attachement".

Whilst Mme d'Aulnoy had seemed to conceive of destiny as an essentially malevolent force, Mlle de la Force refers, albeit briefly, to the idea that love may have a happy or unhappy issue, according to the decree of fate. Thus Marie is urged to follow

59. op. cit., p.12. 60. ibid., p.18.
61. ibid., p.310.
the dictates of her heart: "Croyez en son amour, ou plutôt croyez en cette heureuse inclination que le Ciel a mis dans le fond de votre coeur". That the fate of a love born under an unlucky star is irrevocable is also acknowledged: ".... je parlais seulement de ces amours infortunées produites sous un mauvais astre".

One looks in vain for any reference to fate or destiny in Henri IV. Preceding statements regarding the writer's intention to portray an heroic love, based on recognition of worth and capable of the highest acts of generosity, may be recalled. Indeed, it may be stated that this is the only one of Mlle de la Force's works where the epithet 'généreux' is systematically applied to a protagonist and to the mode of conduct chosen. It may be concluded that a conception of love as reasonable and generous would preclude any idea of its being the work of destiny.

The theme of fate and destiny as ruling the protagonists reappears in Marguerite de Valois, where it is the Constable:

62. ibid., p.322. 63. ibid., p.345. 64. This notion is found throughout the text, applied to Cathérine de Sandoval, e.g., p.104: ".... elle connut que cette Princesse aimait Alphonse, et bien loin d'en avoir de la jalousie, elle conçut pour elle (la Reine) une amitié plus forte qu'elle avait eu jusque-là; car ce n'était pas la première fois que que cette généreuse fille, qui n'aimait Alphonse que pour lui faire du bien, s'était trouvée capable d'aimer jusqu'aux rivales mêmes qui pouvaient aider à la fortune de son Amant".

See also pp. 119, 202, 215.
"... qu'un astre ennemi rendit amoureux dès qu'il vit la Princesse". Marguerite de Valois, lamenting her love, wishes that: "... le Ciel eût voulu unir nos fortunes, comme il n'a que trop uni nos affections". It is in vain that one would seek to avert or to parry the thrusts of love as is expressed in the closing paragraphs of the work. It is Mlle de la Force who thus apostrophizes her readers: "Et si vous voulez faire quelque considération sur tout ce qui leur est arrivé, vous verrez qu'ils ont été comme entrânés à toutes leurs infortunes par une puissance plus qu'humaine, qui fait bien voir que l'esprit, la prudence et le courage échouent contre les décrets du destin".

The same belief in destiny, whether it is termed 'le Ciel', 'le destin', or 'l'étoile' is a strong theme in Gustave Vasa. The Princesse de Sudermanie falls in love with Gustave: "... (elle) parut céder en ce moment à la force de son étoile". Once more, the authoress refers to the 'fatal hour': "Vasa fut frappé, son heure était venue, il aima ....". The same idea being repeated when Catherine of Denmark's sister says to her: "... dites plutôt, ma soeur, que votre moment sensible n'est point arrivé ...". This conception of love leads naturally to a resigned, a fatalistic attitude in the protagonists: such an attitude is quite explicitly expressed in Gustave Vasa, as for instance when the Princesse de Sudermanie is reflecting on her state of mind; thus: "... il n'est plus temps de délibérer sur un destin écrit dans le Ciel ....".

68. op. cit., p.163. See also p.
69. ibid., p.198. See Marguerite de Valois, vol. II, p.110:
"Enfin son heure fatale ne pouvait plus reculer ....".
70. op. cit., p.234.
71. ibid., p.207.
When she imagines that she is about to be joined in marriage to Gustave, she exclaims: "Je vais donner la main à un homme qui ne m'aime pas! mais n'importe, on ne résiste point à sa destinée, je suis prête à partir".72.

As in Marguerite de Valois, Mlle de la Force makes her attitude towards love in Gustave Vasa quite explicit in her peroration, thus: "Oh! Dieu d'Amour! voilà de tes coups, tu frappes dans le temps qu'on la le moins prévu".73.

Just as the idea of love as the work of destiny and the protagonists as its innocent and virtuous playthings, was absent from such a work as Henri IV, for the reasons given, so it is also absent from Mlle de la Force's last work, Catherine de Bourbon. Once more, this absence is accounted for by the lack of development of the love-theme in this work, where love is regarded primarily as an elegant amusement.

If we have stressed the incompatibility of the conception of love/destiny both with the ideal of 'heroic' love and with that of love as a refined game, we must, before continuing this discussion, attempt to define a little more closely Mlle de la Force's position in the works where destiny plays a major role. It is self-evident that love in these works can only be based upon esteem, merit and worth in so far as the protagonists are virtuous. We have, however, stated on several occasions that Mlle de la Force is at pains to emphasize the virtuous nature of the protagonists. Thus, although they are the victims of fate and are thus robbed of their active quality,74 the 'tendre sur inclination'75 which they

72. ibid., p.354. 73. ibid., p.408.
74. Catherine de Sandoval, alone amongst Mlle de la Force's heroines, may be stated to be endowed with truly an active character.
75. It will have been noted that the very term 'inclination' is used.
feel, leads them into no moral transgression.

Finally, let us look at a notion which is inevitably connected with Mlle de la Force's conception of love, and which although it has no moral or ethical connotation, is yet of vital importance in understanding the writer's moral creation; that is, 'les malheurs', a theme which recurs constantly throughout the three novels where destiny holds sway. We shall present the references as they occur within the text and comment on them afterwards.

In the opening description of the heroine of the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, Marie is portrayed thus: "... son courage était au-dessus de ce qu'on en peut dire, et ce fut aussi sa seule ressource dans tous les malheurs qu'elle composèrent la suite de sa vie".76.

The writer makes liberal promises regarding the misfortunes which make up the fabric of this work: "ces fatales noces donnèrent le commencement à tous les malheurs qu'on va voir, et l'amour cruel jeta son funeste venin dans tous les coeurs qui furent capables d'en recevoir".77.

Just as the moral theme of Henri IV left no room for the idea of fate, so also is there no reference to malheurs — to suffering. A significant phrase appears at the very beginning of Marguerite de Valois, however, when one of the characters exclaims: "Je suis en effet une personne extraordinaire mais c'est par mes malheurs...".78

Concerning the Duc de Bourbon, whom she loves, Marguerite asserts: "Ce prince est né pour être malheureux, s'il est vrai qu'il m'aime, comme vous le croyez, et comme je le pense aussi quelquefois, son destin est terrible et le mien n'est pas heureux".79.

76. op. cit., p. 4.  77. ibid., p. 11.
78. op. cit., p. 9.  79. ibid., p. 183.
The beginning of Gustave Vasa contains a phrase which merits our attention: "... il était écrit que ces trois personnes aimeraient; mais, d'une manière si peu commune, qu'il n'y aurait point d'exemple d'un sort si bizarre". When the Princess of Sudermanie realizes that she has become enslaved upon the instant to love, her confidente laments: "Ah! Madame, que je vous plains! Je commence à connaître votre mal; et si je ne me trompe, c'est le commencement d'une inclination dominante: mon Dieu, que vous me faites pitié .....".

The sensitivity displayed by the protagonists manifests itself both in abundant tears, lacrimose scenes being much more frequent in Mlle de la Force's work than in any of the other women writers whom we shall have occasion to discuss, and in a certain psychic quality which they would seem to possess. We have already shown that the heroines invariably predict the misfortunes which their love will cause; this psychic quality is even more strongly expressed in Marguerite de Valois. The Duc de Bourbon's reactions are described in the following terms: "... il s'émut par un de ces pressentiments infaillibles qui nous avertissent si sûrement des choses qui nous intéressent". The queen who loved the Duc de

80. op. cit., p.152. 81. ibid., p.167. 82. See the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, pp.49, 144, 147, 314, 352, 415, 521. Marguerite de Valois, vol. I, p.167: "... elle recevait sur une de ses joues, qui était appuyée contre la sienne, les larmes que la Princesse de Valois répondait". See also vol. I, p.239: "(Le Connétable de Bourbon) était assis sur une chaise, la tête un peu renversée, regardant un grand portrait de la Duchesse d'Alençon qui était vis-à-vis de lui. Il s'appuyait sur une table ayant dans la main un petit portrait de cette même Princesse: et l'on eût jugé par son action qu'il n'en pouvait assez avoir devant les yeux. Dans l'autre main il tenait un mouchoir, dont il semblait qu'il eût dessein d'essuyer quelques larmes qui coulaient lentement sur ses joues". See also vol.I, pp.271,265,304,310,334,368, vol.II, pp.19,46,303,371,386; Gustave Vasa, p.167,268,296,324,373. It is significant that both Henri IV and Catherine de Bourbon are devoid of references to emotional outpourings.

Calabre feels, after the latter's death, that his spirit has returned to haunt her: "Je sens un frisson par tout le corps. C'est sans doute le génie de ce malheureux Prince qui vient se plaindre autour de nous qui l'avons tant aimé." 84.

What is the significance of these elements which form an integral part of Mlle de la Force's compositions? One cannot measure numerically the importance of the notion of fate and suffering as against that of virtue and fermeté within her works. It is for this very reason that such frequent references to that which appertains to the emotions: tears, preséntiments, touching scenes, are important in estimating which are the dominant features of her work.

Whilst, however, we should be inclined to state that the balance is in favour of passive virtue, of sentiment, certain differences between sentiment as expressed here and in Mme d'Aulnoy's novels should be pointed out. It is not unimportant that the sufferings -- les malheurs -- of the protagonists are intimately connected with their virtue; it is this which makes them above the ordinary, 'illustre,' 'extraordinaire.' There is no need, at this juncture, to recall the delight in the rare and the extraordinary, from the moral point of view, which an earlier generation shared and which has been dubbed 'précieux'. This emphasis, this systematic choice of court-themes rather than the vague romanesque scenarios which Mme d'Aulnoy had opted for, accounts for an important difference between them. This same choice of cadre, epitomizing delicate refinement belongs to a different mode of thought, in some respects, from that to which 'Clio' adhered.

If we refer particularly to a difference of approach between Mme d'Aulnoy and Mme de la Force, it is because it would seem to

84. ibid., vol.I, p.287.
account for other characteristics of the latter's work which must be considered in adjudging her moral attitude. It should not however be concluded that there exists a strong sense of unity within her moral creation. Not only do the works differ the one from the other, as has been seen to be the case, particularly in Henri IV and Catherine de Bourbon, so that Mlle de la Force's intention cannot be said to remain constant throughout, but also there are disparate elements within each of her works so that one must hesitate to answer too conclusively for them. Once again, one must exercise caution in assessing Mlle de la Force's possible contribution to the novel. Our task is rather to point out where there seem to be certain discrepancies of tone within her work, both with the aim of presenting an accurate picture and also, by examination, to ascertain whether these discrepancies are more apparent than real.

In the first place, just as the conception of love may vary slightly from novel to novel, so the observation within each work, notwithstanding the overall tone, may vary. That Mlle de la Force chooses to portray a love which is idealistic does not prevent her from making such psychological observations as were entirely absent from Mme d'Aulnoy's work. She allows herself such remarks both on love and on human nature as bear a realistic stamp. Indeed, in the earliest of her works, the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, she observes, through her heroine: "Je reconnaissais enfin que l'homme le plus fort n'est que faiblesse, et qu'on juge souvent de lui sur des apparences qui sont bien contraires à ce qu'il est.

85. See for instance the Histoire Secrète de Bourgogne, pp.128,427. Marguerite de Valois, vol.1,p.347. Traits of realistic psychological observation are particularly frequent in Henri IV, for instance p.17: "Comme l'indifférence qu'elle affectait en parlant de lui à son oncle, avait plus servi à découvrir son amour, que tout ce qu'elle aurait pu dire à son désavantage, car rien ne ressemble plus à l'Amour, qu'une indifférence étudiée". See also pp.14,97,136: "le dépit d'avoir des Rivaux a moins de force auprès des femmes que l'espérance d'en triompher".
en effet". Her attitude to love, even in the 'heroic' Henri IV is marked by a certain tolerance: "car c'est ainsi que les passions produisent des effets différents, selon la différence des coeurs où elles se trouvent".

Despite such psychological observations, despite of a somewhat scabrous scene in Marguerite de Valois and Mlle de la Force's explicit sympathy for 'la misère du cœur humain', explicit on that occasion, we should be inclined to reject once more any assertion of Epicurean influence in her writings. Such observation as exists is entirely in keeping with the material which she has chosen.

It is, in fine, Mlle de la Force's overall insistence on virtue and on suffering which characterizes her work. For this reason, her imitation of certain elements of La Princesse de Clèves, shares the same fate as that of Mlle Bernard. She may indeed imitate the confession scene in the Histoire de Bourgogne, lacking all real element of guilt, her works pay no more than lip-service to the masterpiece of 1678. Similarly, it is not so much the story of Radivil, (intercalated into Gustave Vasa), a repetition of the generous-husband-theme, which is significant, as that of Colombine, the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the infamous Sigibrite. On this latter occasion, Mlle de la Force deploys her considerable gifts for emphasizing the poignant aspect of a tragic love-story — a tragedy rendered all the more poignant by the immaculate virtue of the heroine.

86. op.cit., p.128. 87. op.cit., p.110.
88. op.cit., p.230. The words themselves echo Mme de Lafayette's drama: "... l'aveu est rare, et peu de gens sont piqués de le faire".
Although it would be incorrect to qualify Mlle de la Force as a sentimental novelist, even if it were to serve some good purpose so to do, her position, although neither clearly defined nor easily definable, her particular use of sentiment, make her important to this study, both from the point of view of the moral ancestry of her creation and from that of its possible descendants.
CHAPTER 4.

ETHICS IN MADAME DURAND'S NOVELS: 1699-1702.

Choice of subject nominally historical, but lacking any true concern for history — indicates neither a rejection of reality nor an emphasis on aristocratic values — the tone 'précieux' or 'mondain' to varying degrees in each novel. — Conception of love which precludes true passion — emphasis as much on refinement as virtue. — The writer's aim further manifests itself in use of 'la gloire', 'l'estime;' together with 'la délicatesse' and 'la bienséance' — the effect which these notions have upon the moral character of the novels — Mme Durand not interested in the workings of passion (implied in a moral dilemma or the theme of suffering) but in the effect of its expression — her position in her works, in both their 'mondain' and 'précieux' aspects, resulting from her moral aim and conception of love.

The last five years of the period encompassed by this present section are marked by the considerable activity of a writer whose claim to mediocrity — and to a justified obscurity — are, from a literary angle, as indisputable as they are indisputed.1 The five works which Mme Durand composed at the turn of the century — or, at least, which are attributed to her2 — are:


2. We must make this distinction because the Histoire des Amours de Grégoire VII . . is merely attributed to Mme Durand by Quérard, op.cit., and Barbier, op.cit. This work is not included in the edition of her complete works which appeared in 1734-1737. However, examination of the text has led us at least to assume that Mme Durand is the author.
La Comtesse de Mortane, 1699; the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII and the Histoire des Amours de Grégoire VII, both of 1700; and, in 1702, the Petits Soupers de l'Eté and Le Comte de Cardonne, ou la Constance Victorieuse.

The story of the Comtesse de Mortane is, briefly, that of a woman of surpassing virtue who is married against her will by an ambitious mother to a man who is rendered unworthy of her by such faults of character as lack of refinement of feelings and cowardice. Before her marriage, she had already given her heart to the Comte de Rucille, with whom she is united after much moral debating, at the end of the second volume; by which time her first husband has been conveniently carried off by smallpox. Time and place, wherever they are mentioned in the story, are eminently those of the society which Mme Durand strove to please. The plot cannot but seem familiar: once again, it must be stated that the moral dilemma of the Princesse de Clèves does not find its replica here. Certain elements of the story would, however, indicate that Mme Durand has modelled her tale upon Mme de Lafayette's: once again, though, the kaleidoscope has been altered by the writer's conception of the moral message of the Princesse de Clèves.

Throughout the Comtesse de Mortane, the heroine's severe virtue, considered to be an essential attribute of the Princesse de Clèves, is much stressed. The gratuitous nature of the sacrifice as understood by contemporaries, is here systematically exploited, thus at the

3. La Comtesse de Mortane, par Madame XXX, Paris, veuve de Claude Barbin, 1699, 2 vol. in-12.
188.

Thus, also, she seeks to quell Rucille's ardour: "Taisez-vous, Rucille, ... on ne peut arriver à mon cœur que par une noblesse qui aille jusqu'à la chimère." It is in the latter phrase, 'la chimère,' that we seek justification for the claim that Mme de Mortane is portrayed as being devoted to an ideal, set apart from the vulgar herd; as is said of her in the closing pages of the book: "... la Comtesse devait être démemlée du commun des femmes." 8

If the ferocious virtue which Mme de Lafayette's generation — and after — imagined they saw in the Princess de Clèves, is repeated in Mme Durand's first work, so are several scenes which we presume to have received acclaim from a moral point of view; primarily the farewell scene where the heroine banishes the hero from her sight for ever, as the price of her confession of love, rendered thus in the

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10. ibid., vol.II, p.132. This concern with being distinguished from the vulgar herd has its corollary in a further reminiscence of La Princesse de Clèves, when Mme de Mortane declares: "Je ne survivrai point à mes malheurs; on va parler de moi comme des autres femmes; je vais être le sujet des chansons, des satires, des moqueries; elles me seront bien dures! Grand Dieu! attentive à ma conduite depuis que je suis au monde, je tombe dans le ridicule d'avouer ma faiblesse à un infidèle, à un indiscret!" (vol.II, p.18).
Comtesse de Mortane: "Il faut éviter ma vue; j'évitcrai la vôtre, l'exécution en sera difficile, habitant les mêmes lieux, mais on peut du moins ne se point parler et c'est à quoi nous sommes condamnés." 11. And, further on: "... rien ne vous arrachera jamais de mon coeur, aimez-moi toujours, ne me le dites jamais; adieu mon cher Rucille." 12.

A further literary reminiscence is to be found in Mme de Mortane's description of her fateful wedding morning, when she was dressed, as a victim for the sacrifice. Regarding the ceremony, she relates: "... comme j'étais d'une distraction effroyable pour la cérémonie, j'aperçus à travers un balustre qui environne l'autel, un homme enveloppé dans son ganteau, qui me paraît désespéré." 13. This romanesque detail, evocative of a similar scene in Éléonor d'Yvrée, which we saw as a pendant of the eloquent look in the Princesse de Clèves, is not, however, representative of the tone in the Comtesse de Mortane. The emotive property of such scenes is attenuated rather than fully exploited, whilst the moral dilemma is itself subordinated to other interests.

The actual nature of these interests, and their effect on the moral character of Mme Durand's work, will become apparent during the course of this study. Having inferred that neither the moral conflict of the Princesse de Clèves, nor the alternative proposed by Mme de Lafayette's successors discussed up to the present moment, finds its exact replica in Mme Durand's work, some further indication of the moral tone in the Comtesse de Mortane should be given.

We have referred earlier to the cadre of the Comtesse de Mortane, which we described as being eminently that of Mme Durand's own time. Let us attempt to demonstrate the bearing which this cadre has upon

the moral tone of the work. First of all, the bye-plots, which enjoy an abundant life in the Comtesse de Mortane; and, in particular, the story of Mme de Marigue, the faithful 'confidante'. The existence of one or several bye-plots can hardly be considered the exception in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century prose fiction. They represent, however, a certain difference in Mme Durand's hands from those of her feminine predecessors in the novel. We have noted, in the introductory chapter, the importance attached to conversations at this epoch; and, elsewhere, how these conversations were often reflected in the prose fiction of the time.\textsuperscript{14} The bye-plots in Mme Durand's works do more nearly reflect 'mondain' discussions, whether discussions on morality in the widest acceptation of the term, or a recital of amorous intrigue, than the bye-plots of Mme d'Aulnoy or Mlle de la Force, for instance.

There must obviously result a discrepancy between the tone of the heroine's story and those of the minor characters -- a discrepancy in which the writer's psychological observation, coupled with a power of analysis, produces a certain moral reality. The Mme de Marigue incident does in fact strike a note which has not yet been heard in the feminine novel. The main body of her story opens where the traditional novel ended -- upon her marriage, when Marigue, neglecting his wife, engages in numerous infidelities. The theme itself seems familiar enough now: is it not that of the Mariage de Figaro, when the Count, all ardour in the Barbier de Séville, would appear to bear out the adage that passion is extinguished upon marriage? The case is more serious in the present story, however; Marigue is a flagrantly unfaithful husband who treats his wife in a thoroughly reprehensible manner. Upon Mme de Marigue's marriage: "... il n'y eut que cette femme dont je vous ai parlé, qui en eût une joie parfaite et qui crût tirer meilleur parti, d'un mari dans la possession que d'un amant dans les désirs ... il

\textsuperscript{14} See Section I, chapter 3.
répondit à sa persévérante maîtresse; il en chercha même dans les conditions les plus basses et dans les moeurs les plus déréglées... il aurait quelquefois voulu revenir à moi sans préjudice de ses autres maîtresses, mais je le traitai en amant infidèle, parce qu’il n’était qu’un mari à demi repentant.\(^\text{15}\).

The realism of the portrait of Mme de Marigue’s sufferings is a far cry from the novels of fifty years earlier. It will be noticed, however, that the basis of the story is in essence the belief which has on occasion been qualified as 'précieux' -- present in the Princesse de Clèves -- that passion cannot outlive its fulfilment. The 'précieux' terminology employed in Mme de Marigue’s description of her attitude to her half-repentant husband is particularly striking, in view of the highly realistic traits presented.\(^\text{16}\).

In addition to Mme de Marigue’s story, the conversations previously referred to must also be exposed -- albeit somewhat briefly. If the love of Mme de Mortane and Rucille may be termed 'un amour à l'antique', these latter love-stories are certainly of their time. The relations between husband and wife in a society of arranged marriages are described with much realism, thus: "... s’il aime beaucoup sa femme, il lui passera ses défauts en faveur de ses bonnes qualités; et s’il cesse de l’aimer, il ne s’embarassera guère de ses bizarreries. Au pis aller sa fortune en sera meilleure; et les hommes qui ont fait les lois ont été assez habiles pour se conserver avec bienséance une autorité qui les met en droit de s’absenter souvent de leurs femmes, lorsqu’elles les fatiguent ou les tourmentent."\(^\text{17}\).

Even more harshly realistic is the following comment upon the same subject: "le scrupule que vous avez sur la foi conjugale me paraît bien à l'antique dans un siècle où la plupart des hommes

\(^\text{15}\). op.cit., vol.I, p.195,\(^\text{12}\).
\(^\text{16}\). This realistic morality is later explored and exploited by such men-writers as Robert Challes, Les Illustres Françaises, La Haye, 1713.
\(^\text{17}\). op.cit., vol.II, p.122.
semblent être de concert pour négliger les femmes avec qui ils
sont unis." 18.

The Duchesse de xxx must have claimed many counterparts in
the society of 1699: women of character who were anxious to shake
off the yoke of convention, priding themselves on not being the
dupes of appearances; hence the 'feminist' note in her assertion
that: "... les lois sont injustes à notre égard; nous nous soulevons
contre elles, et peut-être que ces mêmes hommes qui ont mis le
dérèglement dans nos moeurs par leur mauvais exemple, nous voyant
le courage de les imiter, rétabliront le premier ordre des choses
par une conduite contraire; et vous voyez par là que nous aurons
l'honneur de ces grandes révolutions. Ce n'est pas ... que je
(ne) croie à peu près tout au même point où il a été: les dehors
seulement sont dissemblables; on s'est affranchi de mille cérémonies
inutiles, de mille politesses gênantes: mais au fond les coeurs ne
sont pas plus corrompus qu'ils ont de tout temps été". 19.

The sentiment here expressed, one of cynicism towards the ideal
of purity and an assertion of the feminine point of view, is in
accordance with the keen psychological observation occasionally
manifest in the Comtesse de Mortane. 20. The immediacy of the tone
is thus enhanced and the atmosphere more consciously that of 'mondain'
reality, than that of the ethereal realms of the 'grand roman'. Thus
it is, also, that the heroine herself, on no less than three occasions,
makes an implied criticism of the literary portrayal of love: the
self-conscious and sentimental expressions thereof. Referring
to her convent education, she says: "J'avais lu tous les Romans

18. ibid., vol.II, p.141.
20. See, for instance, vol.I, p.190: "Il n'y a point de femme
qui ne pardonne plutôt une infidélité ou une indiscrétion,
qu'un manque de valeur à son amant."
dans le Couvent d'où je sortais; on y fait avec beaucoup d'art
la peinture des passions subites, tout en est plein dans ces sortes
de livres: je regardais tous les hommes les uns après les autres,
et n'en voyais aucun qui me paraît digne de lancer le coup de foudre
dans mon coeur." 21.

Repeating an impassioned soliloquy, she adds: "Je ne sais
si tous les Romans que j'avais lus à la dérobée, m'avaient appris
à parler ainsi seule ou si c'est une suite d'amour ..." 22.

Finally, during the woeful marriage ceremony with Mortane, she is
so struck by the vision of Rucille that she nearly swoons: "... mais
la frayeur de passer pour une Héroïne de Roman me fit rappeler
toutes mes forces." 23.

The cadre at least of the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de
Charles VII might be presumed to differ considerably from that
of the Comtesse de Mortane, by virtue of the fact that Mme Durand
has, in her second novel, chosen an historical subject set at the
time of the Hundred Years' War. The two volumes which make up
the work, nominally hinged upon the love of Charles VII for Agnès
Sorel, contain the love-stories of La Trémouille, the Bastard of
Orleans, the Comte de Lafayette, Louis III, King of Sicily -- and
the Maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc herself. Experience has by now led
one not to expect any appreciable element of historical veracity in
these so-called historical works. Boileau's pungent comment,
previously quoted, rises once again to mind when such warriors as
La Trémouille appear merely by virtue of their unhappy love-affairs,
about which historical documents are completely silent. The whole
work is divorced from its historical context: the sanguinary side
of the epoch is ignored; the murder of Jean sans Peur is treated
perfunctorily in the extreme; Dunois is portrayed as an exponent
of 'le doux, le tendre et le passionné', regaling Joan of Arc --

23. ibid., vol. I, p. 35.
the latter 'enjuponnée' — with tender madrigals and fêtes champêtres.

A difference in tone between this work and its predecessor becomes apparent on examination of the two. In the latter, Mme Durand's choice of theme, removed from reality, is matched by an expression of sentiments which are eminently rarified. The by-plots, which account for the greater part of the two volumes, are utterly dissimilar from the mondain conversations of the Comtesse de Mortane. They are expositions of a love experienced in its most subtle forms, moderately unhappy and subtly expressed.

Such comments upon the tone of the Mémoires Secrets should, however, be qualified by a description of the court atmosphere, supported by textual references. A court atmosphere there certainly is, although equally certainly not that of the patron of the Troubadours, the real Charles VII.

What are the relations of the courtiers to their monarch; and, more important, those of the aspiring royal mistresses? How is the court described other than as: "... un pays où les moeurs se corrompent aisément, et où les coeurs ne pensent presque jamais ce que les bouches disent."

We are thus prepared for the complacent references to the brazen machinations of husbands and fathers whose primary aim it is to thrust their wives and daughters into the monarch's arms. Thus Louvet plays the pander, warning his daughter: "qu'il était temps de donner de l'espérance à un amant couronné," whilst for her husband: "un mari idolâtre de sa femme ne peut soutenir de telles vues sans de grandes agitations; mais il était ambitieux." 26.

The courtier's function is to condone — and to connive at — the royal amours, thus: "les courtisans respectant les amours

de leur maître, s'éloignèrent les uns après les autres à la suite de Louvet."

Mme Durand thus renders unmistakably the court mentality of her own time: an unconscious imitation, doubtless, which is the fruit of observation no longer entirely inhibited by a rigorous literary convention, thus: "... il est rare qu'un Époux couronné, qui est, pour ainsi dire, le centre de tous les désirs, conserve toujours une fidélité exacte à son épouse."28. "Sorelle a sans doute du penchant pour ce Prince, mais dans une jeune personne dont la fortune est médiocre, le roi et l'ambition d'un côté, balanceront le sujet, et l'homme aimeable de l'autre, ils sont tous des mariés: galanterie pour galanterie, elle croira plus pardonnable de choisir le maître."29.

In the Mémoires de la Cour de Charles VII, as at the court of the Roi Soleil, it was considered no disgrace to share a woman's favours with the monarch: "L'amour du roi ne lui faisant pas tant de peine, il le regardait comme un amant qui devait être infailliblement favorisé. Cette fatalité lui faisant prendre patience là-dessus, il désirait seulement être en second avec son maître, un troisième l'incommodait furieusement."30.

Apart from seeing in such descriptions a depiction of the court of Louis XIV, one must concede that such a background must of necessity impinge upon the moral tone of the work.

The third work which we have chosen to discuss, although its attribution to Mme Durand cannot be irrefutably proved correct, is entitled Histoire des Amours de Grégoire VII, du Cardinal de

Richelieu, de la Princesse de Condé, et de la Marquise d'Urfe. 31. In this collection of short stories, we are once more confronted with the question of the use to which historical data has been put. The treatment of historical fact is much different in this present work from that of the Mémoires de la Cour de Charles VII; and much more akin to that of her male counterparts amongst 'historical' writers. In brief, the tone has changed from that of the refined pleasure of pursuit to that of — in the majority of the anecdotes — scurrilous backstairs gossip.

In particular, the choice of Pope Gregory VII — St. Hildebrand — as a target for attack seems somewhat astonishing. We cannot ascertain, it is not our purpose to conjecture, why Mme Durand should choose to delve into the Middle Ages (St. Hildebrand wore the triple crown from 1073 to 1085) to unearth the politician Prince of the Papacy who exacted penance from Henry IV at Canossa, in order to set him up as a figure of ridicule. Suffice it to say that the 'esprit frondeur' is particularly marked in this work. For instance, when St. Hildebrand is cutting his amorous capers, he is made to remark: "trois couronnes plantées sur un bonnet de prêtre ne me chasseront point de votre coeur." 32.

31. As in other instances, we shall refer to it subsequently by the abbreviated title of the Amours de Grégoire VII. Although this work has certain similarities to other works of the time, i.e. Mlle de la Roche Guilhem, Histoire des Favorites, there is no reason to doubt that Mme Durand is the author. E.Magne gives an entirely misleading picture of Mme Durand's writings by quoting from the Cardinal de Richelieu incident, the only one in the whole of her work endowed with a salacious quality.

32. op.cit., p.56. This work differs from Mme Durand's other novels in that it was the only one printed with a 'privilège.' The imprint borne by the in-12° volume, Cologne, Pierre le Jeune, MDCC, may possibly be fictitious. The 'free' style of the work, as opposed to the others from Mme Durand's pen, might lead one to doubt that she is the true author, were it not for the fact that she was essentially a miserable poetaster, doubtless only too willing to earn a few extra sous. Furthermore, the Amours de Grégoire VII also bears a certain resemblance to Les Belles Greccues, published in 1712, by the same writer.
As for the other anecdotes which make up the work, apart from a vague allusion to the generous-husband-theme, which seems to have originated in the Princesse de Clèves; which may be seen in the story of d'Urfé's love for another's wife, the anecdotes — all of more or less unhappy love — are interesting only in that they continue to represent the courtier-mentality. This is most clearly shown in the story of the Princesse de Condé, set in the time of the Vert Galant. "Le roi qui connaissait trop bien Bassompierre pour le croire capable d'épouser une femme pour autrui, jugea que le Prince de Condé, plus jeune, et par conséquent, peut-être, moins scrupuleux, n'y regardait pas de si près." Henri's other consideration in marrying off Mlle de Montmorency is represented as being the following: "... comme un galant n'a rien à prétendre lorsqu'une honnête femme aime son mari de bonne foi, le roi favorisa M. le Prince ou plutôt il voulut se favoriser lui-même, en sacrifiant le pauvre Bassompierre."34

In the Petits Soupers de l'Été de l'année 1699, the 'mondaine' conversations, previously discussed as forming a part of the Comtesse de Mortane, now make up the entire novel. Drama there is none, the technique of composition is in essence that of Boccaccio — or of Marguerite de Navarre.36. The scene is set at the country house, not far from Paris, of one of the ladies: "... une campagne surtout peu distante de Paris, où l'on respire un air pur, où sans

33. ibid., pp.170-171. 34. ibid., p.171.
35. First published on 2 January, 1702, the 'privilege' having been granted on 9 November, 1701; it was subsequently re-printed under the amended title of Les Petits Soupers de l'Été, ou Aventures Galantes avec l'Origine des Fées, 1732.
36. It should be remarked upon that the Petits Soupers de l'Été closely resembles Mme de Murat's Voyage de Campagne, which latter work was erroneously attributed to Mme Durand by Quesard, inter alios. The Voyage de Campagne is actually included in the 1737 edition of Mme Durand's complete works.
se borner dans un jardin, on peut s'étendre dans des dehors agréables, et où on peut voir ses amis depuis le matin jusqu'au soir, l'emporte infiniment sur le tumulte de la ville, pourvu qu'on ait la liberté d'y revenir quand on le veut.**37.** Between amuse­ments al fresco, visits to the comedy, each member of the group tells a story, either that of a love-affair, as in the case of the first anecdote, the *Histoire du Duc d'Ardelle et de la Comtesse d'Orselac*, or a 'conte de fées' as is the case in the second and fourth anecdotes, entitled respectively, the *Prodige d'Amour* and the *Origine des Fées*, or finally a scarcely less imaginative story with a Moorish setting, the *Histoire d'Almanzar et de Zaira*. Mme Durand's fairy stories having already formed the subject of a study,**36.** we do not propose to concern ourselves with them here, choosing rather to concentrate for the moment on the first anecdote of the *Petits Soupers de l'Eté*.

But first of all, let us cast a glance at the company who are assembled together: the 'aimable veuve', the Marquise Dargensac; the two lovers who are eventually married after minor tiffs and misunderstandings; the Comtesse de Miralde and the Comte de Valbène; Mlle de Boislegat who marries the Marquis de Tadilly; Mme de la Fuye, an eccentric gambler who marries the scarcely less eccentric Chevalier de la Manselière—and finally, an Abbé de Cour for good measure.

What is the conception of love as expressed during the conversations interspersed between the anecdotes? Let one of the number speak for all: "... l'amour est la passion des honnêtes gens, ... elle anime les conversations, ... elle ajoute à tous les plaisirs, et ... dans les coeurs bien faits elle ne cause qu'autant de désordre qu'il en faut précisément pour interrompre

**37.** Oeuvres Complètes, tome IV, p. 1.

**38.** M.E. Storer, op. cit.
les calmes qui pourraient à la fin la détruire ... mais quand (l'amour) est infortuné, il faut tout mettre en usage pour secouer un joug qui renverse la raison ...". 39.

It is to this ideal that all subscribe, so that in place of drama, the writer gives us, in this mainly happy octet, an illuminating portrait of character and 'mondain' manners. Mme de la Fuye is perhaps the most extreme example of a study of character, being made to express such sentiments as: "Quand ma main, conduite par un hasard heureux, trouve à point nommé la carte fatale, et que je vois un homme prêt à se pendre, ou une femme se défigurer les couleurs du teint, je goûte les plaisirs qui ne peuvent être comparés". 40.

The work is placed more immediately in the context of the closing years of Louis XIV's reign by such references to the manners of the time as are implicit, for instance, in the following diatribe against gaming: "Mais dans un lieu où l'on veut se divertir, il faut bannir ce jeu séditieux, où tous les hommes deviennent grossiers et les femmes emportées." 41.

Whilst, however, the novelist shows herself to be fully aware of the relaxed morals of the time, she is careful to distinguish the behaviour she intends to describe from them, hence: "On demeura fort longtemps à table, non pour célébrer des orgies, comme il n'est que trop ordinaire en ce temps-ci, mais pour y jouir de la douce liberté qu'elle inspire." 42.

The story of the Duc d'Aumale and the Comtesse d'Orselac is interesting on two accounts. It is in essence the seemingly inevitable theme of thwarted love, Mlle de Chaseu being married against her will to the Comte d'Orselac. The conclusion is not,

41. *ibid.*, p.17.
42. *ibid.*, p.15.
however, that their love is finally rewarded by a legitimate union, but that they tire of each other and that each goes his own way; the writer concludes accordingly: "Quand l'amour est au dernier période, il faut de nécessité qu'il diminue."43.

Furthermore, the role of Mme de Chasæu, the heroine's mother, presents a particular interest, not only with regard to the evolution of the conception of mother/daughter relationships, but also with regard to the moral standards which are implied in Mme de Chasæu's attitude. How far does this attitude differ from that of Mme de Chartres? We read that: "Mme de Chasæu fermait les yeux à mille petites choses, pour n'être pas dans l'obligation de tourmenter son dûnable fille; le Duc lui paraissait dangereux, mais il lui paraissait aussi digne d'être aimé, qu'elle ne pouvait blâmer un goût, dont elle se sentait capable elle-même."44.

Thus it is that she is obliged to forbid Dardelle her house when she discovers that he has been corresponding with her daughter, now married. Let us look a little more closely at her reaction to the situation: "Ce n'est pas ma faute, si je n'avais pas vu (la lettre); vous n'auriez pas cessé de venir chez moi, il faudrait avoir plus de soin des lettres."45. When Dardelle protests their innocence, she rejoins: "Me croyez-vous si dupe? Vous en savez autant que moi; je sais bien que vous ne vous en écrirez pas moins, et que vous vous verrez presque autant; mais prenez-y garde l'un et l'autre, tâchez que je ne voie rien qui puisse m'en convaincre."46. It is, in fine, a complete acceptance of the laws of safeguarding external appearances, previously referred to as a concern with 'paraître' rather than 'être,' which are represented in Mme de Chasæu's attitude.

43. ibid., p. 66.
44. ibid., p. 41.
45. ibid., p. 63.
46. ibid., p. 63.
In the Comte de Cardonne, Mme Durand reverts once more — in theory — to the Middle Ages, choosing Sicily as her setting. This work might be described as forming a dyptich with the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII, as far as the setting is concerned. The story of the Count's love, slight in the extreme, is told against a background of fêtes champêtres and ingenious amusements conceived in honour of the beloved. The purity of the love portrayed precludes the 'mondain' element hitherto present in Mme Durand's works, whilst the book ends — inevitably, one might think — with the lovers' being united.

What conclusions, if any, can be drawn from the basic material of Mme Durand's fictional works, as it has been exposed here? In the first place, the predominance of a 'mondain' trend, in the bye-plots of the Comtesse de Mortane, the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII, the Petits Soupers de l'Êté, as against the neutral tone of the Comte de Cardonne, may be noticed. A certain type of psychological observation not strictly in accordance with the ideal once posed in the novel, is manifest in these works. The actual choice of subject, for the most part simply that of "the court," is significant in that it lends itself to such a spirit of observation. Such a cadre must evidently impinge upon the morality portrayed. Finally, again briefly, what of the protagonists, or rather, what of the passion of love, which is their 'raison d'être' in the novels? It will have been noticed that the conception of love is essentially that of 'la passion des honnêtes gens,' expressed in the Petits Soupers de l'Êté. After the Comtesse de Mortane, the element of suffering inalienably associated with the ideal of a unique love where moral dilemma is attenuated and therefore the protagonist essentially passive, is absent. The protagonists' movement in the story is confined essentially to an expression of their love and their reaction to it.

47. Equally, the significance of the 'précieux' tone of Mme Durand's two 'medieval' novels may be noted.
Such conclusions as may be tentatively drawn from a discussion of the plots in general may be amplified — or qualified — by an examination of the moral notions employed in the texts.

Having seen the main part of Mme Durand's first work, the Comtesse de Mortane, as an imitation of the Princess de Clèves as it was understood by Mme de Lafayette's contemporaries and successors, we may seek to support our argument by reference to notions specifically connected with this 'austere' morality.

Let us examine first of all the notion of 'la gloire'. It is employed frequently throughout this first work, let us see with what exact connotation. In the first place, the conflict is presented as being between the emotions and 'la gloire' in the once-standard acceptation of the term: "... j'ai souffert tout ce que peut souffrir un cœur également sensible à l'amour et à la gloire."

It is this usage which predominates throughout the text, being applied on each occasion to the heroine, thus: "la gloire de Mme de Mortane lui était plus chère que la vie." However, it is interesting to note this change of sentiment on the part of Mme de Mortane, expressed as follows: "... il est des moments où tout me paraît possible pour vivre avec Fucille, où ce que vous appelez illusion, et ce que j'appelle gloire, me paraît une chimère indigne d'une femme sensible."

If the use of 'la gloire' in the Comtesse de Mortane substantiates, in some measure, the claim that Mme Durand was endeavouring, in this work, to create the 'heroic' atmosphere which she supposed prevailed

48. Mme Durand may be considered as belonging to the generation which succeeded Mme de Lafayette's.
49. 'La gloire' is used, in all, nine times throughout the text; Vol.I, pp. 32, 49, 67, 114, 184, 192; Vol.II, pp. 12, 143, 185.
52. ibid., vol.I, p.192.
in the Princesse de Clèves, the usage in the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII is much responsible for what has been termed the 'mondain' tone of the latter work. As elsewhere, it will be noticed that 'la gloire' has particularly the force of reputation when applied indirectly, thus: "... (les femmes) ont sans doute des sentiments plus tendres et plus durables que les hommes; elles doivent infiniment plus craindre un embarquement, où elles risquent le repos et la gloire de leur vie."53. 'La gloire', notwithstanding the somewhat vague application of the term, is important in the moral characterization of the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII by virtue of its frequency.54.

Examples of its use may be selected at random throughout the work and are sufficiently self-explanatory to require no further elucidation. For instance: "La princesse que j'aime est sensible à la gloire:"55 and "j'espérais cependant qu'une si longue absence ferait son effet dans un coeur que la gloire occupait."56. Finally, this ecstatic exclamation: "... un seul mot de sa divine bouche me comblerait de gloire ..."57.

There now arises, in discussing the following three works composed by Mme Durand before 1703; the question of the continued use — or otherwise — of moral notions. In the case of 'la gloire', a decline in importance, from a quantitative point of view together with a discernible neutralization of meaning, is immediately apparent.

In the Amours de Grégoire VII it is, indeed, used but twice. The first occasion is when a virtuous maiden is repelling the Pontiff's amorous advances: "... consultez vos devoirs et votre gloire, et vous parlerez un autre langage."58. 'La gloire' occurs in the last

53. op.cit., vol.II, p.44.
56. ibid., vol.I, p.94.
57. ibid., vol.I, p.100.
58. op.cit., p.48.
anecdote, when the virtuous widow is repelling d'Urfe's eminently honourable advances: "... il y va de ma gloire, et par conséquent de tout mon repos." 59.

Although the predominantly frivolous vein of the Amours de Grégoire VII may lead us to expect a diminution of the importance of 'la gloire', one may be justifiably surprised to find that it is as little used in the Comte de Cardonne, where it is to be found on two occasions, referring to the immaculate reputation of the heroine. "Ses soins ne lui pouvaient être désagréables: mais elle ne pouvait souffrir qu'il l'aimât, sans songer à l'épouser; cela blessait sa gloire." 60.

In the Petits Soupers de l'Été, it is employed with three distinct connotations: the first — previously encountered — simply that of reputation, thus: "... un tissu d'histoire où la gloire de Mlle de Boislegat n'avait pas été épargnée." 61. It is also applied to a woman's proper pride, thus when Mlle de Boislegat meets her suitor, she feels that it is her right — that she owes it to herself — to be angry with him, but: "ce petit sentiment de gloire s'adoucit à la première révérence qu'il lui fit." 62. The final usage, found on one occasion only in this text, and an extension of the previous one, is as follows: "j'en connais (des femmes) ... qui font plus consister la gloire de leurs charmes dans la quantité que dans l'espèce de leurs captifs." 63. Although the moral outlook implied in this last quotation — the use to which proper pride has been put — in itself marks a radical change from the uses of 'la gloire' cited in the Comtesse de Mortane, its relative unimportance, numerically speaking, in the Petits Soupers de l'Été, deters one from attempting to see in this new usage any vital significance from the moral point of view.

59. ibid., p.230. 60. op.cit. p.54. See also p.215.
61. op.cit., p.381. See also p.47.
62. ibid., p.355. See also p.67.
63. ibid., p.271.
If one finds ample evidence of 'la gloire' — at least, evidence which is quantitatively imposing — in Mme Durand's first work, one is not disappointed in looking for a complementary notion, relating specifically to love, that of 'estime.' One may detect, in the Comtesse de Mortane, vestiges of both the eminently Cornelian belief that 'estime' was as essential to all personal relationships as it was vis-à-vis oneself; (this being represented by 'la gloire') and also of the extension of this use, regarding 'estime' as the basis of love — again a Cornelian notion — together with the 'précieux' extension of this, regarding 'estime' as the intellectual aspect of love. Of the first use, however, it is significant that only one example is to be found, as when Mme de Mortane: "plus ma passion est forte, plus votre estime doit redoubler pour moi par l'usage que j'en ai toujours fait."64.

Much more in evidence are the other two usages: of esteem as being a necessary element of love: "... mais on revient à la fin de cette vivacité qui n'est pas soutenue par l'estime."65. The conception of esteem as an alternative to passion is contained in these examples: "... enfin ce n'était point de l'amour, mais c'était bien de l'estime, une très tendre amitié est un engagement presque formé."66. And: "... je n'ai jamais compris ce qui les a fait revenir à la simple estime."67.

If the conception of 'Tendre sur Estime' — the implications of which are sufficiently familiar to render further comment otiose — is much present in Mme Durand's first work, one is struck by the paucity of examples in the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII; and even more, by its disappearance from subsequent works.68.

64. op.cit., vol.I, p.23.
68. Except for a solitary instance in the Petits Soupers de l'Été, p.370, when "... mne tendresse infinie, une estime parfaite ..." are cited as the essential attributes of an enduring affection.
In the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII, the most significant example (from amongst three) is as follows: "Eh! comment m'estimerez-vous? Je ne puis pourtant vivre dans cette privation; que ne faut-il point qu'il m'en coûte pour acquérir cette estime?" 69.

Having noted a falling-off in two Cornelian — or what were once Cornelian — notions in Mme Durand's works; and bearing in mind the relevance of certain moral notions in the feminine novel discussed up to the present, it may be pertinent to enquire into the role — if role there is — of 'la raison' in the five works under examination. Albeit to a lesser degree, the same situation is found to obtain for 'la raison' as for 'la gloire' and 'estime': frequent in the first work, its use diminishes with each succeeding novel.

In the Comtesse de Mortane, 'la raison' is invoked as in former times, to lighten the heroine's path of virtue: in moments of stress she says: "... il me falut toute ma raison et toute ma vertu pour ne pas faire mille extravagances." 70. As for Mme de Marigue: "... toute sa raison, toute sa fermeté, toute sa vertu ne lui avait pas pu défendre d'une affliction vive et d'un dépit cruel." 71.

Finally, an indictment is made against gaming on the grounds that it is contrary to reason: "Est-ce possible, ... qu'à votre âge, fait comme vous êtes, avec la réputation d'avoir de l'esprit, vous cherchiez un amusement qui dérange la raison, qui n'est fondé que sur le désir du bien d'autrui ....". 72.

Little commentary is necessary upon the role of 'la raison' in Mme Durand's works. Its use is strictly orthodox on all four occasions upon which it is employed in the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII, as in the following instance: "... la nature, l'amour et la gloire sont les seules guides que je pretends suivre. Il faudrait, repris-je, ajouter la raison, sans elle ceux-là sont

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sujets à s'égarer."  

Looking for a reason for the lack of importance of this notion, one finds the answer readily in the lack of moral conflict, for the solution of which 'la raison' was required, a factor which becomes increasingly apparent with each successive novel. Just as 'la gloire' and 'l'estime', robbed of their primary importance by the fundamental vacuity of the plot, serve as signposts to indicate a general emphasis upon virtuous moral tone, so 'la raison' is also relegated to this function.  

Once again, we must return to the question of the nature of love implied in Mme Durand's works: it is essentially that exposed in the Petits Soupers de l'Été: the controlled passion of the 'honnêtes gens', which is never in conflict with 'la mer des passions,' inevitably connected (in the novel) with unhappy love: "... mais quand (l'amour) est infortune, il faut tout mettre en usage pour seconer un joug qui renverse la raison."  

It is thus evident that one must look elsewhere for the axis upon which Mme Durand's cosmos revolves. It is not sufficient to point out that the gradual decrescendo of the notions of 'la gloire' and 'l'estime', owing to lack of moral conflict, together with an implicit acceptance of, rather than revolt against, reality, implied in 'La raison'. The preliminary résumé of the intrigues demonstrated the sort of 'honnêteté' present in the novels. Is there a constant factor in the aesthetic/ethical fabric? Notwithstanding the qualifications which should be placed upon any conclusions attempted or reached, concerning Mme Durand's works, owing to the 'ad hoc' nature of their composition, one in nonetheless justified in pointing out certain fairly constant factors. 

In the first place, the notion of 'la délicatesse', with the adjective 'délicat', is found to be of prime importance, as the 

73. op.cit., vol.I, p.185. See also vol.II, p.149, "mais les âmes magnanimes souffrent l'ambition des autres, et soumettent la leur au devoir et à la raison". 
75. op.cit., p.96.
attribute of the sympathetic character. Diverse examples of its use may be cited in the Comtesse de Mortane; the various nuances of meaning may be enlarged upon later. Regarding Rucille, we read: "... il est discret et capable d'une passion forte et délicate, plus que le siècle ne semble le permettre."76.

"La délicatesse" is indicated to be the essential attribute of passion, as the following example shows: "... il y avait du temps qu'elle le soupçonnait d'avoir une passion forte et délicate dans le coeur."77. With reference to the heroine, "la délicatesse" is used with a strictly moral connotation, as follows: "Ignore-t-il le peu de liberté que je me donne, et la délicatesse que j'ai sur mes devoirs."78. This is substantiated by the writer's comment: "... la délicatesse de son âme ne pouvait s'accommoder du moindre soupçon; ce n'est pas qu'elle crût positivement le marquis amoureux ailleurs."79.

The position of "la délicatesse" and its connexion with the sentiments has already been discussed in the study of Mlle de la Force's novels. Let us recapitulate briefly. The first point which must be borne in mind when considering the importance and implication of the existence of "la délicatesse" in a writer's work, is its ambivalence: that it can be either a term of ethics or of aesthetics. Perhaps the fact that "la délicatesse" acquired a strongly moral connotation may be ascribed to the moral pre-occupation of an earlier generation; it is now important to us because of its very mobility. This mobility, to which it owes its survival and vigorous life, means that one may assess in part the moral character of a particular work by examining the use of "la délicatesse" there present. But above all, it must be emphasized that "la délicatesse", in whatever connotation it is employed, is most profoundly concerned with expression.

77. ibid., vol. I, p.3.
78. ibid., vol. II, p.88.
79. ibid., vol. II, p.128.
Typical of the various meanings which the notion has acquired are the two following phrases. In a scene between Rucille and Mme de Mortane, the former explains: "Eh, n'est-ce rien, Madame... n'est-ce rien pour une âme délicate, d'être sûr de vos sentiments?" Later, regarding Mme de Mortane, "... elle s'abandonna à tout ce qu'une âme délicate est capable de souffrir."

It remains for us to demonstrate the constancy of this notion throughout Mme Durand's novels. Refinement is not only the attribute of the virtuous, as for instance in the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VIII: "... il me parlait souvent de la Princesse de Sicile avec une délicatesse, un respect et une douleur qui auraient touché un plus insensible que moi;" it is also acknowledged to be the quality essential for the enjoyment of pleasure: "... mais surtout nous possédons une certaine délicatesse nécessaire pour sentir finement les plaisirs."

At risk of appearing tedious, it is necessary to note the use of 'la délicatesse' in the Amours de Grégoire VII, as for instance, when the heroine of the first anecdote declares: "Vous connaissez trop bien ma délicatesse pour être jaloux des vices, des rides, et de la magie d'Hildebrand."

As one might expect, 'la délicatesse' does not fail to appear in the Petits Soupers de l'Eté, where the lovers, Mme d'Orselac and M. d'Ardelle, "se rapprochèrent en même temps avec des transports qu'une tendre joie fait goûter aux coeurs délicats."

80. ibid., vol.I, p.65. 81. ibid., vol.I, pp.160-161. 82. op.cit., vol.I, p.93. See also vol.I, p.164, "il a un esprit supérieur au reste des hommes, son coeur est plus grand et plus délicat que les autres coeurs". 83. ibid., vol.I, p.37. 84. op.cit., p.86. "Vous n'êtes pas le premier à qui elle a fait part de son cœur, que si votre délicatesse ne s'étend pas jusque sur le passé" also pp.289, 301.
More interesting, perhaps, is its appearance in the Comte de Cardonne, from which we shall quote all three examples 'in extenso':

"... il chercha divers moyens de parler à sa jeune maîtresse, pour tenter toutes les voies de se rendre heureux par ses faveurs, si sa résistance ne lui préparait un bonheur plus parfait et plus délicat." 86. Concerning the heroine: "Cette dernière attaque lui faisait sentir tout ce qu’une âme délicate est capable d’endurer." 87. And finally: "il ne savait pas si ce n’était point un art pour le faire déclarer à son père, et c’est ce que sa délicatesse ne lui permettait pas de faire..." 88.

So much for the virtue of refinement in Mme Durand’s work: a notion which had, as we have seen, acquired much importance amongst the theoreticians of ‘honnêteté’.

‘La bienséance’ or ‘les bienséances’ are also present in Mme Durand’s novels, to support and implement the effect of ‘la délicatesse.’ Previous discussion has already demonstrated the exact force of the term, together with the moral significance of its ascendancy in late seventeenth century ‘mondain’ thought. Once again, ‘la bienséance’ here denotes a concern for the appearance of a moral action; with seemliness. Thus it is that in Mme de Mortane, the heroine can no longer receive Rucille: "... la bienséance ne pouvait pas permettre que je pusse voir un homme qui avait tiré l’épée contre mon mari." 89. ‘La bienséance’ appears in Mme. Durand’s novels as a term which may be applied to cases both weighty and trivial, for instance: "mais pour votre passion, outre que la bienséance ne me permet pas d’y répondre, ..." 90. as compared with: "je n’étais plus chez-moi qu’aux heures où la bienséance eût été blessée de n’y pas retourner." 91.

One need not dwell on the incongruous aspect of the appearance

86. op.cit., vol.I, p.28.
87. ibid., vol.I, p.146.
90. ibid., vol.I, p.97.
of the term in the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII, where we read that: "... le Bastard d'Orléans surtout jouissait de toute la liberté que peut permettre la 'bienséance'." And where Joan of Arc is portrayed as making her entry at court, "accompagnée ... de deux femmes pour la bienséance." 

It is the same moral code, represented in fundamentally aesthetic terms, which is referred to in the Comte de Cardonne, where: "la bienséance ne permettait pas à Félicie d'aller chez le Comte depuis que le roi l'y avait menée." 

It would be temerarious to conclude that the slight difference in moral tone between the Amours de Grégoire VII and Mme Durand's other work, already referred to, is further emphasized by the absence of any reference to 'la bienséance' in it. In the first place, it should be understood that 'la bienséance' itself occupies a minor place in the novels, as the number of examples quoted tends to show. However, just as the brief but constant reference to it in the context of the works previously discussed is contributory towards the creation of a certain 'mondain' tone, so its absence may be taken to indicate a difference in the writer's aim. 

Once again, the cast of the Petits Soupers de l'Eté manifests a reasonable concern with 'la bienséance', so that when: "le Comte de Rozeluc ... parut fort amoureux de Mlle de Chaseu; elle répondit à son amour, en personne qui connaît les bienséances." She demurs when he asks for her portrait, and this at the end of the tale, on the grounds that: "pour agir avec bienséance, je ne dois vous donner mon portrait qu'après (notre mariage)." 

Thus, reference to certain terms, perhaps indicative of subordinate

94. op.cit., p.325. See also p.226.
95. op.cit., p.51.
96. ibid., p.278.
elements in the works; and not always of a specifically moral connotation, is necessary in order to complete the portrait of Mme Durand's moral creation. 'La bienséance' would of itself be relatively unimportant in these novels, were it not for the fact that it acts in conjunction with 'la délicatesse'. As we have seen, Mlle de la Force employed this latter term with particular reference to its sentimental aspect. Mme Durand, however, as her references to 'la bienséance' would suggest, is primarily occupied with refinement of expression and with appearance. It is of relevance to this study to notice how these harmonies appear within each writer's works; how the full significance of a notion is revealed by an examination not only of the notion itself, but also of others which accompany it. It will be readily conceded, on the face of the foregoing evidence, that, unlike Mlle de la Force, Mme Durand's primary aim is to present a pleasing picture to her readers, one where refinement and virtue, whilst present, are never so present as to inhibit pleasure.

Do the elements of Mme Durand's works which have been brought to our attention during this study form a particular pattern? How do they mutually interact? And what do they tell us about Mme Durand's ethics in her novels? Let us look once more at the cadre which she presents. In the first place, a difference between the background here and in Mlle de la Force's works, for instance, may be remarked. Although Mme Durand also chooses (nominally) an historical subject, the eminently aristocratic flavour, the somewhat rarified atmosphere of Mlle de la Force's works has gone. Neither does Mme Durand reject reality in her novels in the sense that Mme d'Aulnoy did. We are presented with stories which are really endless discussions of behaviour and refinement, in a cadre which is now half-'précieux', now smacks of the worldly-wise 'mondain' society of the late seventeenth century. In neither case can we
discern an attempt on the writer's part to edify her readers.

What of Mme Durand's conception of love? Actual quotations from the texts, as well as a recital of the stories themselves, provide ample evidence that Mme Durand is not concerned with tragic love and all that it implies. Her portrayal of this passion is in strict accordance with the background against which it is presented, where virtue and pleasure go hand in hand; and where indeed the former may be considered, in the last resort, to exist insofar as it is regarded to be the true concomitant of the latter. The same minor oscillations between the banal and affected 'précieux' tone of parts of the Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Charles VII and the whole of the Comte de Cardonne, and the more realistic moral attitude in the rest of the novels, is matched by slight variations in the expressions of love.

We are now justified, indeed it is incumbent on us, to venture some remarks, in conclusion, on Mme Durand's aim — and therefore the keynote of her ethics — as it manifests itself in her works. The notions to which she refers at length from 1699 until 1702, 'l'estime' and 'la gloire' in particular, apart from the fact that their force is necessarily modified by the nature of the works in which they are employed, are further impinged upon by the presence of 'la délicatesse', accompanied by 'la bienséance.' For, just as these two latter notions become mutually complementary, so they may be seen to have a neutralizing effect on other essentially alien moral notions. Might the converse not be true, that it is these latter notions which are influenced by 'la gloire' and 'l'estime'? Evidence of the fundamental disregard for high moral issues would render such an argument invalid.

Once again, Mme Durand's conception of love may be seen to correspond to the constant pre-occupation with refined enjoyment and pleasure in her works. It is not so much the passion itself
which she seeks to analyse, but the delicate expression thereof. Where Mlle Bernard, for instance, so constructed her novels that the didactic aim, even though attenuated, was ever present, Mme Durand's attitude, her emphasis upon the refinement, her neutral use of specifically moral notions, indicates a disregard for human excellence. It is this fundamental disregard which accounts for the essentially 'tamed' conception of love, a conception which precludes all reference to fate. It is this same disregard which leads her to portray pleasure rather than suffering.

Finally, how far is this attitude responsible for the tone in Mme Durand's novels? Frequently throughout this discussion, we have used the term 'mondain' to describe certain aspects of her work. This taste for refinement and this implicit belief in the efficacy of virtue — understood as a manifestation of refinement — as a means of obtaining pleasure, order the amount of realism which is permitted. Thus by 'mondain' we mean that which respects virtue and shuns vice, without being the dupe of ideals. Similarly, when we employ the term 'précieux' to qualify certain aspects of Mme Durand's work, we refer to a certain convention which held delicacy of language and sentiment to be paramount, where the exact ritual of a declaration of love was observed. This is a mode of thought according to which the actors neglect all spontaneity in favour of expression; a little more removed from reality than the strictly 'mondain' attitude previously mentioned, yet sharing with it a basic concern with elegance above all things.
ETHICS IN THE NOVELS OF OTHER WOMEN WRITERS, 1687-1703

MADEMOISELLE DE LA ROCHE-GUILHEM

The lack of intrinsic value of her works -- Le Grand Scanderberg, Zingis indicate the evolution which has occurred within the novel -- Mlle de la Roche-Guilhem's later works show the forces which are at work in the novel -- their particular characteristics, viewed as "historical" novels.

Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem doubtless deserves the obscurity into which her works have fallen; indeed, her claim to consideration must be regarded by any standards as minor. The mediocrity of her talent is evident throughout the whole of her work: never does the level of literary creation rise above that of prolix banality. In addition, owing to the fact that she was a Protestant emigré who fled first to Holland after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and then settled in England in 1697, her contact with the French literary scene must be presumed to have been tenuous in the extreme. The fact that her work so clearly voices an outmoded ideal is thus attributable to these two factors: not only did she lack the stimulus provided by close relationship with a literary milieu, but also her mediocrity would tend to render her less sensitive to the movement of ideas and more apt to remain faithful to the literary conventions with which she was the most long acquainted.

The very fact of the existence of Le Grand Scanderberg¹ and Zingis² demonstrates the resilience of the heroic novel: the 'grand roman' flourishes -- even though in an abridged form -- into the eighteenth century,³ in spite of the oft-vociferated opinion

1. Le Grand Scanderberg, Amsterdam, Pierre Savouret, 1688.
of the advocates of 'bon sens'.

Those works which Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem published later in the period under discussion: the *Amours de Néron*, *Jacqueline de Bavière*, and the various editions of the *Histoire des Favorites* mark a distinct difference in tone from the first two. From this, one may unhesitatingly draw one major conclusion: that if Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem hearkens to other voices than those of the Scudéry school, it is because she considers the new elements which have been introduced into the novel will find a ready market. For Mlle de la Roche-Guilhem, like Mme Durand, was essentially a pot-boiler, always willing to seize upon and exploit a theme which would find an audience.

Discussion of *Le Grand Scanderberg* and *Zingis* presents the sole difficulty of avoiding repetition: all criticism of the 'grands romans' made from Boileau onwards might be applied here. We have already referred to a rejection of reality within the novel, when deciding upon the aptness of the term epic, as applied to Mme d'Aulnoy's works. On that occasion, we rejected the idea of a true epic quality in such novels as *Hypolite, Comte de Duglas* on the grounds that there was a fundamental difference of moral inspiration between this and *Le Grand Cyrus* for instance. We may further

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4. Mme de Sévigné, a woman of admirable taste and good sense, whilst conceding that their plots are ridiculous and trifling, admits: "...je m'y laisse prendre comme à de la glu." May it be suggested that the serious reason for their continued existence is the universal appeal which they made to their women readers? That the function of literature in Society is to represent, by appeal to the mind and imagination of the reader, an idealisation of his own emotional being, would not be seriously disputed. This function, understood on a lower plane, can serve in presenting an image idealised in a grosser sense, offering a means of vicarious enjoyment — a form of escape from dull reality. It is just such a role that the heroic novel could continue to play in a society where women still occupied a much inferior position. This thesis finds support in the longevity of the genre and the universality of the phenomenon.

5. *Amours de Néron*, par Madxxx, Amsterdam, 1695.
elucidate this question by examining—briefly—the underlying moral inspiration of Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem, whom we see as the true successor, or rather the lame imitator, of Mlle de Scudéry's ideal.

First of all, the background of both Le Grand Scanderberg and Zingis: in the first case, that of the Eastern Mediterranean, the land of Artamène and in the second, the nebulous regions of Tartary. The protagonists, whether they hail from the shores of the Black Sea or from Mongolia, are noble and generous, whilst their adversaries, whether they be the barbarous Turks (as opposed to the morally superior Christians) or the warring Mongols, are treacherous and cowardly.

The significance of choice of subject has already appeared as an important aspect of this study. Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem is manifestly not interested in even the rudiments of what we have grown to accept as local colour. Furthermore, the cadre clearly marks a retrograde step in aesthetics: the background lacks in all respects the precision and historical proximity of a Mme de Villedieu—chronologically Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's contemporary.9

She is, however, manifestly concerned to depict an ideal: one as far removed from reality as her décor. If one hesitates to accept the accuracy of the latter statement, all doubt may be dispelled by such a description of the royal palace in Zingis as: "Le palais royal est hors de la ville et un des plus superbes de toute la Tartarie. Les jardins en sont vastes et curieusement cultivés."

8. The very title, Le Grand Scanderberg, sounds as an echo of Le Grand Cyrus which is its principal model.

9. The importance of the development of greater verisimilitude in the novel has been discussed in such studies as those of Marie-Aline Raynal, op.cit., and Dorothy Dallas, op.cit. In this present context, where a distance of space replaces a distance of time, one is reminded of the controversy between the advocates of the Ancients and those of the Moderns. The novel in general was to choose instinctively the part of the Moderns: the function which it gradually assumed, of conveying and commenting on the human passions, renders an easily recognisable décor necessary.
The plots of *Le Grand Scanderberg* and *Zingis* run a similar course: the noble and virtuous hero is eventually rewarded—after innumerable contretemps—by the heroine’s hand and heart. That they are so many copies of ‘Brutus damaret’ would be apparent from the most cursory examination. However, having disposed of the question of historical verisimilitude within the works, we should still look further to ascertain more nearly the ideal which informs Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem’s writing at this period. First of all Scanderberg and Zingis, who resemble Sappho’s Persian heroes even to the swishing plumes. As we have previously inferred, the parallelism of situations between *Le Grand Scanderberg* and *Le Grand Cyrus* is so marked that one is bound to consider the former to be a conscious imitation of the latter.

Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem portrays characters of a truly noble stamp, in the fullest acceptance of the term. Born of noble blood, even though they may not know it—this feature is yet another reminiscence of *Le Grand Cyrus*—they are consumed with discontent at their life of idleness which they deem shameful and unworthy of them.

10. op. cit., p.18. Anachronistic details—of dress, conversation—of the whole spirit—abound. For instance, this conversation between two Tartars, ibid., p.124. "C’est par vos premières actions que vous méritez la couronne de Tartarie et tout ce que vous y avez ajouté; et c’est par la vie, que vous m’avez conservée en faveur de Taxila que vous méritez cette Princesse". The hero of *Le Grand Scanderberg* tells his story thus: "Le Sultan qui eut bonne opinion de ma jeunesse, y fit donner tous les soins nécessaires pour me rendre honnête homme." (p.16). The entry of the slaves is described thus: "...pour rendre ce spectacle plus beau, elles portaient des chaînes d’or et on les avait chargées de senteurs et de corbeilles de fleurs". (p.31)

11. See *Le Grand Scanderberg*, p.92, "Les ordres ayant été donnés partout l’invincible Scanderberg parut devant son armée, la tête ombragée de plumes noires".

12. For instance, the mother of Scanderberg, like that of Artamène, had a prophetic dream before he was born, p.15: "Elle songea qu’elle avait accouché d’un serpent si grand qu’il couvrait tout l’Empire". See also *Zingis*, pp.43-44, 47.

The notion of worth, of being worthy of oneself, one's class, one's love - the whole system of ethics to which it refers - thus forms the basis of these two novelettes. The same preoccupations - somewhat lacking in meaning in these ephemeral plots - are expressed as were gloriously and significantly used in Corneille's dramas.

The ideal which is the motive force in these two novels is that of the essential harmony between love and liberty. The inter-relationship of liberty/love/worth has already been discussed when it was pointed out that it was necessary to resolve the difficulty of conceiving of love as a weakness and reprehensible in that it represented an alienation of liberty. This represents the basis of the aristocratic mode of thought: that love must be envisaged as tending towards, rather than detracting from, individual freedom. The conception of love as the alienation of free will has as its corollary that it can lead to crime: it was due to the importance attached to will that the notion of love as being noble in the breasts of the noble was conceived.

If the attitudes struck by the heroes are gauchely and painfully reminiscent of the Scudérian ideal, so also is the fetish made of chastity on the part of the heroine - a necessary concomitant of the perfect passion. It is, indeed, a ferocious virtue which the

(cont.) nécessaires pour des actions peu communes; ne suis-je pas le plus malheureux des hommes, de sembler être destiné à passer ma vie dans une oisiveté honteuse..." cp. Le Grand Scanderberg, p. 39, "... c'est l'oisiveté qui me rend triste".

14. The epithets, généreux, grand, illustre, worn somewhat threadbare of significance, are used to describe the main protagonists.

15. Such exhortations as: "Cherchez-vous une mort sans gloire... et voulez-vous que les Turcs triomphe de toute celle de votre vie", seem empty in the context of Le Grand Scanderberg.

16. See introductory section, where we discussed briefly this aristocratic mode of thought which rejected the idea of a loss of liberty, and which resolved the difficulty by decreeing that the individual, in order to retain his integrity, must be worthy of the object of his passion, which must in its turn be worthy of him. The whole is conceived of in terms of absolutes.

17. For expression of these ideas, see Le Grand Scanderberg, p. 15, "Mais quelque passionné que soit le roi d'Albanie, l'amour ne lui fit rien dire, ni rien faire qui soit indigne de lui". Love as a possible weakness is expressed by Scanderberg: "Arianisse ne sera-t-elle
works were published during the same period as Eleonor d'Yvrée and the Histoire d'Hypolite, Comte de Duglas. To Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem may be applied with some justice a criticism which we should consider in general unfounded: that the only difference between the novels of the late seventeenth century and those of Mlle de Scudéry is that of length. Let us revert for a final time to the question of the appositeness of the term epic, applied to Mme d'Aulnoy's work in particular, in that it represents a rejection of reality. In spite of the fact that both novelists' works indubitably represent such a rejection, the differences between them are irreconcilable. Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's conception of Man as master of his destiny, echoing down from the halcyon days of Artamène, is alien to that in Mme d'Aulnoy's novels. Similarly, the conception of love, in both cases linked by an immutable logic to the conception of the individual, has much evolved in 'Clio's' works: she is concerned not so much with love as being noble in the breasts of the noble as being a constant source of suffering. In fine, it is on considering such works as Le Grand Scanderberg and Zingis that we understand the progress made in the novel towards a true-to-life portrayal of the passions.

If Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's first two works have merited a place in this discussion in that they may be used to show how far moral characterization has developed in other novels, the others of her work published during this period may be demonstrated to reflect the mainstreams of literary creation at the time. In the Amours de Néron, the various editions of her Histoire des Favorites, 20 which appeared during the last years of the seventeenth and early years of the

20. Both the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale possess various copies of this work: we shall not deal with the separate editions in turn. Unlike those of the other women writers, Mlle de la Roche-Guilhem's works were published in the Low Countries, owing to the fact that she was a refugee from France.
hero can never be at too much pains to respect, not daring to so much as raise his eyes to his beloved. 18

In her expression of love in these novels, Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem faithfully translates an idea which formed an intrinsic part of Scudérian/précieux ethics: that love, being omnipotent, created its own laws, a transgression against which was accounted a crime. We are bound to recognize in the conception of love as paramount, overriding interests of State, the imprint of an earlier generation — that of the Fronde. According to this morality, the loyalty which was due to one's beloved was of the same nature as that due to King and State. The notions of 'crime' and 'criminel' thus appear as a leitmotiv in these two short works. The following passage from Le Grand Scanderberg, chosen as representative, might have been written by 'Sappho' herself: "Je n'ai point affecté le trouble qui vous a paru, et quoi qu'il en soit, vous êtes plus heureux que moi, n'ayant point à vous donner à ce que vous n'aimez point, et pouvant soupirer sans crime." 19

Regarding such servile imitations of Le Grand Cyrus as Le Grand Scanderberg and Zingis, it is perhaps surprising to realize that these

(cont.) prévenue de quelque tendre inclination...? Et le coeur qu'elle ôte ne doit-il rien espérer d'elle? Je n'avais pas plutôt prononcé ces paroles, que je les trouvai indignes d'un homme qui aspirait au nom de grand."

18. e.g. Zingis, p.27, "Zingis avait trop de respect, pour ne s'imposer pas une parfaite discretion...il ne précipita point une déclaration de son amour, qui pouvait irriter Taxila, et voulut attendre que ses services la préparassent à l'écouter favorablement";
Le Grand Scanderberg, p.46 (Scanderberg to Arianisse) "...puis que Scanderberg perdrait la vie plutôt que de manquer de respect pour vous".

p.47, "J'attendrais que mes soins et mon respect eussent préparé la déclaration et mérité l'aveu".

19. cf. Le Grand Cyrus, tome I, vol.ii, p.36, "...l'amour n'a jamais fait naître la haine. ... ce n'est que la manière de se faire entendre qui peut être dangereuse, et qu'il est nécessaire de bien choisir: il ne faut donc pas parler d'être aimé, en découvrant que l'on aime: il ne faut rien demander, rien espérer, et rien prétendre, que le seul soulagement de faire savoir son mal à celle qui la cause..."

op. cit., p.130. Arianisse is addressing Scanderberg about her marriage to another, who is unworthy of her. cf. Le Grand Cyrus, tome I, vol.ii, p.136, "...un Amant dont la passion respectueuse n'a jamais offensé votre vertu, par un désir criminel;..." See also pp.138,871.
eighteenth centuries, and Jacqueline de Bavière, Comtesse de Hainault, Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem has turned her back on the heroic genre in favour of the pseudo-historical account: in deference, no doubt, to the growing popularity of the latter during this period.

The first of these works, which although published separately from the Histoire des Favorites, really is the blueprint for this latter collection of stories, is indeed representative of all Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's subsequent works. The title, the Amours de Néron, tells us all that we need to know - all that there is to know - that it is set in Ancient Rome and that it deals with amours of the depraved and capricious emperor.

In considering Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's use of history, it might be pertinent to consider, for a moment, that Mme de Villedieu had had recourse to a similar theme in the Faiblesses Humaines. Both ladies manifest a flagrant disregard for historical accuracy, but where Mme de Villedieu, an unrepentant Epicurean at heart, rendered a complacent account of life in Imperial Rome, Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem has chosen to tell of suffering virtue, with the profligate Nero unable to win the affections of Actée, a slave with the soul of a princess, which - it eventually transpires - she is.

If a fundamentally moralizing attitude, as opposed to that of Mme de Villedieu for instance, is apparent in Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's treatment of history in the Amours de Néron, a further characteristic, which becomes more apparent in certain of the anecdotes in the Histoire des Favorites, is also discernible. In spite of the overall virtuous tone, the author is not afraid to refer to moral turpitude in high places, which she cites as grounds for attack against authority and against the monarchy in particular.

21. Les Amours de Néron, p.7, "... il était presque toujours amoureux, et le libertinage seul lui plaisait".
22. ibid., p.9 "(Neron) fut bien surpris, lui, devant qui tout était soumis, de trouver dans Actée une résistance telle que la première et la plus sage Princesse de l'univers aurait pu faire..."
The diatribe against the monarch's taking part in court spectacles, an echo from Britannicus, is echoed here, whilst Nero is portrayed throughout in an unfavourable light. Nor are we spared references to the general moral decadence of the time: Junia's incestuous relationship with her brother, the scandalous behaviour of Poppea and Messalina, the vices and squalor of the age, although referred to with restraint, are nonetheless present.

This treatment of history marks something of a new departure among women writers, although, as we have already seen and shall see again, not amongst their male counterparts. The aspect which is peculiar to Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem is that she does not refer to scabrous incidents in a way liable to titillate the readers' senses. The moralizing aim is implicit throughout, revealed in part by copious references to the accepted moral notions of the time such as we have discussed in preceding chapters. In Nero, the first of several high-born protagonists whose weaknesses are revealed and castigated, we may see the work of a Protestant emigré anxious to criticize by implication the regime of Louis XIV and Mme de Maintenon.

Granted, such works as these occupy a minor place in the clandestine literature of the time: the criticism is not so vitriolic, the satire lacking the sting of that of some of the men writers. In any case, this aspect is but a minor one of our discussion, primarily concerned as we are with a particular study of moral values within these novels.

In the Histoire des Favorites, the characteristics which were in some cases barely discernible in the Amours de Néron are now given full expression. The title itself, suggestive of the seamy side

23. ibid., p.15, "Quoi! Le successeur des Césars au lieu de se faire un modèle de leur admirable vertu, ne songe qu'à imiter l'adresse de Roscius dans les spectacles...c'est ce qui le plonge dans cette mollesse honteuse si indigne de son rang".

24. ibid., p.70.
of history, bears out the promise of the earlier work. The authoress has culled her material from various epochs in history. The main point about them is that they all belong to the literary common currency of the time. Two of the anecdotes, the stories of Agnès Sorel and Julie Parnèse, were also treated by Mme Durand at about this time. The story of Marie de Beauvilliers is equally reminiscent of an incident in Mlle de la Force's *Anecdote de Bourbon*, whilst that of Livia — harking back to the Augustan Age — reminds one once more of Mme de Villedieu.

In spite of her prolific output, Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's works deserve no comment other than that which has already been made. The moral tone, even, monotonous and dull, giving proof of a certain moralizing intention simultaneously makes certain concessions to what we may presume to have been the taste of the time in the depiction of wronged virtue.

Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's novels deserve, then, only the briefest comment, in the first place because they are so conspicuously out of step with those published at the same time in France itself, and secondly because the change in tone which is registered within the successive works may be regarded as testifying to the influence of the women novelists previously discussed.

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25. *Amours de Grégoire VII*, which, it will be remembered, were published anonymously and are merely attributed to Mme Durand. Whilst discussing this work, we compared it to that of Mlle de la Roche-Guilhem.

26. These comments are eminently applicable to *Jacqueline de Bavière* which it is not intended to discuss specifically here.
ETHICS IN THE NOVELS OF OTHER WOMEN WRITERS, 1687-1703

MADAME DE MURAT

The setting of her works marks a departure from that of other women writers — the reality which she portrays is that of the honnêtes gens — a greater reality than that of Mme de Villedieu. — Reflects the doctrine of pleasure subscribed to by the honnêtes gens: neither barren idealism nor debauchery. — Freedom from literary conventions allows for greater observation of reality.

Mme de Murat, a strange — and if certain reports be true, in private life a reprehensible — character,⁴ at all events a woman of original talent, wins a place in this discussion with two works: La Défense des Dames, ou Mémoires de Madame la Comtesse de, which appeared in 1697,² and Voyage de Campagne, published in 1699.³

It is a pity in some ways that this discussion must be confined to printed works, for the manuscript of an unpublished work of Mme de Murat proved to be one of the most interesting documents encountered during the preparation of this study. A journal kept during her exile at Loches and entitled Histoire Galante des Habitants de Loches, Mme de Murat's manuscript merits a brief acknowledgement in this discussion in that it contains the original of one of Mme Durand's short stories.

In considering Mme de Murat's Mémoires, one is immediately confronted with the question of whether this is a work of an autobiographical nature. The little which is known of the writer's

1. There is some controversy about Mme de Murat. She figures largely in L'Envers du Grand Siècle, where M. Gaiffe bases his statements on D'Argenson's police reports. On the other hand, M.E. Storer, in La Mode des contes de fées, would seek to whitewash Mme de Murat's character — an apology which is less convincing than M. Gaiffe's indictment.

2. La Défense des Dames ou Mémoires de Madame la Comtesse de ***/ Dans lesquels on verra/que très souvent il y a beaucoup plus de malheur que de dérèglement dans la conduite des femmes, Paris, Claude Barbin, 1697.


4. MS. Arsenal. Mme de Murat, eminently a dilettante, is yet a much better writer than Mme Durand from a purely literary point of view. The latter is indebted to her on many occasions in her works.
life permits one to reject such an idea, comparable to that concerning Mme de Villedieu's *Mémoires de ... Henriette-Sylvie de Molière*. This comparison, however, proves a fruitful one, the two works being similar in more than one respect. In the first place the style - that of a fast-flowing narrative told in the first person - resembles closely that of Mme de Villedieu, as does the type of events recorded in this racy journal. The plot, if such it can be called, thus marks a departure from that chosen by women writers like Mmes d'Aulnoy and de La Force, for instance, who were Mme de Murat's literary contemporaries. Here, as in the case of Mme de Villedieu, the term 'picaresque' could be profitably applied.

'Dinamise' had composed her *Mémoires* twenty-five years previously. One of the major objects in examining Mme de Murat's *Mémoires* will therefore be to ascertain how close is the similarity between the two works and, with regard to such differences as may become apparent, to see how far these may be attributed to the influence of Mme de Murat's contemporaries amongst women novelists.

A first point: that of the setting which, as we have indicated, is essentially realistic in that the author describes a background of actuality, one which in no way partakes of the literary convention requiring a separation in time or space. However, we must immediately qualify the term 'picaro': Mme de Murat is not concerned to describe the hard material realities of life, which would not only be shocking to the reader for whom the work was intended, but would also be entirely alien to his or her experience. Thus although the heroine passes through innumerable vicissitudes, she escapes without experiencing any material hardships and without the author's ever seizing the occasion to make some social criticism.

5. Mme de Murat would seem to have written this diffuse work - typical of the 'occasional' literature of the period - in reply to Saint-Evremond's *Mémoires*. 
The story, too rambling and extravagant to be resumed here, begins, as in the case of Henriette-Sylvie, when the heroine is a young girl whose head is filled with such romantic nonsense as she has gleaned from reading novels. She is first of all immured in a convent, from which she escapes into matrimony with a man whom she cannot love — because he is unworthy of her — from whom she is eventually separated. Hereupon she becomes an object of scurrilous gossip and calumnious insinuations, so that a slanderous interpretation is placed upon the most innocent of her actions. Quite apart from the realism of the story itself as it unwinds — compared with the more rarefied atmosphere of Mme d'Aulnoy's novels — the writer ventures certain realistic observations on the Society of the time.

We should immediately add, however, that the primary characteristic of this observation is its uncritical, its amoral nature. This fact further restricts the application of the term 'picaresque'. Mme de Murat reports on what she sees with an even greater liberty than did Mme de Villedieu, yet it is essentially the world of the 'honnêtes gens' which provides scope for her observation, from which she never draws any conclusions of general moral significance. The aim never appears to be to portray the seamy side of life nor to castigate the vices of Society.

What are the specific elements of realism to which we have referred? Taking first the convent episode, previously mentioned, the tone is one of strong moral indignation against the iniquity of forced vocations. Although not to be compared with the outcry against this evil such as was to be expressed in La Religieuse, it does reveal a greater preoccupation with reality than was present in Mme de Villedieu's work.

6. Mémoires, pp.18, 22-23, "C'est là sans doute l'effet le plus innocent que puisse produire la lecture des romans sur l'esprit d'une jeune personne." It will be remembered that Mme Durand echoed this attack on the influence of romantic fiction on the young in the Comtesse de Mortane (1699).
The heroine's charms being - it would seem - of a singularly potent nature, her footsteps are dogged by admirers whose intentions are more or less honourable. This theme, comparable to that of Mme de Villedieu's Mémoires, is accorded a somewhat different treatment in the later work. Whereas there were some strongly realistic elements in Henriette-Sylvie's story - for did she not have cause to comment about a judge that he was the only man she had met, willing to espouse the cause of a pretty woman, without an ulterior motive? - Mme de Murat's observations are more realistic still. Quite apart from explicit references to prostitution, a price is offered for the heroine's favours on more than one occasion.

What of the milieu in which this drama, such as it is, takes place? The first point to notice is that it is comparatively precise; such indications as the occupations of the characters being clearly given. From these indications, one realizes that Mme de Murat is more concerned with what we should nowadays term the upper-middle class, the noblesse de robe, than the aristocracy. Those who vie for the heroine's favours are the eminent and wealthy citizens of Paris.

If the tone throughout is fundamentally amoral, if the moral values portrayed remain unquestioned, the protagonists themselves seem to belong to a sort of demi-monde, being all more or less disreputable. The Duchess who befriends the writer - at first portrayed as a generous soul - turns out to be having a liaison with the perfidious Abbé de Cour who also has designs on Mme de M's honour. All the characters exist by virtue of their relationship to the heroine: the wealthy président à mortier because his perfidy causes some of the minor pérepetie, his son, genuinely in love with her, because his youthful impetuosity causes some of the catastrophes. If such types as the faux dévots appear momentarily, they are mocked and pilloried in such a way as to amuse the reader rather than to arouse his or her moral indignation against the vice in question.

7. ibid., p.38.
Perhaps one of the most perplexing aspects of this work is the duality of tone, the dichotomy not only between the milieu in which the heroine lives and her own inviolable virtue, but also between this much-vaunted virtue and her obiter dicta on love. For if on the one hand the writer avails herself of the freedom accorded by the genre she has chosen, she is on the other careful to observe the tenets of virtuous love. Not only does she reject out of hand all advances which are not accompanied by the most profound respect, but her heart is won only by the long and faithful services of her youthful admirer, Saint-Albe.

However, due perhaps to her fundamental disregard for the underlying moral issues, Mme de Murat allows herself certain observations on love which are completely at variance with this conception of a pure and ethereal passion. She admits at an early stage in the story, that her husband began to attract her less when his rival, one Sauveboeuf, began to attract her more. Having thus implicitly admitted the existence of a love based on the senses, one of her final conclusions is that such a love is extinguished upon fulfilment—that is to say, upon marriage.

The moral notions most frequently invoked are those of la délicatesse, la bienséance, and finally l'honnêteté, all of which we have met before, and which serve to indicate clearly the world of polite corruption and refinement at the expense of morality into which Mme de Murat transports us.

8. ibid., p.106, "Mais ce qu'il avait fait pour moi et le respect dont il avait toujours accompagné sa passion, me faisait croire qu'il n'y avait que lui au monde qui fût digne de moi."
10. ibid., p.258. See also p.175.
11. See pp. 121, 218, 206, "... je pris le chemin de ma terre, résolue de me consoler de la perte d'un homme qui n'avait pas assez de délicatesse pour se contenter de mon coeur."
12. See p 216
13. See p.147, "... mais je ne crois pas qu'il soit permis d'aimer un homme qui souffre qu'une femme qu'il a aimée et qui a recours à lui, devienne la proie de ses ennemis".
With regard to the discrepancy between certain elements of Mme de Murat's portrayal of love, one might point out that this illustrates how the cadre must impinge upon the subject-matter, the emotions depicted. A picture of ideal love - such as that of Julie and Hypolite in the *Histoire d'Hypolite, Comte de Douglas*, would have been not only at variance with the general background, it would have been also impossible to achieve.

What are the conclusions which an examination of the text entitles us to draw concerning the moral observation in Mme de Murat's *Mémoires*? In the first place, we have noticed that there is a greater reality, a greater freedom of expression than was present in the *Mémoires de...Henriette-Sylvie de Moliène*. Such a frankness could not reasonably be attributed to the influence of other women writers of the years which intervened between the two works. On the contrary, the medium of expression - the journal of everyday events - which allows the writer to record the real rather than the ideal, and in which the didactic aim is necessarily attenuated, together with a more "human" view of love, sets Mme de Murat apart from the mainstream of the feminine novel of the time.

The second of Mme de Murat's works to be published, the *Voyage de Campagne*, resembles too closely, in manner of composition, Mme Durand's *Petits Soupers d'Été* for one to avoid seeing it as the model for this latter work. The *Voyage de Campagne* has a gently bucolic setting: that of the countryside "not too far from Paris", where the honnêtes gens could relax and amuse themselves, away from court duties. Mme de Murat, whose life was spent as much in the country as at court, illustrates admirably the feeling for nature of the late seventeenth century, describing the scene thus: "Le soleil venait de se coucher; c'est à mon gré le plus beau moment de la journée: il n'y a pas une petite

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14. It is interesting to note that the title of Mme Durand's work was originally *Les Petits Soupers d'Été de l'Année 1699* - the year of the publication of the *Voyage de Campagne*. The title of the former work was amended in subsequent editions.
fleur qui ne jette une odeur aimable, pas un oiseau qui ne chante; les esprits mêmes se trouvent plus libres que pendant le chaud du jour."

The cadre itself is important only in so far as it sets the tone of the work — representing late seventeenth century French Society. The protagonists, whom once again we suspect as serving as models for Mme Durand’s characters in the *Petits Soupers d’Eté*, belong incontrovertibly to Mme de Murat’s day and age: honnêtes fainéants and honnêtes femmes like the Marquis d’Arcine, Mme de Talemonte and the inevitable Abbé de Cour.

The writer, instead of filling the pages with anecdotes as Mme Durand was to do, avails herself of the opportunity afforded by this particular cadre, of presenting studies of contemporary manners. The reader is intended to be amused by descriptions of the contemporary scene. The company are visited by country ladies whose attempts to show how they keep abreast of the times in literary matters are somewhat risible. Again, a more important interlude is provided by the visit to the home of a certain M. and Mme Richardin, merchants who have become enriched by their labours and who have bought their present position — including a decaying chateau and a dubious title. The grotesque scene, more cruel than that of Molière’s *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, sheds a harsh and revealing light on the evolutions which were taking place in the Society of the time and on the reactions of the honnêtes gens towards them.

The *Voyage de Campagne* is essentially an opuscule reflecting the pastimes of the honnêtes gens — the most important of these being the game of love. Once one accepts the belief that pleasure is the aim of existence, one’s attitude towards love must be that it must serve to procure this pleasure. Naturally, such a conception of love and

15. op.cit., p.10. Mme Durand’s description seems to have been inspired by this. For further discussion on the seventeenth century’s feeling for nature, see A. Adam, *Le Sentiment de la nature au XVIIe siècle*, Cahiers de l’Association internationale des Études françaises, juillet, 1954, no.6.
life must preclude passion as being detrimental to pleasure. These theories, which we have had occasion to expose in the works of Mme de Villedieu, for instance, form the central theme of the *Voyage de Campagne*. One may easily understand that these anecdotes are of an essentially trivial nature, there being no serious moral issues at stake. Mistakes and misunderstandings occur only to give a fillip to a passion which might die too quickly, a passion whose raison d'être is to *enliven* to an existence which might otherwise become monotonous.
A non-idealistic work as opposed to others of Mme d'Aulnoy's fictional creations. — The conception of love in the Mémoires — sensual — presupposing an equality between the sexes. — The effect of such terms as 'la gloire', 'le mérite' nullified by the underlying doctrine of pleasure. — The role of 'la délicatesse' in this doctrine. — The essentially amoral nature of the Mémoires — the significance of reason in this context.

If we have chosen — somewhat arbitrarily, it might seem — to separate the Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre from the other works by Mme d'Aulnoy previously discussed, it is primarily because of the 'galant' tone of the Mémoires as opposed to the somewhat sentimentalizing tone of the other novels. The full significance of this statement will become clear during the course of this discussion.

Bearing in mind the stories of Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, of Jean de Bourbon and the Comte de Warwick, one is struck by an initial difference between these and the Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre. Whereas the former had all been set in somewhat remote regions, either geographically or historically, these Mémoires purport to be a record of almost contemporary events, being set at the Court of Charles II. The events retailed, all of a decidedly apocryphal nature, concern the merry monarch's courtiers: Monmouth, Buckingham, the Earl of Oxford, Nell Gwynn. If the statement that the 'ideal' cadre of Mme d'Aulnoy's other works was matched by an idealistic moral tone was true, then the converse, that in this case the material reality of the background is matched by a portrayal of incidents of a non-idealistic nature, is equally true.

2. The other of Mme d'Aulnoy's works which can be accounted pure fiction is the Nouvelles Espagnoles par Madame D', Paris, Claude Barbin, 1692. The work contains the same formulae of unhappy love and virtue persecuted by a malignant fate as were the essential features of her novels. In spite of the title, there is as little indication of the Spanish scene as in Jean de Bourbon.
3. The Abbé Laporte, op.cit., vol.ii, p.204, describes the Mémoires in the following terms: "... autre ouvrage de Madame d'Aulnoy, ne présentant que des aventures galantes et romanesques. On y voit des (continued overleaf)
Let us look briefly at the conception of love expressed in this work. The protagonists are without exception "honnêtes gens" - idle and pleasure-seeking. In this recital of backstairs gossip, no moral issues ever arise to be solved. Everyone is concerned with amorous pursuits, with the sensual pleasures of love, whilst at the same time conforming to the minimum standard of conduct laid down for life in polite society.

For the men, life is a succession of amorous conquests, where the greatest pleasure lies in the chase and where physical possession and indifference are two stages which follow so quickly upon each other as to be synonymous. The 'amours volages' which are represented, together with explicit references to the male protagonists' attitude, allow one to see in such as Buckingham a forerunner of the Lovelace figure - or at all events, one who stands in direct line of succession to Don Juan. To support this important assertion, we shall quote at length a conversation between the Dukes of Buckingham and Saint-Albans.

Buckingham - Il est des personnes qui ne peuvent vivre sans avoir une passion dans le cœur.

Saint-Albans - Mais c'est donc par habitude, et cela ne doit être appelé qu'un amusement.

Buckingham - L'habitude peut y avoir quelque part et pour de certaines gens ces sortes d'affaires ne sont pas sérieuses...Mais pour moi je me trouve les mêmes dispositions, je change seulement de l'objet, tantôt une blonde, tantôt une brune me captivent et m'enchaînent tour à tour.  

(cont.) courtisans volages, qui courent de belle en belle, sans s'arrêter à aucune, et font successivement le bonheur et le tour­ment de leurs maîtresses."

4. Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre, Par Madame D', second edition, La Haye, M. Uytwerf, 1695, vol. i, p. 205. On a subsequent occasion, Aran had reproached Buckingham with the faults of a Don Juan, ibid. vol. ii, p. 106. "Car vous avez souvent engagé votre cœur à des personnes qui ne pourraient prétendre à une conquête si glorieuse; mais enfin vous leur persuadiez votre passion, vous leur faisiez mille serments, et elles se donnaient toutes au penchant de vous croire et de vous aimer: à peine étiez-vous certain de leur cœur que vous le leur ôtiez: convenez donc que vous aimiez sans raison, et que vous les abandonniez sans sujet".
Monmouth analyses his behaviour thus: "Je vous l'avoue... je n'ai jamais eu de véritables plaisirs dans la possession d'un coeur que je me suis cru absolument acquis."

Je suis sensible... aux soins que je rends à une nouvelle maîtresse, à ses dédaux, aux empressements qu'ils me causent... enfin à tout ce qui fait le commencement d'une passion."

It is in fact a society of sensualists with love conceived of in similar terms: where decorum and outward restraint give a fillip to passion. Such a conception is, naturally, diametrically opposed to that of love as a unique and all-consuming passion. According to this mode of thought, Jeannette and Phyllis were not mutually exclusive, the former's existence being accounted as of no importance, in that the heart was not committed.

This attitude towards love indicates that the aim of existence is considered to be the attainment of pleasure. What is the role of women in this refined labyrinth? If the aim of love is considered to be that of sensual enjoyment, there must obtain an essential equality between the sexes: the inviolable barrier of chastity which separated Mandane from her suitors having definitively disappeared. Women, as much as men, subscribe to the doctrine of pleasure. Under this new regime, the number of ladies' "captives" is considered a tribute to their charms. The captives must of course be worthy of them and the courtship must conform to the rules laid down by a society exigent as to external details.

We have, in referring to the feminine role in this game of love, employed the metaphor of war—captive and defeat—which has

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6. See ibid., vol.i, p.197, "... si l'on voulait faire un crime à un homme de ce qu'il aime plus d'une fois en sa vie, il n'y aurait aucun qui dût être innocent."
7. Ibid., vol.i, p.33, "Il peut arriver dans le cours d'une grande et longue passion, que l'on s'échappe pour profiter d'une occasion favorable: mais il est certain que ces petites infidélités n'ont aucune suite."
indissoluble 'précieux' associations. We may continue this discussion of the Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre by studying the use and significance of certain notions.

It has been previously claimed that this is a non-idealistic work. Having referred, albeit briefly, to the hegemony of love - as a vehicle of pleasure par excellence - one might be almost surprised to ascertain the reappearance of 'la gloire' in such a work. How can there be room for questions relating to moral worth when the pursuit of pleasure is paramount? In Mme d'Aulnoy's other works, in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, for instance, 'la gloire', in the sense of one's reputation in Society, where reputation was nonetheless correlated with one's personal merit, was still an important consideration.

The difference in tone between Mme d'Aulnoy's other works and the Mémoires is manifest in the use of 'la gloire' in the latter, signifying as it does one's good name in Society, without regard for moral worth - a difference summed up in the Duke of Monmouth's explanation regarding his clandestine love affair: "Le mystère que je vous ai fait de ma passion pour elle, n'est point un défaut de confiance pour vous: mais elle est délicate et jalouse de sa gloire." The debasement of the term is, however, most fully apparent in the following passage, when a mistress explains to her lover the importance of keeping their liaison secret: "Voudriez-vous, milord, qu'il parlât de moi, et me trouveriez-vous digne des sentiments que vous me témoignez, si ma gloire souffrait dans le monde." The latter statement is highly revelatory of the moral tone of the Mémoires. A precarious system had been built around the notion

8. For instance, Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, vol. i, p. 72, when Julie says that she cannot "... souffrir un soupir pour un autre que pour mon époux sans commettre un crime contre lui et contre ma gloire".
9. op.cit., vol. i, p. 31. On another occasion, a woman of the court, about to accede to her suitor's entreaties, remarks: "Je suis contente, je veux bien me laisser persuader, ménagez ma gloire, je n'ai rien au monde de plus cher". (vol.ii, p.148).
10. ibid., vol. i, p. 87. See also vol. i, p.194; vol. ii, p.45.
of worth. In order that the lover might be worthy of his mistress — of her affections — he must in the first place fulfil the requirements of honnêteté, must be courteous and refined in all things. She in her turn must be worthy of him in that her reputation must be unblemished: that is, no scandal must be attached to her name. They must both in all things obey the rigorous laws of conduct towards each other and towards society at large — laws which, it may be said, are founded exclusively on 'paraître' — on appearance — rather than on 'être' — on the substance.11 The use of 'la gloire', originally a notion which formed an integral part of Cornelanian ethics, is interesting not only in that an examination of the manner in which it is employed provides an unerring clue to the moral tone of a work, but also because in the case of the Mémoires it demonstrates the effect of the underlying moral doctrine — the doctrine of pleasure which we hold to be at the basis of this work — upon such a concept. The words continued to be used — just as these courtiers express themselves in the flowery language of the 'précieux'12 — they remain as the framework around which a new moral edifice has been built.

Similarly 'le mérite' once used by Corneille to imply moral worth — although, it is true, also employed by him to indicate physical beauty when referring to women — is given a trivial employment in the Mémoires. We have already noted the evolution of the term and the gradual disappearance of a more spiritual connotation in the Princesse de Clèves. Here the evolution is complete — it is to Monmouth's amorous prowess that the lady is referring when she asks: "Quelle raison

11. Even the dissolute Charles II is portrayed as proceeding according to these rules: "J'aimais la comtesse de XXX d'une passion si respectueuse...j'attendais que le temps me fit mériter un bien que je ne voulais devoir qu'à mes soins et à sa reconnaissance". (vol.i, p.55).

12. These honnêtes gens' evince a highly-developed taste for circumlocution and the pretty metaphor, for instance: "Trouvez-vous ici, belle Nympe...quelque coeur digne de vos traits? il me suffira d'avoir trouvé le vôtre... (vol.i, p.223). See also vol.i, p.216. This language gives an effect of elegant badinage, suited to the superficiality of the emotions expressed.
avez-vous, milord, pour vous défier de votre mérite?"\textsuperscript{13}

A notion reappears in the Mémoires, which we have previously shown to be essentially related to the expression of a thought - with the outward and visible signs rather than the inward reality: that of 'la délicatesse'. One is in no way surprised to find that it constantly recurs in the Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre, both in view of the facts given in the preceding sentence and also because, as we have stated elsewhere, la délicatesse so often denotes a preoccupation with pleasure.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, whilst such notions as 'la gloire' - terms of a strongly moral connotation - may appear only in an emasculated form, 'la délicatesse', essentially amoral, characterizes admirably the tone of the work. 'La délicatesse' is given as a guide to conduct. It also indicates the dual nature of pleasure here: that happiness is the sole aim of existence, and that it can only be achieved by an exercise of 'la délicatesse'.

Examples of its use are several, one of the most representative occurs in some advice given by Saint-Albans: "Croyez-moi, une passion tendre et délicate est accompagnée de mille délices pour le coeur et pour l'esprit; mais un amour emporté et brutal cause dans l'âme d'un honnête homme de cuisants remords qui ne lui laissent point sentir qu'il se promet".\textsuperscript{15}

In fine, there are two major conclusions which one might draw from the Mémoires. Let us return firstly to the question of the cadre, which we termed non-idealistic. The carnal nature of these loves, as opposed to the spiritual passions of Jean de Bourbon and Hypolite, is apparent - in spite of the veil of euphemism.\textsuperscript{16} One might argue that

\textsuperscript{13} ibid., vol.i, p.18. See also vol.i, pp.20, 247.
\textsuperscript{14} In this sense, with the quintessence of a thought or act from which it derives its value - this value being synonymous with pleasure.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid., vol.ii, p.115. See also vol.i, pp.31, 33, 58, 164, 198; vol.ii, p.66.
\textsuperscript{16} One is reminded of Pierre Bayle's comment in the Nouvelles de la République des Lettres, octobre, 1684, "On est fort persuadé en lisant les histoires amoureuses, que le Héros va beaucoup plus loin que le livre ne dit."
the term 'realistic' could be applied in this case. If we have opted, rather, for that of non-idealistic it is because the aim of the author, as we conceive it to be, is that of presenting a simulacrum liable to please her readers. She thus portrays characters who function on a non-idealistic level, whose sole aim in life is pleasure and yet she is careful to ignore the moral implications of this study of adulterine loves. It is essentially an amoral work, or, alternatively, a work of euphemism — where moral issues remain necessarily vague.

Having thus sought to define a little more clearly the moral content of the Mémoires, a final word remains to be said about the conception of love expressed here. This we have described as eminently sensual, but it must also be added that love never appears as a blind force, an external agent which moves the protagonists like so many puppets. We have already suggested that the value of la délicatesse was that by it alone could happiness be achieved. Such a conception of life and love precluded passion in that it destroyed happiness. Thus just as 'la délicatesse' was in a manner of speaking a duty, but one which conferred the ultimate reward, so the emotions must be kept in check by an exercise of reason. One should not be surprised to find reason acting as the companion and overseer to sensuality. M. Bérvichou has already pointed out that the aristocrat never accepted a subjugation of will and that reason was conceived of as an organ of liberty. So it is that in the system of ethics such as are manifest in the Mémoires, sensuality is allowed, especially sensuality of a predatory nature such as that of Buckingham and Monmouth, provided it is ordered by reason. It is true that the Mémoires represent merely an isolated example of this mentality: nonetheless such indications on Reason as are given here incline one to see it in, albeit to a minor extent, a harbinger of some aspects of the eighteenth century. 17

17. Love is conceived of as a conscious choice, for instance, vol. ii, p. 109, "... il prit dès ce moment la résolution d'aimer". See also vol. ii, pp. 124, 144.
The works of three other women novelists remain to be discussed: they are, *Le Mari Jaloux*, by Mme Gomez de Vasconcelle, written in 1688; *L'Amour à la Mode*, by Mme de Pringy, which first appeared in 1695; and Mme Tenain's *Histoire du Comte de Clare*, published in 1696.

These three novels have been grouped together, not simply for reasons of convenience, but also because they have certain characteristics in common and represent a divergence in tone from that present in the works of the first three writers discussed in this section.

In the first place, their setting is slightly different from those of Mlle Bernard or Mlle de la Force. None of the novels at present under consideration purport to be based on historical fact; in all, the time is the present, the place, Paris. In fine, all three are, we should suspect, faithful portraits of the society life of the time.

Let us look briefly at the aspects of *Le Mari Jaloux* which are of interest to us. The story is divided into two parts: the first, dealing with the history of a young adventuress who so prevails on the mind of a senescent marshal that he leaves his fortune to her. The second part is taken up by the love story of this woman's daughter and a young man whom, for reasons of spite, her mother will not allow her to marry.

In spite of the realistic nature of the first story, the tone of the work as a whole is eminently virtuous in the sense that Mme de Lopé is presented as a figure of antipathy and the pure love of the young couple is extolled. It is not, however, the virtue and the morality of Mandane

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or of the Princesse de Clèves. The tone of the work, dealing as it does with the middle class, is essentially 'bourgeois'. Thus, the notions of 'la gloire' and 'la générosité' are absent, and even 'la délicatesse' suffers some attenuation. The moral values of the middle class are portrayed — values which are based on practical considerations.

A further feature of Le Mary Jaloux which distinguished it from the novels which have been discussed up to now, is the evidence of psychological and moral observation, which is completely alien to the spirit of Mme de Lafayette's aristocratic emulators in the novel. 4

L'Amour à la Mode, as the title might indicate, tells what love was really like in late seventeenth century society — it is, in fact, a study of manners. The authoress writes with considerable verve about the immorality which lay beneath the polite mien of the 'honnêtes gens'. We are given amusing descriptions of assignations which take place in closed boxes at the opera; of charming supper parties, or collations in the countryside outside Paris.

The men are not inclined to waste time in a courtship of tender sighs and respectful submission, but take the short cut of jewels and other such tangible presents, to the lady's heart.

As one might expect, the women portrayed in Mme de Pringy's study do not resemble Mandane or Clélie. The writer has rendered a frank account of the venality of the society women of her time. In short, this is not a tale of love as it was practised on the banks of the Lignon, in the realms of Cyrus, but in the elegant drawing-rooms of Paris in the late seventeenth century.

Finally, Mme Tenain's Histoire du Comte de Clare, again a work set in the here-and-now of Paris, 1696. Once more, we have a tale of amorous dalliance and intrigue, but, on this occasion, the tone is frankly licentious. 5. Indeed, this is the only work which can be reliably attributed to a woman writer 6 which can be accurately qualified as porno—

4 5. Even the hero is portrayed, not as "un chef-d'oeuvre de la nature..." but, "fort petit; tous les traits de son visage étaient confondus par les accidents de la petite vérole; et sans lui faire injustice on pouvait dire qu'il n'était pas beau".
-graphy. It belongs to a type of novel which pullulated in the late seventeenth century — as later— and which was usually published anonymously.

The survey which has been made here of the feminine novel from 1687 to 1703 has shown, firstly, the comparative unity of tone in the works of women writers. Quite apart from the phalanx formed by Mmes Bernard, d'Aulnoy and de la Force, the number of writers whose works differ radically in tone from the main body, is slight. The 'roman bourgeois'; the novel of manners, perhaps developing apace in the hands of men writers, claim few exponents amongst the women who are mainly pre-occupied with exploiting various aspects of the 'mondain' morality of their time.

6. The attribution of Les Mémoires de M.L.D.D.O. to Mme d'Aulnoy is erroneous, (an error which is perpetuated by R.C. Williams, op. cit.). She herself gave a list of her works in the preface to the Comte de Warwick, 1703.

7. See, for instance, op. cit., pp. 5, 33, 69, 152.
SECTION III

ETHICS AND THE FEMININE NOVEL: 1703-1715
CHAPTER I

ETHICS IN THE NOVELS OF WOMEN WRITERS, 1703-1715

Mlle l'Héritier — the aspects of current ethics which she reproduces account for her lack of importance to this study. — Mlle Barbier — a new but minor star in the firmament. — Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem — her works are as outmoded and lifeless as the ethics implied in them. — Mme Durand — imitates only the 'mondain' or the 'précieux' aspects of her former works. — The important years for this study are thus 1687 to 1703, when the characteristics which we associate with the eighteenth century were beginning to form.

The rich material for study provided by the feminine novel from the appearance of Eleonor d'Yvrée until 1703, is alas! not imitated in the final years of Louis XIV's reign. By a strange coincidence both Mme d'Aulnoy and Mlle de la Force fell silent at the same time.

Fate, which played such a large part in the novels of these women writers, did not bring forth any worthy successors to them during the period which we are about to discuss. The novelists who appeared at the beginning of the new century are doomed, we feel, to remain eternally forgotten.

Such statements as these may seem at first to be unduly gloomy: however, the briefest examination of the texts is sufficient to prove them amply justified. The first of the "new" writers whom we shall deal with, Mlle l'Héritier de Villandon, published two works during this period, La tour ténébreuse et les jours lumineux, of 1705;¹ and Les caprices du destin, which appeared in 1708.²

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1. La tour ténébreuse et les jours lumineux. /Contes anglais/ Accompagnés d'histoirtettes, et tirés d'une ancienne chronique composée par Richard, surnommé cœur de Lion, Roi d'Angoulême, Paris, Barbin, 1705.
2. Les caprices du destin ou recueil d'histoires singulières et amusantes arrivées de nos jours, par Mlle l'Héxx, Paris, Pierre Michel Huart, 1708.
The first of these novels, although the sub-title, *contes anglais*, might arouse one’s curiosity, is, in comparison with the works discussed in the previous section, devoid of interest. The action, set in the time of Richard, Coeur de Lion, is vacuous in the extreme. Indeed the setting itself is as spurious as that of Mme Durand’s *Mémoires...de la Cour de Charles VII*, where we saw Dunois "pousser le doux, le tendre, et le passionné" with Joan of Arc. It is, in fact, a manual of behaviour in that it exemplifies the "correct" reactions to situations as the 'honnêtes gens' of the time conceived of them.

There is no plot, still less any drama. The tone which reigns is one of effete 'préciosité'. By this we mean that, in spite of the non-existence of moral problems, the characters are much given to expatiating on ultra-subtle points of morality. On the one hand, the notions of 'la gloire' and 'la délicatesse' are frequently referred to, whilst on the other references to the real as opposed to the ideal mode of behaviour are to be found.

Denigrating though these remarks on *La tour ténébreuse* may seem, they are justified on all grounds if one compares this work with those of Mlle l'Héritier's forerunners. It is in the same terms that one must judge *Les caprices du destin*; indeed, the present-day reader has difficulty in understanding what interest Mlle l'Héritier's works presented for her contemporaries - her potential audience.

3. *op.cit.*, p.34, "...je souffre aussi une douleur mortelle des chagrins où elle se livre; car je sais que par sa vertu délicate, elle se fait sans cesse des reproches de ne pouvoir mettre d'accord son coeur et sa foi. p.37, "Hé que me sert! ... la tendresse de ses sentiments, puisque pour l'intérêt de sa gloire, qui par la pureté de mon ardeur m'est plus chère que la mienne propre, je ne puis même aspirer à être heureux."

p.223. Vous ne trouverez maintenant
Pour réparer dé tels dommages,
Aucuns jeunes héros venus de hauts parages,
Mais vous trouverez seulement
Certains gros financiers, qui frauduleusement
Chercheraient cent moyens pour vous mettre à leurs gages.
Perhaps their attraction lay in the fact that they were a form of moral treatise in disguise. From them, if the readers did not glean anything of moral significance, at least they learnt what to say. The work, a collection of short stories, contains rarefied "questions d'amour", with liberal references to 'la gloire' and 'la générosité'.

The aristocratic setting, which we have seen to be the hallmark of the feminine novel at this time, is repeated here. There is no element of life-like psychology, but rather, the writer has reverted, in her ethics, as in her implied aesthetic values, to the Scuderiian ideal. Typical of this strongly moralizing quality is the following: "Voilà où en sont réduits ceux qui ont quitté le chemin de la vertu; pour cacher un premier crime, ils se trouvent entraînés dans des crimes nouveaux."^4

The pre-occupation with 'la gloire', 'la générosité' and 'le mérite' is matched by a conception of love based on esteem, familiar to readers of Mile de Scudéry's works. ^6

Another woman writer, one of whose novels appeared at the end of the period under consideration, was Marie-Anne Barbier, whose Théâtre de l'Amour et de la Fortune, of 1713,^7 presents a considerable interest to this study. The work is made up of two volumes of short stories bearing such titles as 'Les Prodiges du Destin', and 'Gésimond, fils naturel'. These alone lead one to invoke the Abbé Prévost; indeed, it is such a work as this which, although a slight and isolated example, we see as the true descendant of the novels of Mme d'Aulnoy and Mile de la Force. Although the tone throughout these stories is

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4. op.cit., p.115.
5. See pp. 8, 35, 63, 120, 148, 157, 158.
6. p. 121, "tout ce que je puis vous donner est une estime et une reconnaissance parfaite, et je vous crois trop généreux pour vouloir exiger d'autres sentiments de moi, puisqu'il est constant qu'ils blesseraient ma gloire."
eminently virtuous, the emphasis is upon the effects of love and the misfortunes caused by this passion. A typical passage is the following: "... sa maigreur, causée par le souvenir de ses malheurs passés, qu'une secrète passion lui rendait toujours présents; ses yeux qui, enfoncés dans sa tête, semblaient vouloir se dérober à la lumière, et dont le feu naturel était presque éteint par les larmes que lui arrachait sans cesse un trait mortel dont son coeur était blessé: ... " — the last metaphor, that of the dart of love, once used by the 'Précieux', is here given a very different force by the emphasis on suffering and sentiment.

The removal of the setting from the court to a glade or some other rustic spot more propitious to emotional outpouring than a royal grotto, already referred to in our discussion of Mlle de la Force's novels, is imitated here. Tears, too, punctuate the narrative as they did in Mme d'Aulnoy's and Mlle de la Force's works.

Unfortunately, owing to the comparative unimportance of Mlle Barbier's novel, in that it is an isolated example of its kind, we do not feel justified in making a detailed examination of Le théâtre de l'Amour et de la Fortune here. Its significance could only be appreciated if the scope of the study were to be extended to the later sentimental novel, particularly that of the Abbé Prévost.

What of the writers whom we have already met and who continue to publish novels during this period? Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem, who seems to have enjoyed a particular longevity, proves herself to be as indefatigable as she was devoid of talent. We saw how the tone of her

8. op. cit., vol.I, p.II.
work had begun to change during the period 1687 to 1703 from the stiffly heroic to the anecdotic, in deference to popular taste, doubtless. Apart from the various editions of her Dernières œuvres, which keep on appearing (calling to mind stories of a prima donna's farewell tours) and which are in substance the pseudo-historical accounts to which we have already referred, a final effort, L'Amitié singulière, appeared in 1710. The strangest feature of this work is its setting: the Mexico of Montezuma I! However, true to her ideals, Mlle de la Roche-Guilhem succeeds in making him 'damaret' too. He is heard to express such sentiments as: "Je n'oserais rien exiger de votre amitié, parce que je ne l'ai point encore méritée".

Such word-spinning as this requires no further comment: we have already shown what the salient features of Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's works were and what their moral implications. Her role in the novel was, in short, to take the ideals of Cyrus round the globe, from the shores of the Bosphorus to the Tropics.

The last writer to be considered here is Mme Durand. Her two final works, Les Belles Grecques of 1712 and Henri, duc des Vandales, of 1714, may be dispatched as summarily as the other novels by women writers which appeared between 1703 and 1715. The first of these two works, Les Belles Grecques, is strongly reminiscent of Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem's pseudo-historical accounts. The work is composed of a

11. Histoires curieuses et galantes ou dernières œuvres, de Mlle de La Roche-Guilhem, Amsterdam, Paul Marret, 1709.
12. L'Amitié singulière, Nouvelle galante par Mademoiselle de La Roche-Guilhem, Amsterdam, Isaac Troyel, 1710.
13. op. cit., p. 12.
14. We have omitted Mme de Murat's Les Lutins du château de Kernosy, published in 1710, from this discussion because of its slight nature. It is, in effect, a collection of short stories about ghosts and like matters, the material for which Mme de Murat doubtless had leisure to collect during her exile in Brittany.
set of short stories about famous courtesans of Greek Classical Antiquity. In spite of the scabrous potentiality of the material, the tone throughout the works is virtuous, or rather, the pleasurable aspect is exploited to the detriment of the moral implications. The writer does, it is true, refer to prostitution, particularly in the story of Lamia, but does not imply any criticism on moral grounds. The 'honnête' quality of these women is stressed; and one is not surprised to encounter Alcibiades, the idol of the 'honnêtes gens' of the late seventeenth century.

The stories contain a rather discordant mixture of a highly moralizing element, such as the conclusion to the story of LaSs, which, we feel, is included in deference to the critics who attacked the novel on moral grounds, and an element of psychological observation, resulting in such realistic traits as the following: "C'est une fâcheuse chose que la vieillesse: si elle n'arrivait pas insensiblement, et que de la plus brillante jeunesse on passait tout d'un coup à la décrépitude, il n'y a guère de femme qui ne fît quelque acte de désespoir, mais on se flatte, on se croit voir aujourd'hui comme on était hier, mille autres font le même chemin. On ne regarde point derrière soi, les jours se succèdent et s'écoulent; il en vient pourtant un où il faudrait sonner la retraite; ce jour fatal est toujours marqué par la désertion de quelque amant; ..."

The lack of moral conflict, the lack of resemblance between Les Belles Grecques and even such works as La Comtesse de Mortane is as striking in Henri, duc des Vandales. Here Mme Durand returned for a final time to the Middle Ages for a work which resembles, for good or ill, the Mémoires...de la Cour de Charles VII.

Further examination of these texts would only involve a repetition of points already made without bringing any fresh evidence to light.

17. op. cit., p.160, "C'est ainsi que les vices triomphaient dans une religion dont toutes les divinités en avaient plus que de vertus".
18. ibid., p.154.
This brief commentary has shown that, whereas the group of women novelists discussed as a whole in the central section disappear from the scene after the publication of *Henri, duc des Vandales* in the closing months of the reign of the Roi Soleil, the most important work had been completed by 1703, after which date the principal writers, Mlle Bernard, Mme d'Aulnoy and Mlle de la Force, all fell silent.

Those whose works appeared during the last twelve years studied also gave an aristocratic setting to their novels, and share certain features with those of earlier years. They do not, however, imitate the growing emphasis on sensibility found in the final years of the seventeenth century, where vital preparation for the eighteenth century, as we know it, was begun. They chose, rather, the simple 'mondain' themes or the old panegyrics of virtue, notions as outmoded and devitalized as the works of such as Mlle l'Héritier and Mme Durand appear to us.
CONCLUSION

Mme de Lafayette's presentation of reality conditioned by her ethics and by her conviction that passion destroys the will - the effect of this last on her tragedy: her view of passion too complex and too novel to be fully understood by contemporaries. - Comparison between Mme de Villedieu and Mme de Lafayette - Mme de Villedieu's presentation of reality - her attitude to love. - Which of their attitudes are reflected in the works of their successors - how moral standards of the time are reflected in the novels of women writers - a brief comparison with men novelists.

The three aspects of the Princesse de Clèves which present the greatest interest to this study are: Mme de Lafayette's presentation of reality, which, as we have seen, is conditioned by her ethical assumptions; the impact of these assumptions upon the action; and the manner in which contemporaries interpreted her work.

In her choice of material, Mme de Lafayette has shown her concern for reality through her interest in historical veracity. She has documented the work with care and presented a convincing portrait of court-life: descriptions of delightful activities abound, of court balls such as the one where M. de Nemours and Mme de Clèves meet for the first time; and regal celebrations, such as the marriage of the king's daughter. Nevertheless, her picture is partial only, throughout the novel, Mme de Lafayette has depicted an acceptable version of reality, one from which unpleasant details and elements of coarseness have been banished in favour of a picture destined to please the reader. The society of the honnêtes gens is faithfully mirrored, even to their moral attitudes, their pre-occupation with pleasure at all levels of behaviour and their over-riding concern for appearances. This world whose motto is paraître rather than être, is shown as being indifferent to moral issues; consequently a certain amoral quality pervades the Princesse de Clèves.

'Féliciane's' work has been proved to contain an element of realism, that of a psychological observation uninhibited by the moral pre-occupations which prevailed in the Grand Cyrus for instance.
This quality, deriving from the spirit of psychological curiosity associated with the Chambre bleue and systematically exploited by the theoreticians of honnêteté is responsible for an emancipation of tone and a dilution of the strongly moralizing flavour of earlier novels.

The Princesse de Clèves has been interpreted as exclusively mondain and so it is indeed if one considers only its setting in the court and its minor characters. However, in her presentation of major characters, above all in her conception of love as exemplified in their behaviour, Mme de Lafayette has gone far beyond the 'mondain'.

In the first place love is conceived of as all-powerful. This in itself is not diametrically opposed to the 'précieux' belief in the hegemony of love, from which it certainly derives. The essential difference between the love of Mme de Clèves and that of Mandane is that whereas in the latter, love was founded upon esteem and was thus supported by the will, so that there was no dichotomy between will and passion, in the former, passion defeats both the will and reason. For Mme de Lafayette the emotions were the immediate victors over the reasoning faculty.

Furthermore, the amoral quality of the work, already referred to, is present also in Mme de Lafayette's conception of love. In the first place, the individual and his love no longer make common cause in a striving to attain the highest point of perfection, as they did in the days of Artamène. The existence of passion, no longer a love founded on esteem, no longer reducible to reason, militates against the peace of mind of the individual instead of enabling him to achieve his goal of perfection.

The consequence of Mme de Lafayette's attitude towards the passions and her mistrust of human will is that man has been displaced from the position he occupied in the Cornelian drama and in 'Sapho's' novels. No longer is he master of all and particularly of his own
destiny; on the contrary he has become the plaything of fate. We have seen how this has affected the nature of the drama: if the passions are the declared victor from the outset, the protagonists must be passive rather than active. Their rigorous virtue prevents them from sinning, yet they are held fast by the bonds of their passion so that they must suffer its pangs as long as they are in its thrall. In other words, there is no solution to their dilemma.

Finally, although the Princesse de Clèves reflects many features of current 'mondain' mentality, particularly in its setting, Mme de Lafayette's conception of passion was too complex to be fully understood by her contemporaries and successors amongst women novelists. It is not surprising, therefore, that it found no parallel in the works that followed and that its influence varied according to the moral standpoint of the particular writer.

Mme de Villedieu's work presents none of the difficulties of definition which arise in discussing the Princesse de Clèves; the doctrine she preached in her works was one of refined hedonism: a message essentially unvarying throughout. In the setting of her novels she neglected the realms of Cyrus and Clélie for the Versaillais grottoes familiar to her contemporaries.

Just as in her choice of material and her handling of subject matter she favoured a discreetly embellished portrait of reality, so in her conception of love, she presented pleasure as its sole justification. The characters whom she has created are all eminently 'reasonable' people, whose hearts never rule their heads. The passion and the drama which made up the stuff of the Princesse de Clèves are replaced by a picture of amorous dalliance where the senses, tamed by reason, contribute to the pleasure which is the avowed aim of existence.

Unconcerned as she was by questions of morality, Mme de Villedieu was free to concentrate on material detail and on accurate traits of psychological observation - particularly of the motives
determining human behaviour.

Thus both Mmes de Lafayette and de Villedieu were influenced by and expressed different aspects of current moral doctrines. Both, for instance, disregarded questions of human excellence; whereas one denounced the myth of the supremacy of will, the other chose to concentrate on depicting the pleasurable aspects of existence. Both represent a reversal of values from those implied in the Grand Cyrus; and between them they provided rich possibilities of development in the feminine novel.

The particular aspect held in common by Mmes de Lafayette and de Villedieu and their successors is the aristocratic setting, which we have seen is universal. Whether the action was set in the Middle Ages, as in the first of Mlle Bernard's works and several of those of Mlle de la Force and Mme Durand, or whether at the court of the Valois, as on various other occasions, the same concern for refinement and nobility prevails.

Historical fact is, however, used on all occasions as the pretext for a study of the human heart. Whether the setting is relatively precise, as in Mlle de la Force's novels, or vague and romanesque, as in Mme d'Aulnoy's, a preoccupation remains constant. We have indicated that in the novels of Mme de Lafayette and Mme de Villedieu a claim to historical veracity and a more or less serious attempt to re-create an historical atmosphere was evidence of a concern with fact, as opposed to the romanesque character of Mlle de Scudéry's creations. Their successors used history as a pretext for telling a story of unhappy love. All Mlle Bernard's stories, as we saw, ended on a sad note with a death or final parting; Hypolite, Comte de Duglas, alone amongst Mme d'Aulnoy's works, ended happily; all Mme de la Force's novels concluded tragically.

An examination of the ethics in these novels has enabled us to reach certain valuable conclusions on the significance of the theme of unhappy love. Whereas the passion of Mme de Clèves for Nemours
was fundamentally guilty, the love felt by Éléonor d'Yvrée, by Julie for Hypolite, by Cathérine de Bourbon, by all the heroines of these novels, was of a profoundly innocent nature. That their love could never be fulfilled was due to some external agency - to conflicting family or political interests for the most part.

This feature of the feminine novel may doubtless be ascribed to the didactic aim of literature. Although the novel was no longer a moral treatise in disguise as it had been in effect a few generations earlier, moral considerations still played a major role in a genre which was constantly being attacked on the ground that it had a pernicious effect on morals. Thus, the virtuous nature of the protagonists and of the love which they felt is strongly stressed: the hero is distinguished by the respectful nature of his passion.

Love is all-powerful in the sense that it is no longer 'tendre sur estime' but is conceived of as a passion against which human strength is vain. Never do the characters vow to relinquish their passion; even if they are engaged against their will elsewhere, they swear to remain faithful in their hearts. Once again, in spite of superficial resemblance between such a notion and that which informed the Princesse de Clèves, the similarity is more apparent than real. Although the love is omnipotent, it is for the most part conceived of as being noble within the breasts of the noble, thus betraying its 'précieux' identity. Mme d'Aulnoy alone has raised a dissenting though scarcely articulate voice here: she has particularly stressed the violent and impetuous nature of passion, hinting at its darker side.
These two articles of belief, simultaneously present in the feminine novel, have contributed to a major degree to its particular quality and to certain developments in moral characterisation.

Firstly, the pre-eminent rectitude of the protagonists meant that the moral dilemma in these works was virtually non-existent. The emphasis consequently fell on a description of their sufferings, arousing the reader's admiration for their steadfastness, and more particularly, his pity for their tribulations. This appeal made to the sensitivity of the reader, scarcely present in Mme Bernard's novels and yet clearly expressed in Mme d'Aulnoy's and Mlle de la Force's works, may justifiably be ascribed, in the first instance, to the didactic aim generally implied. The spectacle of suffering and yet inviolable virtue could be expected the more easily to arouse the sympathy of the reader, and indeed, to move him profoundly, in that it was generally understood at that time that happiness was the indisputable reward of virtue. Furthermore, the fundamental lack of dilemma in the stories, in the sense that on the one hand no element of guilt or temptation is involved and on the other, the protagonist is powerless against the forces to which he is prey, accounts for a change of intention on the part of the writer from that of moralizing in the strict sense of the term, to that of moving the reader.

The omnipotence of passion and the ensuing static quality of the drama thus tended to show the protagonist in a passive light: deprived of ultimate control over the situation, he is free only to suffer. This, as we saw, was illustrated in the way in which the main characters insisted on the somewhat passive virtue of submission to duty - le devoir - particularly in Mme d'Aulnoy's and Mlle de la Force's novels.
The denial of the efficacy of will implied in all acceptance of the hegemony of passion, leading to a denial of man's responsibility for his destiny, accounts for the development of a fatalistic attitude, expressed in such phrases as 'le Ciel', 'le destin', 'l'astre sous lequel je suis né...'. This again may be seen to be the logical outcome of an emphasis on virtue: where it is accompanied, not by happiness but by sorrow, what else but Fate can be to blame? Mme de Lafayette implied that her heroine was not ultimately responsible for her plight; her successors have shown man as weak and crushed by the forces of destiny—an object worthy of pity.

We have not attempted to answer the question why these women writers chose to portray unhappy love rather than the refined exploitation of the senses à la Mme de Villedieu: this is a question outside the scope of this study. We have, however, demonstrated the interaction of such aspects of ethics as were current, either in mondain moral treatises or in the feminine novel of 1678.

The conclusions which one may draw—limited although by no means negative—on the conception of love in the feminine novel under discussion, are that whilst the four writers whose works have been particularly studied imitated neither Mme de Lafayette's conception of passion as amoral nor the irrefutable element of guilt in her work, but rather saw the work from the moral standpoint with which they were familiar, yet it was still passion as opposed to love/esteem or sensual love which they portrayed. From this fact derives the essential unity within their work.

The study made of the use of moral notions within these works showed them to be an unerring guide to the ethics implied: 'la bienséance', rarely referred to in the novels of a more sentimental or tragic flavour, was found to denote a pre-occupation with society and with worldly matters. An important conclusion which we were able to reach in this respect was that
the emasculation of notions which had previously had a strongly
moral connotation, such as 'la gloire' or 'la générosité', replaced
by an emphasis on feeling and sentiment, was attributable to the
lack of moral dilemma.

A further result of this aspect of the study was to reveal
the heterogeneous nature of these notions: of this 'la délicatesse
des sentiments' is doubtless the best example. Careful examination
was required to show whether the emphasis was on refinement, 'la
délicatesse' or on the sentimental aspect. This lack of definition
of meaning, combined with the nebulous moral quality of such
notions, we attributed to the intellectual and moral climate of
the time, as expressed in the ideal of 'honnêteté'. Here even
reason seemed to have come to be regarded as an intuitive faculty
and the emphasis on psychological observation and concern for what
was fitting in all matters placed emphasis on the psyche rather
than the will.

It is in this latter aspect that we discern the stronger link
between Mme de Lafayette and her successors. In discussing the
Princesse de Clèves, we commented on 'la délicatesse'
which was
an attribute of the main protagonists. On that occasion, whilst
pointing out its association with the mondain cult of refinement,
we pointed out the development of this emphasis on the senses
rather than reason. Was it not due to this 'délicatesse des
sentiments' that Nemours wept after the Coulommiers incident and
that Mme de Clèves derived a certain enjoyment from her
sufferings?

The sensitivity which is manifested by the heroines, particularly
those of the trio Mlle Bernard, Mme d'Aulnoy and Mlle de la Force,
is directly descended from that of Nemours and the Princesse de
Clèves. Eléonor d'Yvrée's grief at her forthcoming marriage and her
emotion during the ceremony will be remembered as will that of the
tender Julie on leaving England in Hypolite, Comte de Duglas. Mlle
de la Force's heroines were shown to be equally demonstrative in
their grief. It is this particular attitude to suffering which, in our opinion, endows the feminine novel of the time with its peculiar quality.

The importance of the feminine novel between 1678 and 1703 as opposed to the novel in general: its unity and its intrinsic value may only be completely understood if one looks—however briefly—at its masculine counterpart.

The feature of the works of men novelists of the time which first strikes one is the disparity of choice of subject matter: every conceivable background has been chosen for works which continue to develop as they had done during the nine years following 1678, discussed previously. The aristocratic setting, the significance of which from the point of view of implied ethics it has been one of the main aims of this study to discover, appears only occasionally amongst the wild confusion which still reigns in the masculine novel.

This does not mean, however, that men did not also write novels which purported to be historical accounts and in which fiction and historical fact were inextricably mixed. The number of novels resembling those an examination of which has formed the main subject of this study, is extremely small compared with the total output. The year 1697 alone contains a considerable number of historical works by men whose tone resembles that of the feminine colleagues. The novels in question are Mylord Courtenay, by Le Noble; Le Prince de Longueville et Anne de Bretagne, by Lesconvel; Les Actions Héroïques de la Comtesse de Montfort...; and Anne de Montmorency, connétable de France. This, it will

2. Le Prince de Longueville et Anne de Bretagne, Paris, Guignard, 1697.
3. Les Actions Héroïques de la Comtesse de Montfort..., Paris, vve Mazuel, 1697.
be noted, was the moment when women writers were most active and doubtless the popularity of the genre of the historical incited everyone of literary pretensions to exploit a profitable vein. 

Apart from this, such writers as Lenoble, with his *Ildegerte, reine de Norvège* of 1693, and *Zulima ou l'Amour pur* of the following year, composed works which, although their setting is nominally the same as that of the feminine novel, do not contain the essential elements of the latter. 

More representative of the trend amongst men writers are the works of Courtilz de Sandras, too well known and too frequently discussed elsewhere for an explanation of their character to be necessary. A study of those of his works which appeared during the closing years of the seventeenth and early years of the eighteenth centuries has revealed no common denominator with those of Mlle Bernard and her colleagues; Courtilz de Sandras was manifestly interested, not to tell a story of unhappy love but, rather, to pass off his works as accurate, factual accounts. Action is external, observation generally confined to the moral and political reality of the times in which he wrote.

Which of the men writers of the time distinguish themselves by the number of novels they wrote? Le Noble, whom we have already mentioned as a writer of historical novels, ranks amongst the most indefatigable pot-boilers. We use this latter term advisedly, as he seems to have been prepared to turn his hand to any style of writing. Lesconvel, whose output was also considerable, composed various pseudo-historical novels, the tone of which varies from the effete précieux of the *Aventures de Jules César*, 1695, 

5. Further isolated examples of works similar in tone to the contemporaneous feminine novel, and the authorship of which is uncertain are: *La Duchesse de Médo*, 1692, apparently by one Quinet; and *Le Duc de Guise*, 1694, attributed to de Brie. 


to that of a striking psychological realism in the *Comtesse de Chateaubriant*, a sombre study of jealousy, published in the same year. The lack of unity within the work of these men causes one to look in vain for a sense of underlying aim or purpose.

The masculine novel in general was developing either in the direction of the licentious, of which the works of the courtier dilettante, the Chevalier de Mailly, are a good example, or of the 'roman bourgeois', where aristocratic pretensions are completely absent.

If the feminine novel of the 'great' years of 1687 to 1703 does not resemble its masculine counterpart, it does, however, bear certain likenesses to the novels of the Abbé Prévost and Marivaux, which were shortly to follow. It would be out of place, in this study, to begin a comparison between the feminine novel and the works of these great exponents of two different aspects of love.

However, such evidence as has been produced here is sufficient to make one doubt the accuracy of M. Trahard's claim that sentimentality in literature was first manifest in 1720. Writers such as Prévost and Marivaux could no more develop in an intellectual and moral void than could Mme de Lafayette. Their way was prepared, we should suggest, by the women novelists who, influenced by current moral notions, particularly those regarding passion, first began to study the nature and effects - often the unhappy effects - of love.

8. *La Comtesse de Chateaubriant ou Les Effets de la Jalousie*, Amsterdam, Garrel, 1695. This work, the story of a woman who marries without ever having been in love, contains such traits of psychological observation as the following: (p.55) "Elle ouvrit les yeux sur le malheureux état où elle était; et ce fut alors qu'elle commença à connaître la situation de son coeur, qu'elle avait jusques-là toujours ignorée."

9. P. Trahard, *Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIIIe siècle*, Boivin, 1931, pp.12-13. He states that there is no indication of sensibility in the literature of 1700 to 1720. However, as we have seen, the major preparation for the new ideals was being carried out in the feminine novel during the final decade of the preceding century.
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