Abstract of a thesis to be presented for the degree of Ph.D., in French, in the Faculty of Arts, of the University of London, by H.A. Saer, entitled:

"ENGLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXPERIMENTS IN FRENCH DRAMA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY."

Between 1730 and 1789, the most striking experiments in French drama were the "comédie larmoyante" and the "Drame bourgeois".

The study of English influences on these new forms falls into three divisions; the effect of English ideas on French theory, the use of themes from English sources by French playwrights, and changes in stage technique brought about in France by the assimilation to English practice.

The theory of "comédie larmoyante" was not vitally affected by English ideas, because current prejudices hindered the spread of innovations from England introduced by writers like Prévost.

On the contrary, the theory of "drame bourgeois", which Diderot worked out, and which Beaumarchais and Mercier subsequently modified, was more susceptible to English influence. This was because Diderot was peculiarly sensitive to the influence of ideas from England, and because circumstances favoured the reception of such ideas during the rise and growth of the new genre. Shaftesbury, Lillo, Moore, Young, and Richardson all contributed to develop the new form of tragedy in France, inspired its moral aim, its sentimental appeal, or its use of the bourgeois as a hero of tragedy. Johnson's critical work also had a certain effect on Mercier's conception of "drame bourgeois".

Both "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois" borrowed themes from English novels, like "Clarissa" or "Tom Jones"; from plays like the "London Merchant"; from poems like the "Night Thoughts"; and from contemporary accounts of English life, like the "Spectator" papers.

The personal influence of Garrick helped to introduce some changes in the style of acting on the French stage; and English practice encouraged the use of prose in tragedy, and the disregard of the "three unities" in France.

English contributions to experiments in French drama in the eighteenth century reflected most of the significant movements in French thought that arose from contact with England, and the importance of such contributions is greater than is commonly believed.
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A thesis submitted for the examination for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts in the University of London.

by H. A. Saer.
ENGLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXPERIMENTS IN FRENCH DRAMA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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INTRODUCTION.

The present study of English influences on the French theatre has been limited to the years lying between 1730 and 1789, because it was then that the most striking experiments of the century were made in drama. There were two new forms, with whose history we are concerned; the "comédie larmoyante", and the "drame bourgeois".

Before proceeding to sketch the arrangement of our material, we must define certain terms used in the comparison of French and English literature.

The words "sentimental comedy" and "domestic tragedy" have been taken to mean that type of comedy which arose in England with Steele, early in the century, and Lillo's "enlargement of the graver form of poetry", as he described it in the Prologue and Dedication of his Merchant of London.

"Comédie larmoyante", has been applied, with its narrowest signification, to the comedy of feeling which appeared in France towards 1745, to be superseded about 1757 by Diderot's more daring experiments. Nivelle de la Chaussée's plays embody its chief characteristics. Thus it may be understood as an attempt to bring home some moral truth to the audience, by appealing to the emotions. It had the
distinguishing quality of presenting scenes of laughter, in
the style of traditional comedy after Molière, side by side
with pathetic, instructive episodes.

"Drame bourgeois" has been used as a name for the new
movement in the French theatre, which began with Diderot.
It covers works of such different temper as Le Père de
Famille, Le Philosophe sans le savoir, Beverley, Euphémie,
La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV, Jenneval, Le Séducteur and
L'Heureux Échange. All these plays can be included within
the meaning of the term "drame bourgeois" if it is under-
stood to signify a touching picture of "middle life", intended
to improve society by impressing the principles of right
living upon the public.

Diderot's distinction between "tragédie bourgeois" and
"comédie sérieuse" has been retained in the discussion of
certain points in the theory of "drame". "Tragédie bourgeois"
describes "tales of private woe" that end in tragic fashion.
"Comédie sérieuse" describes plays which set out to teach
the common race of men their duty, and the advantages of a
virtuous life. For the purposes of this study, it has been
applied to those pre-Revolution comedies, like Le Vaporeux
or L'Heureux Échange that introduced "gay" incidents, after
the manner of Steele, and contrary to the practice of Diderot.

The history of English contributions to experiments in
French drama may be divided into three parts: the effect of
English influences on French theory, the use of themes from English sources by French playwrights, and changes in stage technique brought about in France by assimilation to English practice.

The first of these opens with a consideration of the part played by English ideas in developing "comédie larmoyante", the efficacy of their influence, and its importance in preparing the way for further innovations in dramatic writing.

The remaining chapters in this section deal with the value of English influences on "drame bourgeois". Diderot's work is the central point of interest, for he was the first to expound an ordered theory of the "lesser tragedy", and he reacted in a peculiarly sensitive way to the impact of English thought on his mind.

For the sake of clearness and method, we have resolved the history of English influences on "drame bourgeois" into a determination of the various currents of thought which flowed from England to France. These affected, first the idea of discovering a new province for tragedy, then the moral aim and the appeal to feeling in "drame bourgeois", and lastly, the introduction of middle-class characters into tragedy.

It was from Lillo, Moore and Richardson that Diderot learnt how to broaden the scope of tragedy, while Young and
Shakespeare taught Baculard d'Arnaud and Mercier how to extend it even further. But these writers would have been powerless to change the course of French drama, had not the need of some new kind of serious play been emphasised by the dissatisfaction with "imperial" tragedy which prevailed in France during the first half of the century.

The success of "comédie larmoyante" provided a fresh incentive to work out a more natural and more touching mode of writing for the stage. The chapter on Lillo, Diderot, and the "drame bourgeois" touches upon the strength and the value of these different forces.

Then follows a discussion of English influences on the moral aim of the French "plays of private woe", and their appeal to feeling. Here again Diderot is preeminent; for he welded together into one system of dramatic thought all the previous attempts to discover some formula which would transform the stage into a vehicle for ideas on social and moral reform, and he used sentiment as the means of bringing such ideas into close touch with the actual experience of the spectators.

In this chapter we have described the development of this view of drama, and brought out certain differences between the use of sentiment in France and in England. We have set forth the part of Shaftesbury in supplying certain
fundamental principles of the message which Diderot tried to convey to the public, through his plays, the importance of Richardson in teaching him to endow that message with a living force, and the use of Lillo's example as a successful writer of the drama which was then being created in France. Finally we have outlined the later changes introduced into "drame bourgeois" as a result of contact between French and English thought.

The last point to be examined is the appearance of the middle classes in French tragedy. This seems to be bound up with the change in the temper of this part of society, which took place between the closing years of Louis XIV's reign, and the Revolution. The middle classes virtually controlled the wealth of France, and so wielded real power. Questions of "privilege" were judged in a way that seemed to them unjust and increasingly galling: and this stimulated conflict with the aristocracy.

Drama reflected this conflict; and playwrights set merchants and millers in the places formerly sacred to kings and heroes. Diderot's interpretation of English tragedy, strengthened by the view of English society presented in Voltaire's Lettres Philosophiques, in the Spectator and in Richardson's novels all promoted this radical change in French tragedy.
Diderot, Marmontel, and Mercier took to heart the lessons taught by the flourishing new growth in English middle class literature, and were thereby encouraged to develop the tragedy of common life in their own theatre. Lillo and Moore in particular, decisively influenced Diderot's experiment with the idea of treating 'private distresses' as the stuff of tragedy. We have devoted the rest of this chapter to the consequent storm of criticism, and the interminable dispute over the right of "tragédie bourgeoise" to be included amongst the legitimate forms of drama, because these were closely involved with the relationship between French writers and English thought on similar problems. This concludes the first part of our study.

In the second part we have investigated the use of themes from English literature in "comédie larmoyante" and in "drame bourgeois".

It is divided into four chapters. They treat of the themes borrowed from the English novel, from the domestic tragedies of England, from the Spectator papers, and from English life as reflected in the comedies translated into French, or in the "legends" about English manners which were current in France.

In each chapter, the French plays studied are arranged in groups, according to the source from which they took
their material. We have suggested the channels along which contact was possible between the French and English writers, and estimated the effect of such contact upon the plot, the characterisation, and the style of each play. We have also included plays and poems outside the strict limits of "comédie larmoyante" and "drame", if they throw light on the causes or the results of English influence in this direction.

The discussion of plays which were founded on stories from the Spectator is placed after the chapters dealing with works inspired by English novels and domestic tragedies, because the papers by Steele and Addison were not recognized as a storehouse of plots suitable to "comédie sérieuse" until borrowing from these other originals had become a fashion in France.

In our account of the use of material taken from English comedy, from English life and from the Spectator, we have tried to emphasise the gradual change in the nature of "comédie sérieuse". It was due in some measure to the influence of Steele, Murphy, Kelly, and Sheridan that "gay" scenes were introduced into this type of comedy, which had previously, as its name implies, been uniformly serious in tone. Although this point may be considered a digression from our main topic, yet it is so intimately connected with the reproduction of English themes in French drama, that they cannot be separated.
The third part of the history of experiments on the French stage in their relation to English thought touches upon the new attitude adopted towards the convention of the "three unities", the use of prose in tragedy, and the art of acting in France.

We have attempted to appreciate the weight of English precedent, and the stimulus of Garrick's visits to Paris in bringing about these changes in the technique of French drama without neglecting those elements in French tragedy and in the theory of stagecraft which worked towards the same end.

It is impossible to unravel the intricacies of the influence exerted by writers in one language upon the dramatists who used another, without taking into account the work of translators, of obscure critics, of mediocre playwrights, to counterbalance the impressions gained from a study of the better-known writers, like Voltaire or Diderot, who enjoyed the advantages of being able to read English works in the original.

Further, the fact that the present work is an essay in comparative literature implies a debt to those critics who have evolved a method of dealing with a subject of this kind.

There are two books which must be named in this connection; Lanson's study of Nivelle de la Chaussée and Gaiffe's *Le drame en France au dix-huitième siècle*, because the
definitions they give of "comédie larmoyante" and of "drame bourgeois" have been adopted here.

English contributions to experiments in French drama during the eighteenth century reflected most of the important movements in French thought that arose from contact with England, and the weight of these contributions is greater than is generally believed.
PART I.
Chapter I.

ENGLISH IDEAS AND THE COMÉDIE LARMOYANTE.

Sentimental drama in England had been accepted as an improvement on Restoration comedy, ten years before the rise of "comédie larmoyante" in France; and during this period, French writers had shown a lively interest in English letters.

Opportunity was thus offered for the imitation of English sentimental plays in France. At the first glance, points of similarity between the ideas on comedy current in England during the first quarter of the eighteenth century and the theory of "comédie larmoyante" in the following twenty years, are easily discovered.

First, there was the charge of immorality brought against the early comedies of the century in both countries, and the consequent attempt to create a new comedy with some definite moral purpose behind it. Then, in order to make the lesson of the play attractive, writers in both countries discovered the uses of sentiment, in plot and characterisation. Critics and authors fell to discussing the novelty of this type of moral sentimental play, for they could see that it possessed qualities belonging to tragedy, although it professed to be comedy.
Before it is possible to affirm or deny that this similarity was due to contact between French and English thought on drama, it is necessary to examine the accounts written by French travellers in England, literary journals, the prefaces of translators, and their choice of books to be translated.

These texts, arranged in order of publication, show the possibilities of a modification in French dramatic writing, as ideas from England gradually became known, and they explain the conditions in France which helped or hindered the efficacy of such ideas in fostering "comédie larmoyante".

The Spectator was the first important English work which treated of Steele's new theory of comedy to be translated into French. It appeared in 1714, in response to the growing popularity of serious reflections expressed with elegance and wit. Two years before this, Justus van Effen, in the Preface to his Misanthrope mentioned the Tatler and the Spectator, and added that his periodical was an imitation of their manner: although he doubted the success of his venture, for, said he, "il s'en faut bien que les Ouvrages d'Esprit soient si générale-ment goutées qu'en Angleterre". By 1714, the taste for these periodicals was well-established in France, and the dramatic criticism in the Spectator papers had become accessible to a

(1) J. Van Effen, Preface. Le Misanthrope. La Haye, 1712.
wide circle of readers\(^1\). The abundant store of themes contained in the stories and moral reflections of the *Spectator* was certain to attract attention, the sentiment displayed by the English essayists was very pleasing to French readers, and their continual references to the touchstone of classical literature fitted in with ideas of the time in France, and ensured a favourable reception for the views they expressed.

The *Spectator* summed up what Blackmore, Collier, Farquhar, Cibber, and Steele had argued\(^2\), in defence of a new moral, sentimental comedy, which was to be a substitute for the Restoration plays.

In Paper 65, the "Man of Mode" was condemned: elsewhere, it was suggested that pleasure in the theatre "should be aroused from such good natural impulses as are in the audience". Plays should aim "to make us rise from them wiser and better than we sit down to them": the theatre should "contribute its assistance to the advancement of morality and the reformation of the age". Fashionable people who mocked at signs of sensibility in the audience were held up to ridicule. From these different papers\(^3\), a constructive criticism of drama is made out: Steele and Addison were working towards a comedy that pleased by means

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\(^2\) see a list of their critical writings (before 1711) in the Bibliography.

\(^3\) No.51, no.446, no.208; also no.40. *The Spectator*, ed. Aitken. Lond. 1898.
of sentiment, and taught some definite moral lesson.

Plays that 'reformed the age' already existed in France when the Spectator was translated in 1714. There is an interesting reference in Langbain's Lives and Characters of the English Dramatic Poets to "Aesop, a Comedy, acted at the Theatre Royal in 1697... it was writ in French by Mr Boursaut... This I'm sure, there has never been on the stage a play of more general Satyr since the Plain Dealer, and there are such Publick and useful morals recommended to the audience that will be as beneficial to the Commonweal as diverting to the immediate spectators." This play was also very popular in France: by 1710, it had been acted 108 times; so that the same appreciation of attempts to advance morality existed in both countries. It was gaining strength in Paris towards 1714, for in 1709 Campistron's Jalous Désabusé had been loudly applauded: it was the story of a man and wife converted to love for each other; and a maidservant who was unusually scrupulous in the matter of a love-intrigue. The young dramatist Destouches had declared, in the Preface to his successful first play, Le Curieux Impertinent, that its popularity encouraged him in his new venture - to instruct, while pleasing without offence to chaste ears. He wrote

(2) Le Curieux Impertinent was written in 1704, and the Prologue in 1708: first played in Paris in 1710.
L'Ingrat and L'Irrésolu in the same vein: to make his purpose clear, he concluded each play with a short speech of sound advice directly addressed to the audience. Even in the Divertissements written for the Duchesse du Maine at Sceaux, he professed a moral aim. These had all been acted by 1714.

As far as ideas on the moral aim of comedy were concerned, the translation of the Spectator in 1714 could do no more than confirm the existing tendency to write improving plays. It was some years before its influence on the sentimental element in the new comedy was felt in France.

Meanwhile, the moral comedy of Destouches must be considered as a symptom of reaction against the strict tradition of Molière, and the cynical pictures of bourgeois life, or the plays founded on sensational events of the time, (such as the trial of Cartouche) that were to be seen in the work of Dancourt and Dufresni. Destouches' comedy attempted to find a fresh dramatic principle, and to satisfy the demand of the Church for moral pieces on the stage.

Long before this, the Church in France had quarrelled with the stage over the question of morality, and the controversy was still going on, when le Père Joseph de Courbeville chose to support the argument that the French stage was immoral, by publishing Jeremy Collier's Short
View .. of the Immorality .. of the English Stage. As Louis Bourquin points out the effect of this work was to prove the morality of French drama. Jeremy Collier's denunciation of immorality on the English stage, and his comparison of French and English comedy to the advantage of the French helped the reaction against the less moral tendencies in drama, and confirmed the opinion that French comedy was superior to English. This idea gathered weight, and was repeated parrotwise by later critics until "anglomania" grew too strong for them.

Courbeville's preface claimed to give a just idea, for the first time, of the English theatre. He appealed to the curiosity of his readers by a significant change in his translation of the title, by his praise of the original, and by the introduction of Saint Évremond's comment on English comic plays: "Car ce qu'en dit M. de Saint-Évremond n'est comme un léger crayon qui n'est pas même ressemblant, au moins pour L'essentiel. 'Il n'y a point de comédie' (ce sont

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(1) Le P. Joseph de Courbeville, Critique du Théâtre Anglais, comparé au théâtre d'Athènes, de Rome et de France, et l'opinion des auteurs tant profanes que sacrés touchant les spectacles. 1715. He mentions the Journal de Londres as having drawn his attention to Collier's book.

(2) L. Bourquin: "La controverse sur la comédie au XVIIIe siècle." Revue d'Histoire littéraire de France. 27e année. 1920. (p.548 ff.)

(3) "A Short View of the immorality and profaneness of the English Stage" was turned into "La Critique du Théâtre Anglais, comparé au Théâtre d'Athènes, de Rome et de France, et l'opinion des auteurs tant profanes que sacrés touchant les Spectacles".
ses termes) 'qui se conforme plus à celle des Anciens que l'anglaise; pour ce qui regarde les moeurs'." This gave a hint of Courbeville's position in the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes; and all these considerations helped the sale of his book.

Before going on to consider the effect of Courbeville's translation on French comedy, it is useful to add something to his account of Saint Évremond's opinion on English plays. The phrase "léger crayon" is not fair to the earlier writer, who had studied English comedy so closely as to imitate it in his play Sir Politick Would-Be. Saint Évremond brought out the distinction between the two nations which became a commonplace of the eighteenth century, and formed the theme of popular plays like Boissy's Le Français à Londres - "les Anglois pensent trop, et les Français ne pensent pas assez". He was daring enough to censure French comedy for observing too carefully 'the regularity of the Ancients', and preferred a touch of the 'agreeable variety' of English plays. He summed up by saying: "Il faut aimer la Règle pour éviter la confusion; il faut aimer le Bon Sens qui modère l'ardeur d'une Imagination allumée, mais il faut ôter à la règle toute contrainte qui gène, et bannir une Raison Scrupuleuse, qui par un trop grand attachement à la justesse ne laisse rien de libre et de naturel."¹ Saint Évremond thus reveals

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himself as a "Modern" and a very early admirer of English drama.

The Mémoires de Trevoux and the Journal Littéraire commented on Courbeville's translation, but their observations are not interesting from the literary point of view. Some idea of the circulation of this work may be gathered from the fact that Riccoboni and Desfontaines mentioned it in their critical writing, some years later, as a source of information on English comedy.

There is a more useful clue to the impression it made when it first appeared in a letter written by Brossette to J.B. Rousseau in 1715, where he says: "Il paroit en France une critique du Théâtre anglais, ... etc., traduite de l'anglois de M. Collier. Le nom du Traducteur ne paroit pas.... l'Auteur ne ménage point les Poètes ses compatriotes, qui ont déshonoré le théâtre anglois, en y exposant l'Athéisme, l'Impudence, l'Obscénité, et tout ce qu'il y a de plus scandaleux. Il fait en même tems le parallèle du théâtre d'Angleterre avec les Théâtres d'Athènes, de Rome, et de France."

(1) see p.551, Revue d'Histoire littéraire, Année 27 (1920), Louis Bourquin, "La Controverse sur la Comédie au xviiie siècle".
(3) p.363, t.I, Desfontaines, Le Nouvelliste du Parnasse, Paris 1731. see also Prévost, Le Pour et Contre, tome IX, no.occoiv, p.73, (1736).
Some two months later, Rousseau wrote in reply, "Je n'ai point vu la Critique du Théâtre Anglois, dont vous me parlez. Mais sur le plan que vous m'en faites, ce pourrait fort bien être un bon livre. Il est vrai qu'il n'y a ni rime ni raison dans toutes leurs pièces de la manière dont elles sont bâties, mais j'en ai vu plusieurs qui ne laisse-ont point que de servir de canevas à d'excellentes comédies, si elles étaient bien traitées."

Saint Évremond's opinion that English comedy was admirable, might have turned the attention of French writers to English models very early in the century, had not Courbeville argued against him. Brossette and Rousseau strengthened French prejudice in favour of their own politer comedy, written in accordance with the rules framed by Boileau. Rousseau's hint that English comedy might prove a valuable source of new themes was taken up later in the century.

Evidence of the Spectator's influence in bringing a new canon of criticism into France may be seen in Marivaux' Spectateur Francais. This work was very probably inspired by the English periodical, which was still very much in vogue.

(1) p.55 ibid. Lettre de J.B. Rousseau à Brossette.
(2) probably during his visit to England in 1701, with Maréchal Tallard.
(3) Quérard mentions a translation of The Spectator, of 1716. Brossette used a quotation from this English periodical to begin a letter, in 1721. The growth of its popularity during the century may be inferred from Descazeaux-Desgranges' Preface to his translation of Addison's Drummer in 1737, and from l'Abbé Leblanc's account of the young man who read Pope and the Spectator, and then exclaimed: "Je pense à présent!" (v. p.22, Vol.I. Lettres d'un François etc. La Haye 1745).
Marivaux gives a hint of the new method in criticism when, in the 16th number of his paper, he writes of a performance of Inès de Castro: "Je me trouvai auprès d'un homme qui la critiquoit pendant qu'il larmoyoit, de sorte que son coeur faisoit la critique de son esprit.... mais pour moi, je crois que notre esprit n'est qu'un mauvais rêveur toutes les fois qu'en pareil cas il n'est pas de l'avis du coeur."

There is an observation in the Spectator's 208th paper, written in a very similar spirit: "Thus the whole audience is afraid of letting fall a tear, and shun as a weakness the best and worthiest part of our sense."

Such a coincidence in the tone of dramatic criticism may be due to Marivaux' imitation of the English periodical. Several indications point to this conclusion.

Like the Spectator Marivaux described himself as an elderly philosopher, who had spent his life studying men, and amusing himself with his reflections. He showed a sense of humour, in the true vein of the Spectator, when he told the delightful story of the old gentleman in the bookshop, to whom he slyly suggested that the proper dress for moral reflections was not a "weekly sheet", but a sober volume, suitable to the "flegme" of serious readers, and when he described powdered wigs on a windy day. The Spectateur

(2) feuille 25, Spectateur Français, op.cit; also feuille 24, p.288.
(3) feuille 6, ibid.
(4) feuille 15, ibid.
Français also resembled its English namesake in its observations on good nature, in the pathetic stories of girls who were seduced, the grief of parents where children were ungrateful, the attitude of noble patrons to their clients, and the happiness of virtuous love.

Marivaux definitely says that he followed the example of the Spectator in a matter of technique: "Mon confrère le Spectateur anglois avoit établi des Bureaux d'adresse où différents Particuliers lui envoyaient des Lettres.... mon Confrère vaut mieux que moi, puisqu'il pense mieux, et qu'il est venu le premier; ainsi je ne puis m'égarer en suivant son exemple."

This last phrase may be applied to more than the device of inserting letters in his periodical. Marivaux was very sensitive, and at the age when he wrote his Spectateur the temperate wisdom of Addison, and Steele's good nature and generous feeling must have had a powerful effect on his philosophy: especially as he was friendly with the "Moderns" in the famous quarrel, who were inclined to favour English


(2) feuille 12, p.125, Marivaux, Spectateur Français, op.cit.
ideas. According to Laounmet and M. Trehard, the essential qualities of Marivaux' sentiment and philosophy are to be found in the Spectateur Français; and it may reasonably be argued that if the Spectateur contains a system of thought which was not seriously modified in Marivaux' later work, either he matured very early, or he worked out this system as a result of his contact with the ideas of the English moralists.

Therefore, it is not indefensible to say that the influence of the Spectator is responsible for Marivaux' praise of the heart as a better critic at the play, than reason. If so, then Marivaux had some part in bringing sentiment into the theory of drama: for he evidently admired plays he could "applaud with tears". In his own early comedies, he showed that he aimed at the reform of society, by describing life on imaginary islands, and so castigating evils in the French society of his day. Here and there in this work, as well as in the more famous later plays, there was an occasional glimpse of a sentimental outlook on family relationships, on poverty, and on social differences: which he had already expressed in the Spectateur, and which he might have seen for

(1) In 1720-22, when the Spectateur Français appeared, there were no sentimental plays: the favourites at that time were Destouches' early works, Baron's Andrienne, Boursault's Aesop plays, and the livelier comedies of Brueys, Legrand, and Dancourt.
the first time in the English periodical. There is, however, a difference in quality between Steele's natural, spontaneous good feeling, and Marivaux' drier, more reasonable sentiment: for his sentiment had to agree with what his contemporaries called "l'esprit de Marivaux". It was because of this difference that Marivaux' sentiment did not influence later plays through his own dramatic work: but since his novels allowed more scope for the expression of feeling, it was through this channel that it eventually returned to shape the course of "comédie larmoyante".

The originality of Marivaux' criticism, and of his plays, stands out in comparison with the following note on Steele's reference to "The Old Batchelor", in de la Chapelle's prosy translation of the Tatler, which was published in 1723: "C'est une pièce de Congreve. On dit que la représentation en réussit extrêmement bien sur le théâtre anglois, mais je ne saurais dissimuler que la lecture m'en a toujours choqué, tant j'y trouve de grossièretés dans les paroles et dans les pensées." This comment represents general opinion at that time.

A list of books in the library of Cardinal Dubois, who died in 1723, may be quoted to show what English works were

(1) Le Philosophe Nouvelliste; p.157 (note) Vol.I, éd. 1723, Amsterdam. The complete edition did not appear until 1735; but by that time Steele's later views on drama, in the Spectator, had long been available to French readers.
likely to be in the possession of cultivated readers of that time. It included Shakespeare and Jonson, but no later dramatists; Jeremy Collier's Short View, and numerous historical and political works.

England interested the Cardinal, as it did most French people about 1725, from the historical and political standpoint. Thus the Swiss Béat de Muralt, took up a fresh view of the subject, when he wrote his Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français, describing the English theatre from his own personal impressions.

In his second letter, he repeated the idea that French comedy was superior, because it conformed to the "rules" - (he was thinking of Boileau's method of criticism) and he blamed English comedy, rather in Collier's style, for its immorality, and its low comic wit. His description fixed two characteristics of English comedy so firmly in his readers' minds, that they became commonplaces for the rest of the century.

Muralt defined the first thus: "Du reste, il est bien vrai qu'aux endroits où il ne faut pas de ménagement, les Anglais excellent; ce sont des conversations soutenues, des

(3) p.27, Lettre II. ibid.
pensées heureuses et fortes, dont le grand nombre ne s'est, je crois, trouvé jusques ici que chez eux." His originality lay in seeing this "thoughtfulness" in English plays, for the English love of philosophic reasoning was already a byword in France.

His second point was the emphasis he laid on the English fondness for portraying singular characters, a trait which corresponded with their well-known tolerance of eccentricity in real life: "Les caractères en France sont généraux, et comprennent toute une espèce de gens, au lieu qu'en Angleterre, chacun vivant à sa fantaisie, le poète ne trouve presque que des caractères particuliers, qui sont en grand nombre, mais qui ne sauraient faire un grand effet."

This second reflection, although modified by Muralt's conventional ideas on comedy, strengthened the belief that the English eccentricity was a sign of strong character. This again helped in the breaking down of the classic tradition in comedy, which meant the painting of "humours" in the English fashion, rather than universal types, after the manner of Molière: a tendency to be seen in Destouches' La Fausse Agnès.

The Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français was read and discussed: and went through several editions by the end of the century. Two years later, Desfontaines was roused to answer

(1) p.23. Lettre II, ibid.
(2) Otto von Greyerz mentions seven (pp.xviii-xix, Einleitung, Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français, ed Bern. 1897.)
Muriel's criticism of French and English character: but although he made a few remarks on English drama, he threw no new light on the subject. His work is a symptom of the early stages of "anglomania" in France, when curiosity was the chief motive of interest in England.

In 1727, Destouches' Philosophe Marié was the success of the year, and in L'enrivieux, ou la Critique du Philosophe Marié, as in the earlier play, there are signs of the effect of Destouches' contact with English life and letters, during the seven years which he spent in London, at the French Embassy.

In order to estimate the effect of this direct link between a French playwright, and the English theatre, it is essential to review Destouches' ideas on drama before he went to England, as well as the theories of those English writers whom he might have met between 1717 and 1723.

Before he went to England, Destouches had tried the "utile-doux" as a formula for comedy, had found it successful, and had used it persistently.

When Destouches arrived in London, the idea of moral and sentimental comedy had become familiar to the literary world.

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(1) Observations sur les Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français de Muriel, deuxième édition, 1721, à laquelle on a joint l'apologie du caractère anglais et français, etc.; (par l'abbé Desfontaines, Cologne, 1727).
(2) With one exception: L'Obstacle Impévu, in 1717,
As early as 1696, Blackmore's Preface to *Prince Arthur* had urged the need of "more effectually conveying wise instructions". This work was forgotten in the storm aroused by Collier's *Short View*. Then Cibber, who was quick to realise the trend of public opinion, professed moral aims in his prologues and prefaces, and created characters like Sir Friendly Moral\(^1\), to emphasise the new purpose of drama. There were hints of an appeal to feeling in his work, notably in *The Careless Husband*.

It was Steele, however, who most clearly stated the share of emotion in forming the new style of comedy. In 1703, Steele wrote of the hero in his *Lying Lover*\(^2\): "The Anguish he here expresses, and the mutual Sorrow between an only Child and a Tender Father in that distress are perhaps an injury to the rules of comedy, but I am sure they are a justice to those of Morality. And Passages of such a nature being frequently applauded on the Stage, it is high Time we should no longer draw occasions of Mirth from those Images which the Religion of our Country tells us we ought to tremble at with Horror."

Almost at the same time as Steele, Farquhar had realised that there was something of tragedy in the new comic pieces. He observes, in the Preface to *The Twin Rivals*\(^3\): "The most

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(1) Sir Friendly Moral, in Cibber's *The Lady's Last Stake*, 1707.
material Objection to this Play, is the importance of the Subject, which necessarily leads into Sentiments too great for Diversion, and supposes Vices too great for Comedy to punish.... if there be a middle sort of wickedness, too high for the Sock and too low for the Buskin, is there any reason it should go unpunished? What are more obnoxious to human society than the Villainies expos'd in this Play? - but the Persons are too mean for heroick, then what must we do with them? Why - they must of necessity drop into Comedy!"

A fierce discussion raged over Steele's sentimental comedy, The Conscious Lovers, and from 1720 to 1723, Dennis argued with Steele's friends, in the very personal fashion of the eighteenth century, over the aims and methods of such experiments in drama1.

(1) 1720: The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar by Mr Dennis. (Lond. 1720.) (His mildest accusation is that Steele corrupted the English stage.)

1720: An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet call'd the Character of Sir John Edgar, humbly inscribed to Sir Tremendous Longinus. (Lond. 1720.) (This warmly defended Steele, and ascribed the material and moral improvement of the stage to his efforts.)

1722: Dennis answered an old criticism of Sir Fopling Flutter (in The Man of Mode) written by Steele in the 65th Spectator, with an attack on The Conscious Lovers, then in rehearsal. He ridiculed the sensibility of the lovers, and called Young Bevil 'an old man'; which shows that the traits of sentimental comedy were clearly defined by 1722.

1722: Benjamin Victor, An Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, on his play call'd The Conscious Lovers. (Lond. 1722.) (Very laudatory.)

1723: Dennis, Remarks on a Play call'd The Conscious Lovers. (Lond. 1723.) (This was in Dennis' most sarcastic vein.)
The new movement could not escape Destouches' attention. The complete theory of "comédie larmoyante" had been evolved, and he might have carried it to France ready made. His duties as secretary to the French Embassy, and as its unofficial head for some time after Dubois' departure in 1718, absorbed most of his time and energy, however, and limited his capacity for taking in new ideas. On the other hand, his position served him, since it brought him into personal contact with Addison, and possibly, with Steele. The performance of his play, L'Ingrat, at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, in 1722 was another occasion when he might have met Steele and Cibber. Destouches came into contact with the publishing world when he helped J.B. Rousseau with the publication of the London edition of his works, so he would be likely to hear of the various pamphlets which figured in the discussion over the Conscious Lovers. During his stay in London, Destouches would naturally go to the theatre, and there were frequent performances of the Lying Lover, the Careless Husband, the Twin Rivals, and

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1. Destouches mentions personal acquaintance with Addison in the Preface to Le Tambour Nocturne (1736).
the **Conscious Lovers**\(^1\), so that he must have seen some of these plays.

The moral aim which was professed by the writers of the new comedy in England would attract Destouches, and his own character\(^2\) would tend to make him sympathise with their sentimental style of writing. Steele and Addison showed a classical bias in criticism, and this would help Destouches to accept the new ideas on feeling which were brought out in their theory of drama.

When he returned to France, he prepared the *Philosophe Marié* for the stage, and it was acted in Paris in 1727. It was the most popular play of the year: the other favourites were the light comedies, *Le Français à Londres*, *Momus Fabuliste*, and *La Nouveauté*, by Boissy, Fuzelier, and Legrand: not one of them had any claim to be called sentimental, although, in Destouches' phrase, they were full of "brilliant sayings, fresh phrases, quips and jests with double meaning".

The original quality of *Le Philosophe Marié* lay in its touching scenes, which moved the audience to tears. Destouches described this in the ninth scene of *La Critique*

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(1) see the Handlist of Plays, under these titles, at the end of Allardyce Nicoll's *History of Early Eighteenth century Drama*, (1700-1750) (C.U.P. 1925.)

du Philosophe Marié:

Araminte: "Le troisième acte n'a pas eu moins de succès. Il a fait rire comme les deux autres, mais ce qui va vous surprendre, Monsieur, c'est que le quatrième a commencé par une scène sérieuse, entre le Philosophe et son père, et que cette scène a paru si touchante, que tout le monde s'est mis à pleurer."

Lycandre: "Pleurer à une comédie! Mais cela est fou!"

There are three points of resemblance between this criticism of Le Philosophe Marié and the aim of Steele in his plays.

First, was a scene of tender affection between a father and son in the Lying Lover; then, in words that correspond to Destouches' "scène sérieuse" Steele commented on it - "It is high time that we should no longer draw occasions of mirth from these images", and lastly, in both the French and English plays, it was the feeling expressed in the conversation between father and son which brought about the moral conclusion.

Although there was no similarity in the plot of The Lying Lover and Le Philosophe Marié, the likeness in the dramatic formulæ adopted by Steele and Destouches appears from the objections made to their plays. Destouches quoted Lycandre - who may represent J.B. Rousseau - 'that it was folly to weep at comedy': and Dennis wrote against Steele: "all that sensible
part of the World has always denied that a deplorable object is fit to be shewn in Comedy"².

Le Philosophe Marié may well have been affected by Steele's ideas, for it was first written in England: J. B. Rousseau saw it there, and criticized it in a letter to Destouches, for its too complicated action, and the eccentric character of an old woman - which did not appear in the final version. Destouches had evidently caught something of the spirit of English comedy; - the love of a busy plot and odd characters described by Muralt as characteristic of English writing for the stage.

The most important point of resemblance between Le Philosophe Marié and English sentimental comedy was, however, that "seriousness" which brought tears to the spectators' eyes: while Destouches' probable interests and friendships during his stay in London made it easy to believe that this similarity was by no means fortuitous.

The honour of a pioneer belongs then to Destouches, for he was the first to realise that comedy might be written so as to draw tears from the audience. Although Marivaux had evidently appreciated this point in the dramatic criticism of

(1) p. 6, Remarks on a play call'd the Conscious Lovers. J. Dennis. (London, 1723.)
(2) p. 653, Revue d'Histoire Littéraire, (Vol. XIV, 1907): the letter is quoted by Bonnefon, in the article referred to above: it begins "Votre nouvelle comédie, dans l'état où vous me l'avez montrée à Londres, pêchait certainement contre la simplicité" etc. Rousseau was in London in 1723.
the *Spectator*, he did not make it one of the cardinal features of his style in playwriting. It was more apparent in his novels, and it was always tempered by Marivaux' profound sense of reality, which refused to accept the illusory view of human nature essential to sentimental comedy with a moral aim; so that he had little influence on the growth of "comédie larmoyante".

Destouches did not carry the use of sentiment to its logical conclusion, as d'Alembert points out in the well-known passage:\(^1\) "Les Auteurs, d'ailleurs très estimables, qui ont suivi et même agrandi la route frayée par M. Destouches, au lieu de subordonner comme lui l'intérêt à la gaiété, ... ont subordonné ... au Pathétique, le Comique." Critics of such different weight as Fontenelle\(^2\), Voltaire\(^3\), and the Abbé Leblanc\(^4\), distinguished the beginnings of "comédie larmoyante" in Destouches' *Le Philosophe Marié* or his *Le Glorieux*.

Had Destouches cared to take the last step in the formation of the new comedy, by making the sentimental element in his plays overrule the others, he would probably have achieved the success which Lachaussée enjoyed when he produced the

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first true "comédie larmoyante" a few years later. Destouches' lifelong attachment to moral comedy, and his choice of Addison's play, The Drummer rather than one of Steele's works, for translation into French, explain his failure to take that last step. He held to the belief that comedy should seek to improve the audience through gaiety rather than sentiment, although he would agree that a certain admixture of pathos was permissible.

In spite of the fact that Nivelle de la Chaussée hailed Destouches as his master, in 1736, when his own Fausse Antipathie and Le Préjugé à la Mode were the most popular plays of the day, it is impossible to prove that the earlier dramatist had any definite influence on Nivelle's work.

After the success of La Fausse Antipathie in 1733, Nivelle de la Chaussée recognized that he had achieved something new in comedy, which he defined as "épi-comi-tragique". His second outstandingly popular play, Le Préjugé à la Mode

(1) There is the evidence of the Critique du Philosophe Marié to support this view, and it is confirmed by a passage in Le Sage's Diable Boiteux, (p.99 Vol.II, ed. Paris 1728) where the author describes the fashionable display of excessive feeling, in his account of the Duchess of Vieille-Brune's behaviour when a tragedy was read to her.


confirmed his adherence to this formula, according to which following the dictates of the heart led to virtue, and tears were called forth by the misfortunes of worthy characters. The enthusiasm for the heroine of *Le Préjugé*, Constance, was so great that it had a real effect on every-day life: it became fashionable to be a good wife: as Lanson says¹ "De la femme du monde, il fit la femme, Rousseau en fera la mère".

Since "comédie larmoyante" appeared in its characteristic form in 1733, any influence from England after that date could serve only to modify it. The next step, after creating the new genre, was to find examples or models to justify it; and this was connected with the first signs of a new attitude towards English drama.

L'abbé Prévost was in part responsible for this new understanding of English plays, and it was he who suggested a suitable ancestry for "comédie larmoyante". His keen critical sense was not hampered by too much respect for the classic tradition in drama, and as early as 1734 he wrote² "De là vient qu'il manque assez souvent aux meilleurs ouvrages de l'Angleterre une certaine perfection de goût.... mais c'est une perfection à laquelle ils touchent, et qu'ils... ne sauront manquer d'acquérir bientôt³.

(2) p.282, Nombre LVII, Le Pour et Contre, 1734, (Vol.IV).
(3) Prévost's bias in favour of French superiority, although not so pronounced as that of most writers of his time, was still strong enough to lead him to praise Voltaire's criticism of the English theatre, which ignored Steele and Cibber, Footnote continued on next page
In the same number of his periodical, Prévost allows us to see why English ideas had affected the development of "comédie larmoyante" so slightly, although the taste of both nations was coming to adopt similar standards: "J'ai remarqué par plusieurs exemples, qu'il y a peu de risque pour un Traducteur à donner des Ouvrages applaudis en Angleterre. Les deux nations sont aujourd'hui dans l'Europe ce qu'étaient autrefois les Grecs et les Romains. C'était un titre pour plaire à Rome que d'avoir obtenir les suffrages d'Athènes.... Comme... [les Francais] ont précédé les Anglais dans les Sciences, il n'est pas surprenant que leurs idées ont quelque-chose de plus exacte, et qu'il y ait plus de régularité dans leurs méthodes."

In 1736 Prévost and Destouches criticised two English plays, and their opinions may be brought forward as typical of the old and the new feeling in criticism.

Prévost described The Conscious Lovers, in Le Pour et Contre. He drew attention to the decency of the play, its observation of the "rules" of comedy, its success in England, and the interest it should arouse in France, as an excellent

(Footnote continued from previous page)
and judged according to the standards of Boileau. This appeared when Prévost gave the substance of the "Lettres Anglaises" in no.XII ff., Vol.I. Le Pour et Conbre, in 1733, a year before Voltaire's work was available to the French public.

(1) Nos CX to CXVIII in Vol.8 of Le Pour et Conbre. (Paris 1736.)
example of English taste. He confessed that his purpose in bringing Steele's work to the notice of his readers was to satisfy their curiosity about English letters rather than to present a model comedy, for he knew that The Conscious Lovers would not meet with the approval of conservative critics in France. He gave his personal opinion of the play, and said that it bore comparison with the best that France could show, barring a few minor breaches of the "rules"; and he even put forward the English point of view about the unities, with arguments to defend it\(^1\). Prévost's criticism was original\(^2\): and his sturdy independence of thought, backed by the popularity of his early novels, might have had a great effect on "comédie larmoyante", had it come before La Fausse Antipathie. As it was, the effect of this new critical temper was to confirm the success of "comédie larmoyante" by pleading the right to make innovations in drama.

Destouches' Preface to the Tambour Nocturne, his version of Addison's Drummer, was written in the same year\(^3\). It showed understanding of the latest developments in English

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(1) p.324, No.CXVIII, Vol.8, ibid.
(2) As early as 1734 he brought his sensibility into criticism "Je ne suis pas si monstre que je n'ose juger du sentiment des autres par le mien" (à propos of a play, p.24, No.XLVI, Vol.4, Le Pour et Contre).
(3) Le Tambour Nocturne received the Censor's "permission to print" on. Feb.3, 1736, and Quérard gives 1736 as the year of publication.
comedy, but Destouches was more timid than Prévost, and judged by the traditional standards of French criticism. He repeated the usual comments on the immorality and the disregard of Boileau's "rules", which he, too, observed in English comedy. He allowed Addison the merit, in spite of this, of having written a play as near as possible to the French model. He said that the best writers for the English theatre agreed with Addison in a desire to reform the extreme licence of their plays, both in morals and in the form of drama, and to this end, they were translating Molière to serve as the example for future dramatists. In these observations, Destouches merely echoed the critical thought of previous writers on the subject, but he had the advantage of knowing more about the reaction against immorality in the English theatre, and their desire to conform to French standards of good taste. He ended with high praise for this effort: and prophesied that the English drama would equal that of any other nation, ancient or modern, if it became more moral and more obedient to the rules of criticism which he regarded as authoritative: and he greatly admired the wit and the strong natural characters in English comedy, the lively, elegant dialogue, and its piquant satire.

(1) This was the "entirely New Translation... by Several Learned Gentlemen... with Frontispieces designed by Coypel, Hogarth," etc., of which the later volumes appeared in 1732.
Destouches gave an account of English comic writing that supported his own theory of a comedy, in the tradition of Molière, which had a strong moral bias. He was not sympathetic to "comédie larmoyante" in his later criticism, perhaps from jealousy. Nevertheless, his description of modern English comedy in this preface may have strengthened the general approval of the moral element in the new kind of play in France, although his rather patronising judgment of Addison's effort would not lead French critics to look for examples in English comedy. Destouches' later remarks on English drama in the "Lettre à Madame de P***, in 1745, have no bearing on "comédie larmoyante".

When Descazeaux-Desgranges published another translation of The Drummer in 1737, it became obvious that new lines of approach to English literature were opening up, this time through the very general admiration for the great thinkers of that country.

"J'ai aimé le comique de cette pièce"¹ says Descazeaux-Desgranges, "à la première lecture que j'en ai faite.... c'est la bonne nature qui s'y produit et qui s'y parle; mais que dis-je? quoi! je fais devant le public l'éloge d'une pièce dont M. Addisson est Auteur! Il me suffisait de le nommer, j'aurais donné l'idée d'un esprit des plus polis et

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(1) La Prétendue Veuve ou l'Époux Magicien, comédie en 5 actes et en vers. Paris 1737 par M D[escazeaux] D[esgranges.]
This enthusiasm for Addison as a thinker had led to appreciation of his play: but the persistent belief in the superiority of French comedy still possessed the power to neutralise the effect of such an admiration for English sentimental comedy on the similar form of drama introduced by Nivelle de la Chaussée.

In spite of this, there are signs which show the ever-increasing knowledge of English dramatic compositions in France, and the growth of sympathetic understanding apparent in criticism. In 1737, the use of English in the following announcement which appeared at the Foire de Saint Germain is very significant: "a new entertainment of dancing, of singing". Again in 1744, Moreau de Brasey indulged in unqualified praise of English comedy, calling it 'an excellent representation of the follies of mankind'.
At the same time, the success of "comédie larmoyante" as an experiment in drama prompted the more nimble-minded critics to find a respectable ancestry for it, so as to refute the upholders of tradition by creating a counter-tradition.

Prévost performed this office for the new genre, in 1737. He wrote a comment on Steele's remark about the Self-Tormentor of Terence "In the comedy are passages which would draw tears from a man of sense, but not one that will provoke his laughter". Prévost wrote "À l'égard de Plaute, quoiqu'il paroisse que son principal dessein étoit de faire rire, il est vrai néanmoins qu'il faisoit plus de cas lui-même d'une comédie sérieuse qu'il avoit composée, que de tout le reste de ses ouvrages. Le sujet des Captives est grave - aussi déclare-t-il dans l'Epilogue qu'il attend plus de faveur et d'applaudissement que jamais pour une comédie où les bons peuvent apprendre à devenir meilleurs....

C'est aussi aux Partisans de la nouvelle méthode à faire usage des armes que je leur fournis pour se défendre. Mais ils ne doivent point oublier que suivant ces idées c'est fort injustement qu'on donne à leur entreprise le nom d'introduction nouvelle, puisqu'il se trouve ainsi que les

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(1) This observation appeared in no.502 of the Spectator, with a long disquisition on Terence, by Steele: but Prévost gives a reference to no.339 of the Universal Spectator, where it was attributed to Addison. (see note 2.)

(2) pp.145-147; no.CLXIV, Vol.XII. Le Pour et Contre. (1737).
meilleures Pièces de Plaute et de Térence sont dans le goût qu'ils veulent introduire."

Steele and Addison, as Professor Bernbaum\(^1\) points out, were the first to regard Plautus and Terence as classical examples of sentimental drama, and to interpret and imitate their plays in this sense. Dennis\(^2\) saw the connexion between Steele's comedy and Terence. Prévost evidently borrowed the idea from Steele as the above quotation indicates, and the defenders of comédie larmoyante obeyed his command to 'use the arms he furnished for their defence'.

Professor Bernbaum mentions Marmontel's, Grimm's and Voltaire's references to this point, which were published some time after the first quarrels over "comédie larmoyante".

Fréron\(^3\) twice mentions Roman comedy as the ancestor of comédie larmoyante; so does D'Alembert\(^4\); while Bougainville\(^5\)

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(1) Prof. E. Bernbaum, The drama of Sensibility, 1916. Ginn. He does not enlarge on the effects of this idea in France.
(2) Dennis: Remarks on a Play call'd the Conscious Lovers, 1725, p.10: connects Steele and Terence; and he objects to Terentian comedy because it "lacked that Humour and Plesantry which are so agreeable to the nature of Comedy".
shows most clearly that he followed Prévost's idea when he had to pronounce the merits of Nivelle de la Chaussée in his "Discours de Réception à l'Académie Française." Years later, in 1777, Thomas\(^1\) wrote to Barthe, advising him to consult the great Comic writers when he was in difficulties over Les Fausses Infidélités: "Je crois aussi que Térence pourrait bien être de cette compagnie, mais Térence avait un peu plus de cet esprit moderne qu'on ne connaissait pas trop de son temps. On soupçonne qu'il a écrit plusieurs scènes du Comte d'Olban et de la jeune fille de Philippe Hombert, comme aussi les scènes pathétiques et tendres de Lise et des deux Euphémon."

The abbé Leblanc also drew attention to Terence, and mentions Steele in the same connection. This added something to Prévost's idea, and proposed another model for writers in the new style of comedy, but it could have no effect in developing Nivelle de la Chaussée's theory, since in 1745, he had no desire to change his method of composing plays, which were successful and so satisfied him\(^2\).

Leblanc's words betray a significant change in the attitude towards English drama, which may be compared with that of Moreau de Brasey, quoted above. "Ce genre de Comédie", wrote Leblanc\(^3\) to Nivelle de la Chaussée "où vous excellez

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\(^2\) see Lanson, Nivelle de la Chaussée. (Paris, 1887).

\(^3\) p.122, Lettre XLIV, Vol.II. Lettres d'un François, op. cit.
n'est pas aussi nouveau que le prétendent ces Censeurs ignorans ou de mauvaise foi. L'Andrienne de Térence en est une preuve. Il y a longtemps que nos voisins nous en ont donné l'exemple, et en général ils réussissent mieux dans les scènes d'intérêt que dans celles de la Plaisanterie. Le comique dans leurs Pièces est souvent outré, le sentiment y est toujours vrai. Celui qui a mis l'Andrienne en français n'a pas tiré de ce sujet tout le parti qu'il en pouvait tirer. M.Steele, qui l'a accommodé aux moeurs de sa Nation, en a fait une des meilleures comédies du théâtre anglais. La scène du quatrième acte pour laquelle il a composé cette Pièce, comme il n'a pas fait difficulté de l'avouer dans sa Préface, est extrêmement belle, et n'est qu'à lui. Elle est entièrement dans votre goût, et puisque je ne puis vous offrir rien du mien qui vous rende le plaisir que "L'École des Amis" m'a procuré, je vous envoie la traduction de cette scène."

The translation followed, and Leblanc remarked on the excellent moral that might be drawn from it. Leblanc's comparison of Steele and Nivelle de la Chaussée showed the progress of anglomania since Prévost's criticism of the same play in 1736.

Then, at the end of Volume III of the Lettres d'un François, there is a burlesque "Supplément du génie, ou l'art

(1) English audiences, according to B.Victor in the Epistle to Sir Richard Steele, (1722) also applauded this scene in The Conscious Lovers.
de composer des Poèmes dramatiques tels que l'ont pratiqué plusieurs auteurs célèbres du théâtre Anglais". Leblanc begins with an account of tragedy, which proves that he had a fairly wide acquaintance with the English writers of the beginning of the eighteenth century. Then he goes on with his satiric advice to young writers of comedy. To compose a work that would be successful in England, the young author must observe the usual irregularity of construction and indecency of language, borrow the plot from French comedy, complicate it with a second intrigue, and draw caricatures, not characters. Leblanc further quotes Dryden's Essay on Dramatick Poesy, and the Epilogue to Sir Harry Wildair to prove that the English admired nothing that was not their own, and looked down on all other nations.

All the old notions about English comedy were brought out in the Supplément, but Leblanc had a deeper knowledge of English texts, and there are traces of a feeling that the inferiority of English plays could no longer be confidently asserted, but had to be proved. There was none of Prévost's sympathy and profound insight in Leblanc's work: it was his shallow criticism, and the accident that the Lettres d'un François were not published until "comédie larmoyante" was fully developed which really account for the fact that they had very little effect on general opinion in France, in the matter of English drama.
The next interesting point in the history of "comédie larmoyante" was the discussion which arose over the question of its right to be recognized as a true form of comedy. The very real success of La Chaussée's plays, and their firm establishment in popular favour was nowhere more clearly shown than in Voltaire's imitations, although he insisted on splitting hairs to prove that Nanine and L'Enfant Prodigue were not really "comédiæ larmoyantes".

The discussion over this problem took place in 1754, about the time of La Chaussée's death, but none of the writers who took part in it spoke of English influence or example.

Yet there was one important factor, which owed its origin to English ideas, and materially contributed to the success of sentimental plays in France. This was the influence of English writers; the authors of the Spectator, of sentimental comedy, and of the novel, especially Richardson, - which reached French comedy through the channel of the novel. It was all the more effective, because no great tradition of novel-writing existed, to act as a check on the spread of English ideas.

The works of Marivaux and Prévost prepared the public for the enjoyment of moral and sentimental scenes on the stage, because they introduced these qualities into their novels. Prévost described English life, with a touch of sentiment, in his Cleveland: he praised English sentimental comedy in
Les Mémoires et Aventures d'un Homme de Qualité\(^1\), and he brought Richardson to France in his translation of Pamela.

Marivaux had developed his natural sensibility through contact with the Spectator, and Richardson may be responsible for a certain sentimental outlook in Marianne - although the precise relationship of Richardson and Marivaux is still a subject for research. It cannot be denied, however, that all these works made sentimental tales popular in France, and that without their influence, "comédie larmoyante" would not have found such great favour with audiences in the theatre.

Fréron could see this common element in the novel and the new comedy, and remarked on it judiciously\(^2\): "D'ailleurs, par quelle bizarrerie condamnerons-nous au théâtre ce que nous admirons même dans d'autres productions de l'esprit humain? Nous avons des Romans héroïques tels que ceux de Mademoiselle Scudéry..... des Romans de sentiment comme ceux de Madame de Villedieu, de M. l'abbé Prévost etc..... D'où vient n'aurons nous pas autant d'espèces différentes sur la Scène?..... les Pièces attendrissantes seront d'après les Romans tendres et passionnés."

Fréron was not the only writer to form such an opinion. Destouches applied the adjective "romanesque" to sentimental

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plays, in his uncomplimentary reference to them, when he published the preface to *Le Dissipateur*. Later in the century the *Journal des Théâtres* used the same epithet to describe Mélanide, while Desfontaines, in *Le Nouvelliste du Parnasse* proposed that Mélanide should be qualified as a "drame romanesque", until the public adopted the new term which he had coined for these sentimental plays; - the name "Romanédie".

Although contemporary critics did not realise it, this striking new quality common to the novel and to the "comédie larmoyante" was derived, at least in part, from English ideas. Antoine de la Place, La Chaussée's friend, did suggest that a new type of play might arise, founded on a more intimate knowledge of the human heart. As this observation occurs in his dissertation on the principles of English drama, it was probably deduced from his study of that subject.

The results of the contact between English thought and "comédie larmoyante" may be summed up as follows.

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(2) *Journal des Théâtres ou Nouveau Spectateur*, p.120, t. II. 15 août, 1776.
(3) These words of Desfontaines' are quoted with the "Eloge de M. de La Chaussée" etc. in Volume I, *Oeuvres de M. Nivelle de la Chaussée*, Paris 1761-2.
(4) p.lxvi, Préface, Tome I. *Théâtre Anglois*. P.A.de La Place (Londres 1745).
Courbeville's translation of Collier, Muralt's *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*, and Destouches' stay in England all helped to develop moral comedy in France. These men did not point to English models for the new plays, but they all affirmed that the drama should aim at the improvement of manners, and this was a logical conclusion from their acquaintance with the English theatre.

Sentiment, the distinguishing quality of "comédie larmoyante", first began to touch the art of play writing when Marivaux realised its value in dramatic criticism: a lesson he may have learnt from *The Spectator*. When he and Prévost imitated the English masters of sentimental appeal in their novels, French comedy was encouraged to "weep diversion into virtue". Destouches is generally recognized as the first to introduce scenes of pathos into comedy: but he did not create the true "comédie larmoyante", and we are unable to establish a connection between his work and that of La Chaussée. Thus we cannot find traces of English influence in the work of this writer, who knew very little about English literature during the creative period of his career.

The only notable instance of a theory which passed from England to France was Prévost's claim that Terence and Plautus were the "models" for "comédie larmoyante"; an idea he had gleaned from *The Spectator*. It gave considerable weight to the contention that the new plays should be recognized as a
legitimate variety of drama in France.

Three reasons may be put forward to explain the fact that "comédie larmoyante" arose in almost complete independence of the very similar phenomenon in English drama.

First, there was the general opinion that English plays were not worthy of imitation. "Comédie larmoyante" had long been successful before a more sympathetic attitude was taken up in France.

Then, any experiment which departed from the example of Molière and the precepts of Boileau met with fierce opposition and this again prompted most critics to reiterate previous condemnations of English drama, which rested on the charge of disrespect for these authorities.

Lastly, Nivelle de la Chaussée was not one of the leaders of interest in English drama; his tendency was rather to follow popular taste, and when he began to write plays, "anglomania" had not set in, so his mind at that time was impervious to English influences.

After the half-century, the general resistance to new ideas in drama was steadily growing weaker; and even the most orthodox critics were prepared to admit that comedy after Molière and tragedy after Racine were not faultless; while curiosity about England and English literature grew, and there arose a tendency to adopt new ideas from this source, and even
to look for hints for the improvement of French drama in the work of English writers.

Everything was ready for a second experiment in drama; and this was to prove more revolutionary than the first in its breach with tradition and its imitation of English example.
Chapter II.

LILLO, DIDEROT AND THE NEW FORM OF TRAGEDY.

Dr Johnson called Otway's play The Orphan "a domestic tragedy, drawn from middle life". The phrase shows that he distinguished more than one kind of tragedy, and that the term had extended its meaning to cover a new type of play.

Lillo's London Merchant was the first successful play of the domestic kind. In his Prologue, Lillo recognized "Southerne's, Rowe's and Otway's moving strains" as predecessors of his own; and ever since 1731, when The Merchant appeared, critics in England and Germany have made efforts to add to the list of those who wrote "plays of private woe" before Lillo.¹

¹ Lillo evidently realised that the Elizabethans had written tragedy in a style similar to that of his Merchant, for he adapted Arden of Feversham; Hill, in 1781, made use of The Yorkshire Tragedy, in the same way, for his Fatal Extravagance; while Johnson realised the presence of similar qualities in Otway's Orphan and in Lillo's work: later critics, such as Singer in his Das Bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England, (1892), Nettleton, (in the Cambridge History of English Literature), Ward, and Professor Allardyce Nicoll all point out the connection between Lillo's Merchant and the Elizabethan dramatists like Heywood, as well as his more immediate link with the writers of his own time, such as Charles Johnson, Lewis Theobald, Rowe, Otway, Southerne, and even obscure authors like Osborne Sidney Wandesford.
However great a number of predecessors he may have, Lillo's work is no less important, because he was the first to say that he wished to "enlarge the graver kind of poetry", and because the critics of his century saw in him the first to write "plays formed on a new plan".

This recognition of Lillo as an innovator in tragedy was not without effect on the rise of the second experiment in French drama. Like the English playwright, Diderot extended the province of tragedy. As he stated very definitely, he had no intention of ousting the heroic form from its supremacy in the theatre, but he saw the need for a "lesser tragedy", which would satisfy the demand for certain moral, emotional, and aesthetic qualities not included in the imitations of Corneille and Racine.

In order to see how Lillo's work affected "drame bourgeois", we must give some idea of contemporary judgments on this new form of tragedy, explain the tendency to look to England for guidance in shaping it, and bring into prominence the points of contact between English domestic tragedy and the similar experiments in France. Then we must sketch its further development, to show how the original idea of "enlarging the province of the graver kind of poetry" was supplemented by later influences from England.

The success of Lillo's play attracted the attention of English critics at once. It was seen that he aimed at a new
form of drama, and the more conservative judges naturally condemned the attempt. The pleasure of the spectators, however, overruled all their objections; and the appeal to feeling, which was the source of their delight, explains why this particular play attracted attention in France, and was eventually accepted as a model of a parallel development in their own tragedy.

The evidence of Lillo's biographers and his friends establishes the fact that his work was recognized as creative. "The author's friends", said Tom Davies in the Life published with the 1775 edition of Lillo's works, "though they were well acquainted with the merit of "Barnwell", could not be without their fears for the success of a play which was formed on a new plan - and which the writings of the time called a Newgate tragedy." Theophilus Cibber further mentioned Lillo's diffidence about his new venture, "As this was almost a new species of tragedy, writ on a very uncommon subject, [the author] rather chose it should take its fate in the summer, than run the hazardous fate of encountering the winter critics."

There was reason to be nervous about the reception of the London Merchant, for hostile critics and "merry persons", having heard of the unusual subject, and of the writer's

departure from tradition, gathered on the first night, prepared to damn the play. But, as Genest says, "they took out their handkerchiefs instead".

Pope, said Cibber, "had the curiosity to attend the performance, and commended the actors and the author". Popular success confirmed this Olympian approval, and the Merchant was played twenty times to crowded houses during a hot summer.

Fielding's Prologue written for the Fatal Curiosity in 1736 emphasised Lillo's abandonment of the style of heroic tragedy:

"But from this modern, fashionable way
Tonight, our Author begs your leave to stray.....
Throw both your scorn and prejudice aside,
Let us with favour, not contempt, be tried."3

The Prologue to Elmerick showed how this "scorn and prejudice" were overcome by the touching sentiment of The London Merchant.

"His Barnwell once no Critic's test could bear,
Yet from each Eye still draws the natural Tear."4

Sarah Fielding, in the novel, David Simple gave an idea of the drawing-room opinions of "Barnwell" about 1744. It was generally held to be an "odious" "low" play: but Lady Know-All

(1) p.295, Vol.III, Genest, Some Account of the English Stage... [under Drury Lane, June 22, 1731.]
(2) in Theophilus Cibber's Lives of the Poets, quoted above, pp.339 ff.
(4) Prologue, Elmerick (written in 1739) ibid.
and Lady True-Wit - the names are significant - praised its sentiment, and defended its unorthodoxy in breaking away from the example of "Cato". It may be added here that the only other domestic tragedy to have any real influence on "drame bourgeois", Moore's *Gamester*, was often attributed by French writers to the author of *Barnwell*; and as Moore's work brought no new idea to the theory of the genre, his influence merely reinforced Lillo's.

In France, the beginning of the tendency to consider English plays as a possible source of new ideas in drama coincided roughly with the first description of Lillo's play, which appeared in *Le Pour et Contre*, in 1734. Although Prévost did not give Lillo the credit for writing a new form of tragedy, his account of the *Merchant* was sympathetic, and he pointed out the "beauties" of several scenes, which he translated carefully¹: he wrote vividly, because he had been very much impressed when he saw the first performance at Drury Lane², and he felt that his readers would be touched by the emotions which had so moved English audiences, and made them flock to see this play. Prévost's tribute to the popularity of *Barnwell* was the direct cause of Clément de Genève's translation, some years later: and this complete version of Lillo's play was a very probable source of Diderot's knowledge of the work, although Prévost

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himself might have directed Diderot's attention to The Merchant, as he did Grimm's.

It is therefore easy to see the link between Lillo's example and Diderot's theory: but before these can be considered, the progress of a more liberal spirit in the references to English drama, and the movement towards imitation of Lillo's new venture in that sphere must be outlined.

Prévost may be quoted as an example of this more liberal spirit. In 1735, he remarked on 'a tendency to praise and to imitate whatever seemed admirable, regardless of its age, or origin', and here he obeyed the "Modern" tendency, which was first manifested in the famous "Quarrel".

Behind the search for new models in drama lay the dissatisfaction with heroic tragedy, which had been forcibly expressed by Fénélon in the Lettre à l'Académie and by La Motte in his prefaces and disquisitions on this form of drama. It was Voltaire who set the example of looking to England for a remedy: he turned to Shakespeare for devices that would give new life to the imitations of Racine, and this was a powerful incentive to later writers who felt the need of change in French dramatic writing.

(1) see p.229, t.I, Correspondance Littéraire. op.cit.
(2) v. Nombre LXXXVIII, Le Pour et Contre, t.VI, 1735.
La Place gave further impetus to this movement when he translated the collection of plays known as the Théâtre Anglois. He was following the fashion of introducing English works to the French public, but he foresaw certain effects of this "anglomania" on the development of the theatre in France. His answer to the Abbé Desfontaine’s criticism of his enterprise in translating English plays shows this: ¹ "Mais dussai-je encore encourir l'indignation des Rigoristes, je ne puis m'empêcher de croire que l'on trouvera quelques moyens [dans mon Théâtre Anglois] ... d'étendre les limites peut être trop bornées que l'on a osé franchir jusqu'ici. C'est l'héritage que j'annonce à nos neveux ... auroit-on été bien fondé à faire un crime à Leibnits, à Bacon, d'avoir annoncé ou prédit, quoique très obscurément, les découvertes que Newton et ses contemporains ont faites depuis, en Physique." La Place reminded his contemporaries, that as science looked to England for guidance, so the "nation of thinkers" might have discovered the germ of new growth in drama: and two men found inspiration in his collection of plays, to propose the reform of tragedy on lines suggested by their appreciation of English drama.

The first of these was Hénault, who invented a new form of tragedy which would represent in a true and natural way the

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¹ Préface du tome troisième; Théâtre Anglois de La Place, V. p.viii. (Londres 1746.)
facts of history. The example of Shakespeare inspired him
to dispense with the observation of the unities, and to claim
that history, told in action, would excite the "pity and terror
of tragedy". "Je donnai", wrote Hénault in his Memoirs
"en 1747, la tragédie de François II, ouvrage tout aussi
nouveau dans son genre que le Nouveau Abrégé Chronologique,
et dont M. le Chancelier d'Auguesson ne cessoit de vauter
l'invention et l'utilité; il ordonna qu'il fût imprimé.
L'Histoire de ce tems-là y est conservée dans la plus grand
fidélité; c'est une concordance de tous les écrivains con-
temporains; et ce qu'il y a de singulier, c'est que cette
pièce en cinq actes ne laisse pas d'être intéressante. Per-
sonne depuis n'a voulu écrire notre histoire dans le même
genre, et c'est grand dommage."

The sub-title of Hénault's play acknowledged his debt
to La Place, for he called it Le Nouveau Théâtre François;
and the following words in the Preface to François II in-
dicate what he owed to Shakespeare:- "L'exemple même de
Shakespeare ne doit-il pas encourager quand on voit jusqu'à
quel point il a plu à un Peuple aussi spirituel que le Peuple

(1) p.37, Mémoires du Président Hénault, de l'Académie
Française, écrits par lui-même, recueillis et mis en ordre
par son arrière-neveu, M. le Baron de Vigan. (Paris 1855.)
(2) Préface, François II, ou Nouveau Théâtre François,
Anglois." "Spirituel" is an adjective that speaks eloquently of the growing tendency to admire and to follow English example in drama. Grimm\(^1\) was not at all sympathetic in his criticism of Hénault's play, but he had to confess that it fell in with the prevailing taste for English works - "leur folie" he stated in the Correspondance Littéraire, "est maintenant pour la tragédie Anglaise. Le Président Hénault vient d'en publier une dans ce goût là, qui occupe tous les esprits."

The other writer who used English example to suggest innovations in French drama was Fontenelle. He read La Belle Pénitente in La Place's translation, and after meditating on this play, he advanced the theory, in 1751, that a new scale of values might be worked out for dramatic compositions in France, which should include forms possessing certain qualities taken from tragedy and from comedy, to stand between the "true" tragedy in imitation of Racine, and "pure" comedy, in the tradition of Molière. One of these new species was to be the tragedy of middle life: in the style of Rowe. Fontenelle wrote on this point\(^2\) - "Ce que je proposerois ici .... se trouve plus heureusement exécuté dans les Pièces Angloises que je connois, et surtout, ce me semble, dans la "Belle Pénitente", vraie tragédie, à mon gré, où il ne s'agit

(1) p.72, Vol.I. (1747) Correspondance Littéraire de Grimm etc. (éd. Tourneux.)
(2) p.xxvjj ff. Préface générale de la tragédie et des six comédies, Vol. VII. Œuvres de Fontenelle (Paris 1761.)
que du mariage d'un noble Génois.... par bonheur, nous sommes dans un siècle où les vues commencent sensiblement à s'étendre de tous côtés."

It is curious that French thought should thus have followed so closely the development of domestic tragedy in England: for Lillo had named Rowe as one of his predecessors, and Johnson had picked out the Fair Penitent as a play which treated a more moving, modern subject than the classic tragedies founded on the legends of gods and heroes.

The next reference to English drama which reveals fresh thought on the subject was Clément de Genève's preface to his translations of the London Merchant in 1748 and 1751, and his comments on this work in the Cinq Années Littéraires. Again the similarity to the English reactions to this play stands out. Clément's translation was well received because the general love of sentiment, fostered by the popularity of Richardson's novels, helped the public to forgive the singularity of the English 'tale of private woe', and to enjoy weeping over it.

Clément was competent to perform the task of translating The Merchant, and his version was likely to be well advertised, for as Collé pointed out in his Memoirs¹, Clément had been secretary to "Milord Walgrève", the English Ambassador in...
France, and he was the editor of *Les Cinq Années Littéraires*, a periodical which enjoyed a wide circulation.

Grimm said that Clément's version of the *Merchant* made the reputation of Lillo's play. The introduction was a reprint of Prévost's article in the *Pour et Contre*; and Clément confessed that he had incorporated the scenes already translated by Prévost, without altering them, in his own work.

The *Marchand de Londres* was first published in 1748, and a second edition, with the addition of the gallows-scene, in 1751. Clément wrote very complacently of public eagerness to read the play, and his own "delicious horror" as he translated it.

Thus, by 1751, several notable opinions had directed the thoughts of writers who wished to "enlarge the graver kind of poetry" towards the imitation of English tragedy: and the very play that was to suggest a daring new theory to Diderot, was well known in its French translation. When Diderot was free to consider the reform of tragedy, his own habit of thought added its strength to the forces that made him turn to England for ideas.

Up to 1751, Diderot had been too busy with hack-work in translation, and too concerned with philosophic reflections to consider the theatre, except to show a characteristic

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(1) p.475, t.V. Grimm, Corr. Litt. 1er avril, 1764. (op.cit.)
(2) Précface, *Le Marchand de Londres*; P.Clément. Londres 1751.
impatience with tradition in the thirty-eighth chapter of the *Bijoux Indiscrets*\(^1\). He attacked the unnatural in situation, character, and style of acting which he saw in French heroic tragedy, and concluded by repeating the argument of the "Moderns", that they had the advantage of the "Ancients", being richer by the experience of the intervening centuries.

At this point, a curious example of a "tragédie bourgeoise", written long before Diderot composed his theory of the genre, must be considered, because it contributed to the evolution of domestic tragedy in France, and acted in concert with English influences to show that this kind of play might become a valuable supplement to heroic tragedy.

The author was Paul Landois, who contributed articles on painting to the *Encyclopédie*\(^2\); and this probably made his play known to Diderot. This work, *Silvie*, as may be seen from the Prologue\(^3\), owed nothing to English ideas, so it has no place in the movement which prepared the way for Lillo's influence on Diderot. Landois wrote it as a contribution to the argument over the use of prose in tragedy which La Motte had begun in 1730; and he made it a story of real life, with middle-class characters, because he felt this to be a logical extension of prose dialogue in tragedy. *It was the exact*

(1) *Vol.II, Œuvres*, Diderot, (éd. Assézat.) *It was written in 1748.*

(2) *Vol.III, p.249* (juillet 1756) *Correspondance Littéraire,* (éd. Tourneux.)

(3) *Silvie, tragédie en un acte et en prose.* P.Landois.
*Paris 1742.*
opposite of Lillo's argument for making his characters use this medium of expression, rather than verse.

Landois thus devoted most of his attention to justifying the use of prose in tragic writing; and treated the introduction of bourgeois characters, a plot from real life, and the appeal to feeling as innovations of less moment. It is possible to conclude from this play that the forces which had produced Lillo's Merchant of London, were also at work in France, quite independently of their action in England.

Landois' Silvie did not enjoy such a success as Barnwell. It was only played twice at the Comédie Française; and the author foretold exactly the part it was to take in the formation of "tragédie bourgeoise". "Quelque Auteur", he said in the Prologue "plus habile que moi sentira dans son génie des ressources pour réussir dans un genre où' j'aurai échoué. Le Public lui devra son plaisir, mais c'est à moi qu'il en aura l'obligation." Diderot was generous enough to confess this obligation, and to give Landois even more credit than he really deserved.

Meanwhile the disintegration of the seventeenth century pattern for tragedy was proceeding. La Motte, Voltaire, and Fontenelle had advocated certain modifications which they admired in English plays; Landois had experimented with a

(1) Scène dernière, Prologue de Silvie, op.cit.
domestic theme, Crébillon had suggested that more "terror" would put new life into the imitations of Racine: but none of these efforts could check the growth of another and more satisfying type of tragedy. The example of comedy, which had evolved a new type, running counter to the traditions of Boileau, had been accepted by the critics, and pointed the way to a similar possibility in tragedy. The new comedy had also very successfully adopted English themes, while the universal popularity of Richardson's novels directed the thoughts of French writers towards English models.

Collé made some very penetrating observations on the possible effects of Landois' and Lillo's work, in combining to form the nucleus of a new form of tragedy. Like Diderot, he saw it would be a "lesser tragedy"; and he further stipulated that it must be distinct from comedy. The eighteenth century persistently refused to consider tragi-comedy as a legitimate form of drama. The passage in Collé's Mémoires is worth quoting: he describes "une nouvelle espèce de tragédie, ou de comédie héroïque, comme on voudra l'appeller; ce sera toujours une branche de la tragédie; que dans cette tragédie mitoyenne, bourgeoise même, il ne soit point, comme dans les autres, question de grands intérêts... que ce soit, par exemple, une tragédie dans le goût de George Barnevelt, ou de Desfrancs et Silvie. J'admet ce genre, [pourvu que] l'intérêt ne soit pas coupé.... non seulement par aucunes
scènes, mais encore par aucun trait de comique."

Collé's words show how the inevitable pressure of circumstances was working towards a new definition of tragedy; and this process is further illustrated in his criticism of Le Fils Naturel and Le Père de Famille. Collé was not likely to encourage the rise of the tragedy of middle life, however, for the note in his Journal was private, and his official attitude to "drame" was disapproving. It is not by any means certain that he communicated his criticism of Silvie and The London Merchant to Marmontel, or Diderot or one of the other "Philosophes", for he was not really friendly with them. Collé's reference to these plays, and Clément's use of the term "tragédie bourgeoise" on the title-page of his Marchand de Londres make it plain that Diderot had only to take what lay ready to his hand when he gave a name to his experiment in drama, when he outlined its scope, and took Lillo's play as a typical example.

Diderot immediately perceived those qualities in Lillo's work which would extend the province of French tragedy, when he first referred to The Merchant, in 1755. The passage occurs in his article Encyclopédie. He had just asserted that the Encyclopédie should seek out the true causes of various phenomena in the system of knowledge, while bearing

in mind that every living idea had to obey the law of change.

Of literary theories he wrote: "Il faut tout examiner, tout remuer, sans exception et sans ménagement: oser voir, ainsi que nous commençons à nous en convaincre, qu'il en est presque des genres de littérature, ainsi que de la compilation générale des lois, et de la première formation des villes, que c'est à un hasard singulier, à une circonstance bizarre, quelquefois à un essor du génie, qu'ils ont dû leur naissance; que ceux qui sont venus après les premiers inventeurs n'ont été pour la plupart que leurs esclaves, que des productions qu'on devait regarder comme le premier degré, prises aveuglement pour le dernier terme, au lieu d'avancer un art à sa perfection, n'ont servi qu'à le retarder, en réduisant les autres hommes à la condition servile d'imitateurs, qu'aujourd'hui qu'un nom fut donné à une composition d'un caractère particulier, il fallut modeler rigoureusement sur cette esquisse, toutes celles qui se firent; que s'il parut de temps en temps un homme d'un génie hardi et original, qui, fatigué du joug reçu, ose la secouer, s'éloigner de la route commune, et enfantant quelque ouvrage auquel le nom donné et les lois prescrites ne furent pas exactement applicables, il tomba dans l'oubli et y resta très longtemps."

These words explain what Diderot says further on in the same article; and illustrates from his knowledge of Lillo, "Il faut fouler aux pieds toutes ces vieilles puérilités, renverser les barrières que la raison n'aura point posées, rendre aux sciences et aux arts une liberté qui leur est si précieuse, et dire aux admirateurs de l'antiquité 'Appelez le Marchand de Londres comme il vous plaira, pourvu que vous conveniez que cette pièce étincelle de beautés sublimes'."

This line of argument makes it easier to understand why Diderot spent his time in composing the _Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel_ when he went to rest at Le Breton's house in Massy after the storm and stress of bringing out the sixth volume of the Encyclopédie in 1756.

There had evidently been some discussion over the translation of the English play, and Diderot was in full sympathy with a more liberal interpretation of the term 'tragedy'. He was attracted to drama just at this time because he felt the need of a new instrument for spreading his philosophy. He probably elected to use the power of the stage for this purpose because the war with England, the agitation over taxes in Paris, and the universal passion for the theatre all suggested this form of expression as the most suitable, as well as the most popular. Circumstances in his own life, too, were likely to guide his choice in this direction, for drama, whose very essence is the clash of interests or
personalities, harmonized with the important conflicts of
his own career which were just beginning - the quarrel with
Rousseau, the active exchange of pamphlets and satires
between Fréron, Palissot, Moreau, and the "Cacouacs", the
suppression of the Encyclopédie, and the trouble over
D'Alembert's resignation.

Thus Diderot discovered a new field for his abundant
energy; and his influence on the French theatre was of
capital importance, because it was his peculiar gift\(^1\) to
express his thoughts with such warmth, so to stir the feelings
of his hearers, and to give his theories such life and force
that they spread from one to another with profound and far-
reaching results. The criticism of the Entretiens sur le
Fils Naturel in the Correspondance Littéraire, does not raise
the point of Lillo's influence at all; but it grasped the
importance of Diderot's work in crystallizing the new theory
of tragedy, and accurately estimated his power of inspiring
others to put it into practice.

Some of Diderot's friends were not blind to the part

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\(^{(1)}\) Grimm describes this quality of Diderot's conversation
in the Correspondance Littéraire, t.III, for March 1757.
(op.cit.), Marmontel, in the Memoirs, Vol.I, p.249-250,
(éd.Tourneux 1891.) while Morellet, on p.29 of the
Mémoires inédits, (Paris 1823) wrote of Diderot's talk:
"J'ai éprouvé peu de plaisirs au dessus de celui-là; et
je m'en souviendrai toujours, - il prêtait et donnait
mêne de l'esprit aux autres."
Lillo had played in forming his new conception of drama.

Just when Diderot's thoughts on the subject were published, Rousseau praised the Marchand de Londres for the 'true idea of love' it gave to young people, and pointed out that Diderot 'imitated and defended' the English play. Rousseau mentioned the translations by Prévost and Clément, and his remarks allow us to see the connection between Lillo and Diderot, as well as the reasons which gave weight to the statement that Lillo was the real founder of "tragédie bourgeoise", for Rousseau possessed an intimate knowledge of Diderot's ideas at that time, and his Lettre à D'Alembert was read everywhere.

We have already indicated the possible origin of Diderot's familiarity with Landois' Silvie, so we may now pass to a consideration of Diderot's theory.

We find that he was not content to gather up other people's ideas, but that he drew fresh conclusions from the facts at his disposal, and brought new examples to reinforce them.

He gave to the new form of tragedy a title which exactly expressed its scope: "tragédie domestique et bourgeoise". Then, in the spirit of his article Encyclopédie, he adduced the example of The Cramerster, to show that he was no

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(2) p.120, Second Entretien sur le Fils Naturel, t.VII, Oeuvres, ed. Assezat.
narrow-minded follower of tradition. He insisted, however, that he had no mind to break away from that tradition, and that his experiment had already been foreshadowed in France: as he says, in the Second Entretien\textsuperscript{1}, "Il faut espérer que quelque jour un homme de génie sentira l'impossibilité d'atteindre ceux qui l'ont précédé dans une route battue, et se jettera de dépit dans une autre; c'est le seul évènement qui puisse nous affranchir de plusieurs préjugés que la philosophie a vainement attaqués. Ce ne sont plus des raisons, c'est une production qu'il nous faut."

Moi: Nous en avons une.

Dorval: Quelle?

Moi: Sylvie, tragédie en un acte, et en prose.

Dorval: Je la connais, c'est le Jaloux, tragédie."

Further on\textsuperscript{2}, Diderot states: "J'aime qu'on étende le sphère de nos plaisirs. J'accepte les ressources que vous nous offrez, mais laissez-nous encore celles que nous avons."

In the observations published with \textit{Le Père de Famille}, a year later, he elaborated the new division of tragedy. The tense used in Diderot's description: "la tragédie qui aurait pour objet nos malheurs domestiques" shows that he still thought of this mode of composition as an unfinished creation; and his plea that every play should be judged on

\begin{itemize}
\item[(2)] p.151. \textit{Troisième Entretien}, ibid.
\end{itemize}
its own merits and not by comparison, further proves his appreciation of the changes he sought to bring in.

He continually supported his theory with examples drawn from the English domestic plays and novels familiar to him. The prison scene in The Merchant, the story of Clementina in Sir Charles Grandison set the tone of feeling most suitable to the "lesser tragedy". His knowledge of English life suggested the episode dramatised in his sketch of Le Shérif. Diderot translated The Gamester in 1760 and it seemed so natural in feeling to him, that he borrowed its very words to express his love for Sophie Volland. These facts contradict his assertion that Landois was the founder of 'plays of private woe' in France: and like him, Diderot's followers were far more impressed by The Merchant and The Gamester than by Silvie.

There was fierce criticism of Diderot's views, partly because they were new, and partly because he was the Editor of the Encyclopédie. As his friend Suard remarked, Diderot

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(1) p.245, t.I, Lettres de Diderot à Sophie Volland. (ed. Babelon, Paris.1930) No.XLVI, du 18 octobre 1760: "Au reste, mon amie, rappelez-vous le moment où je m'attachai à vous, et songez que s'il pouvait arriver que je vous aimasse et et que je vous respectasse davantage, la misère le feroit. Je vous dirais comme Charlotte à Leuson Je n'aurais pas un toit, j'aurais à peine du pain, que je voudrois coucher à l'air et pâtir à coté de vous."

(2) Palissot alone took up the question of Landois, and thought that Diderot praised him as a colleague in the work of the Encyclopédie, and not on his merits, see.p.138, Palissot, Mémoires Littéraires (1769) ed. Lond. 1771; and p.60 Petites Lettres sur de Grands Philosophes, (Paris 1757.)
seemed ridiculous to some1: "On se riait de l'enthousiasme lumineux de Diderot, de son enthousiasme éloquent, comme des sermons du père la Chaussée."

In 1762 Diderot proposed to publish a collection of domestic tragedies, including his own translation of Moore's play. The work was to be accompanied by the inevitable discourse, which would further establish his theory of drama, and serve as an answer to criticism. The book did not appear, but the "Projet de Préface" in the Assézat edition of Diderot's works gives the substance of his observations on domestic tragedy.

The Preface begins with a new statement of Lendois' position as the first to write plays 'of middle life'. Then the English achievements in a similar style of writing are described as follows:2 "C'est ce genre qui a fait éclorer en Angleterre le Marchand de Londres et le Joueur, en Allemagne Miss Sara Sampson et Clémentine.... Nous avons l'honneur d'avoir fait le premier pas dans ce genre.... Il faut convenir que la hardiesse du génie anglais nous a laissés bien en arrière. Nous trouvons les choses, et tandis que le préjugé, la critique, la sottise, les étouffent chez nous, la raison de l'étranger s'en empare, les suit, et produit des chefs

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(1) p.17, t.II. Gerat, Mémoires sur la Vie de M. Suard. Paris 1820.
(2) pp.424 ff. t.VIII, Oeuvres de Diderot, éd. Assézat. op. cit.
d'oeuvre et des originaux.... Cette petite pièce [Silvie] n'eut aucun succès parce que cet esprit qui s'affranchit des préjugés n'avait pas encore fait les progrès présents."

The latter part of Diderot's discourse repeated the argument that "tragédie bourgeoise" was a new and progressive form of French art, which marked out an untried province for serious drama, without abolishing the heroic style of composition, and without infringing on the rights of comedy. His reply to adverse criticism was to point out that the only effect of such opposition had been the spreading of a belief in the English origin of plays formed on the new plan.

It is plain that Diderot's urgent desire to contradict such a belief made him hail Landois as a pioneer in the field of the lesser tragedy. He must either have been convinced that Silvie had been written before The Merchant, or deliberately set aside the fact of Lillo's priority. It is not Diderot's accuracy that matters here, however, but his effort to change the common opinion about the origin of "tragédie bourgeoise".

Some time before this, Collé had reasoned in exactly the same way on this point: perhaps because he disliked English importations in general. No one else took up the question of Landois' importance seriously, for the critics were absorbed in the discussion of far more interesting
problems which arose out of the matter or the form of plays written in the domestic style by Diderot's followers.

In spite of the claim set forth in the "Projet de Préface", Diderot's imitators persisted in their opinion that tragedy owed its new freedom to England, and to the example of Lillo in particular. Grimm's testimony bears this out. He wrote in 1765\(^1\): "Malgré l'aversion.... pour un genre qui transformerait nos théâtres en lieux de supplice... le Marchand de Londres a toujours conservé de la réputation... et cela me confirme dans l'idée que j'ai depuis longtemps, que les sujets sont égaux, pourvu que l'auteur ait du génie."

Again, Fenou illot de Falbaire, one of the obscure young men whom Diderot befriended, wrote to Hume in 1767\(^2\) telling him that the plays he had written, \textit{L'Honnête Criminal} and \textit{Le Fabricant de Londres}, inspired by Diderot, were to be submitted to English criticism, and that Falbaire hoped for success on the English stage for the very reasons that excluded his plays from the French theatre.

Beaumarchais too, in the "Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux"\(^3\), prefixed to his first play, \textit{Eugénie}, shows that

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(1) Correspondance Littéraire, 1er février 1765, p.187. t.VI. (ed. Tourneux, op.cit.)
Diderot was accepted as the leader of those who were possessed by the "génie curieux, impatient, toujours à l'étroit dans le cercle des connaissances, [qui] ... rompant enfin la barrière des préjugés... s'élance au-delà des bornes communes." Beaumarchais' choice of subject implies the English inspiration of the new freedom, although he does not mention it in so many words.

Grimm rebuked Beaumarchais\(^1\) in the *Correspondance Littérale*; his argument that public opinion was advanced enough to dispense with Beaumarchais' refutation of feeble objections to the "genre sérieux" shows how firmly Diderot's theories had been established in ten years. He showed that he, too, realised the influence of English drama in shaping the "drame" as Sedaine conceived it. "Le génie de Sedaine", he wrote in 1769 "est infiniment analogue à celui du tragique anglais, et si je croyais à la mététempsycose, je dirais que l'âme de Shakespeare est venue habiter le corps de Sedaine"\(^2\).

As Diderot had foreseen, it soon became a commonplace of criticism to say that "tragédie bourgeoise" was written in imitation of English models. Fréron showed this when he concluded his remarks on Saurin's *Beverley* by saying: "Il restera toujours à Monsieur Saurin le mérite d'avoir copié

\(^1\) p.413, t.VII. (sept.1767) *Correspondance Littérale*.

Dorat argued the traditional inferiority of English plays, when he objected to "tragédie bourgeoise" in the preface to his *Deux Reines*; but he shared the general belief in the English origin of this variety of drama, as may be seen from the following observation: "Le théâtre français étoit un Port ouvert à la raison et à la vérité; elles auraient pu y lutter contre la contagion .... mais il donna bientôt accès à ce Tragique hors de nature que nous adoptons, après l'avoir critiqué chez les Anglois."

The younger generation of playwrights who followed Diderot were not content to apply his theories like industrious schoolboys. They looked, like him, to England for further ideas to complete the "enlargement" of tragedy. They found a wider field of English literature open to them, for translations had multiplied, and the curiosity shown in the earlier years of the century about English politics, science, and religious thought, had spread to the fine arts, food and dress.

Young and Shakespeare, through translations, exerted a certain influence over the development of the new tragedy in France at this time.

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There is evidence of Young's influence on "tragédie bourgeoise" in the work of Baculard d'Arnaud, and in Mercier's *Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique*. Baculard was evidently affected by Young's *Night Thoughts*, while Mercier had taken some ideas from the *Conjectures on Original Composition* for his *Nouvel Essai*.

The first complete translation of the *Night Thoughts* appeared in 1769. It was the work of Le Tourneur; and its popularity did a great deal to ensure the ultimate success of Baculard d'Arnaud's plays, *Le Comte de Comminge* and *Euphémie*, since they made use of a new pity and terror, which Baculard saw in Young's poems, to appeal to the audience.

Baculard had evidently come to know of the *Night Thoughts* some time before Le Tourneur's translation was published, for he made several references to this work in the 1765 preface of the *Comte de Comminge*. He might have used Bissy's translation\(^1\), or have known Young's poems through his acquaintance with Le Tourneur\(^2\): but the variety of his references to English literature in the three Discours Préliminaires to the *Comte de Comminge*\(^3\), and the casual introduction of an English phrase

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(1) for the early versions by the Comte de Bissy etc., see Baldensperger, Young et ses Nuits en France. (*Études d'Histoire Littéraire*, Paris 1907).
(2) see p.xi-xij, Préface d'Euphémie, Yverdon 1768.
(3) v. the three Discours Préliminaires, *Le Comte de Comminge, ou les Amants*. Malheureux, ed. Paris 1768. (First published 1765.)
into the Preface to Euphémie, point to the conclusion that he probably read the Night Thoughts in English.

The Nuits revealed to French poets the lyric beauty of death, nature and grief, which they had forgotten for a while. Le Tourneur's translation retained some of his original's strength, and the engravings which illustrated it perpetuated the attractive legend of the ill-used poet, forced to bury his daughter with his own hands, at midnight, and in secret. For these reasons, it proved acceptable to everyone, and it helped on the success of Baculard's attempt to bring religious conflict into "tragédie bourgeoise"1.

Baculard called his version of the new tragedy "le drame sombre". The qualification "sombre" took part of its meaning from Young, and part from English novels like Walpole's Castle of Otranto. Baculard was certain to know these 'novels of terror', because his early novels (in the Richardsonian manner) would awaken his interest in the later type, which came over to France round about 17652. These circumstances all combined to make him create yet another

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(1) V. Mercier, Préface de Jenneval, p.10, t.I, Théâtre Complet, ed. Amst. 1778 etc.
(2) e.g. La Destinée, ou Mémoires de Lord Kilmarnoff, by Miss Woodward. (1766) translated by M. Daville, is described in L'Année Littéraire as "appartenant au genre lugubre". For further examples, see P. Van Tieghem, L'Année Littéraire comme Intermédiaire en France des Littératures Étrangères, table analytique. (ed. Paris 1917.)
variant of domestic tragedy, rather than to make him follow Voltaire in heroic tragedy.

It was Young's work which caused this project to take shape in Baculard's mind, although he quoted other English writers as masters of this style; and he intended his references to foreign precedent to serve in the future enlargement of tragedy.

Audiences enjoyed the "horror" of his later plays, but Baculard's theory found no favour with the critics. He was too orthodox in religion for the Encyclopaedists, and too unorthodox in tragedy for the supporters of seventeenth century traditions.

The idea that Young and the novel of terror were responsible for the general gloom that descended upon French tragedy with Baculard's plays was widespread. La Harpe's reference to "les bâtards d'Young" in 1775, or Cubières' epithet, describing the writers of "drame" as "disciples d'Young", about the same time, may be taken as typical examples.

(1) Préface d'Euphémie, op.cit. p.xii: "c'est dans l'horreur des tombeaux qu'Young a médité ses Nuits, chef d'oeuvre du genre sombre".
(2) p.vij Premier Discours en tête du Comte de Comminge, op.cit: "Je ne rapporte ces exemples empruntés de la littérature étrangère que pour exciter nos écrivains à étendre une carrière qui n'est déjà que trop limitée par notre goût".
Le Tourneur had not only drawn attention to Young the poet, but to Young the critic. In order to explain the strange poetic quality of the *Night Thoughts* to French readers, he translated a portion of Young’s *Conjectures on Original Composition* in the preface to his *Nuits*. In order to make it more attractive, he wrote enthusiastically of Young’s brilliant and daring critical theories, and pointed out that they had been written by a man in extreme old age. He emphasised Young’s revolt against authority and the "ancients", and gave a full translation of Young’s development of the principles which he regarded as the foundation of original work, expressed in the commands "Know thyself" and "Reverence thyself". The opening sentence of Le Tourneur’s preface challenged attention immediately; "Nous naissions tous originaux, comment donc arrive-t-il que nous mourrons tous copies?" As *Les Nuits d’Young* was widely read, the Preface must also have been well-known.

It was therefore not at all surprising that Mercier should speak with admiration of the *Conjectures* in the

(Footnote continued from previous page)
and further; pp.324 ff., no.VII, Vol.I. *Journal des Théâtres*, 1777; "C’est que depuis que nos jolies Femmes ont dévoré dans leurs Boudoirs les Nuits d’Young et les Romans de M. Arnaud, nous ne regardons plus tous les charmes de la mythologie que comme un jeu d’enfants."
(2) p.xxvij ibid. (the Preface was not altered in the second edition). The wording of this sentence may be compared with the famous opening phrases of Rousseau’s *Le Contrat Social*. 


Nouvel Essai of 1773; for Le Tourneur had followed up the work of 1769 with a second edition in 1770, and with a full translation of the Conjectures, included in the Oeuvres Diverses d'Young, also published in 1770.

Mercier and Le Tourneur were friendly for twenty-two years\(^1\), and apart from his admiration for Le Tourneur, which made Mercier compare him to his favourite writer, La Fontaine, the Conjectures on Original Composition were certain to attract Mercier, who was always ready to attack the traditional beliefs of contemporary critics.

In the Nouvel Essai\(^2\), Mercier praised the work of Diderot and Marmontel, whom he saw as reformers of tragedy. He advised young men to read "ces deux Poétiques modernes préférament à toute autre, en y joignant surtout l'Epître sur la Composition Originale de Young, vrai poétique du genre, comme celle qui découvre un plus grand ordre de choses, qui nourrit le plus l'audace de l'écrivain, généralise ses idées, agrandit son art, lui fait secouer l'habitude, et mépriser les cris imbécilles des critiques ineptes."

He embodied Young's exposition of his two principles, "Know thyself"\(^3\) and "Reverence thyself"\(^4\), in the Essai: took

\(^{1}\) see p.299 Note a, Nouvel Essai sur l'Art Dramatique, op.cit. for evidence that Mercier had read the Nuits in Le Tourneur's version.

\(^{2}\) see further, M.G. Cushing, Pierre Le Tourneur, Paris, 1908.


\(^{4}\) cf. Young, ibid, p.32, and Mercier, ibid, p.323.
up with delight the theme that "copies surpass not their originals"\(^1\), and showed that he had understood Young's work as a force in the 'enlargement' of tragedy whose influence might favourably affect the growth of Diderot's new creation in French drama.

Young's panegyric on Shakespeare no doubt helped Mercier to see in him the liberator; and the Nouvel Essai makes it obvious that Young confirmed Mercier's tendency to revolt against the accepted forms of tragedy. Contrary to Diderot's tolerant attitude towards the older tragedy and comedy, Mercier clamoured for the creation of a "drame national" that would hold the stage alone. Had he known nothing of Young's praise of originality and defiance of tradition there might have been less boldness in Mercier's theory of a "national" drama, expressly designed to convey his own ideas on social reform.

Mercier formed a revolutionary conception of serious dramatic composition from Le Tourneur's translation of Young, and supplemented it from the same writer's work on Shakespeare, and from some acquaintance with Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare. The last-named work appeared twice, first of all in the Gazette Littéraire, in 1765, and then, in a reprint by Suard, published under the title of Variétés Littéraires in 1778. (ed. Yverdon).

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\(^1\) Cf. Young, ibid., pp. 11-12, and p. 33, with Mercier, ibid. p. 320, 325, and with p. 90, and pp. 93 and 115 (note) in his De La Littérature et des Littérateurs of 1778. (ed. Yverdon).
1769\(^1\), and this gave Mercier a double opportunity of becoming acquainted with Johnson's ideas.

Mercier's first play, *Jenneval*, had tried to imitate English models\(^2\); this tendency had become stronger in the years between 1769 and 1773, when the *Nouvel Essai* appeared, as proved by the wider knowledge of English poetry and drama which he showed in the later work, and it provided him with the material for working out his new definition of "drame".

There are certain ideas in Johnson's *Preface* which seemed to help Mercier to see in Shakespeare a model for his "national" plays. It is paradoxical that Johnson, who accepted in the main the standards of classic tradition, and saw in Shakespeare a genius that transcended the limitations of "rules", should have inspired Mercier's revolutionary attitude towards the canons of French criticism. Johnson's work was not alone responsible for Mercier's iconoclastic ideas: it was rather the peculiar temper of the French writer's mind which predisposed him to see nothing but the unconventional qualities in Shakespeare, in spite of Johnson's classic, authoritative, and carefully balanced judgments in the *Preface*\(^3\).


\(^{(2)}\) v. *Préface de Jenneval*, p.3 ff, t.I, *Théâtre de Mercier* (Amst. 1778 etc.) The play was first published in 1769.

\(^{(3)}\) Mercier's reputation in France was definitely that of a revolutionary; he was represented in caricatures of the time as "L'Ane comme il n'y en a point", or "L'Érostrate moderne écrivant sur les Arts" - (as a blindfolded figure seated on a stool, labelled "Trésor des Iconoclastes").

(Footnote continued on next page)
The close resemblance between the arguments in the English critic's work, and certain passages in Mercier's *Essai* makes it impossible to doubt that some contact between the two writers had been established. It is exceedingly difficult to estimate just what Mercier borrowed from Johnson, and to decide whether he knew the *Preface* in the original or in the translation published by Suard, but this second point is unimportant, since Mercier used his knowledge of Shakespeare to justify views he already held, rather than to suggest new ones.

Johnson had shown that Shakespeare's genius was free and natural, and that the rules of "imperial" tragedy could not be applied to his work; 'low life' might enter into heroic drama, and the unities be neglected. The *Preface* defended Shakespeare's breach of the conventions by pointing out that his plays were a true, useful, and sincere representation of life.

Mercier neglected everything in Johnson's observations that indicated acceptance of the traditional standards of criticism. This appears very clearly in his description of

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see Vol.I, p.48, and Vol.II, p.176, *Le Preromantisme*, by A. Monglond, for reproductions of these caricatures from the *Collection Cabinet des Estampes*. (Grenoble 1931.)

(1) see below Part III, Chapter IX.

(2) compare the Prefaces to Jenneval and Molière with the passages in the *Nouvel Essai* to which reference is made: see also below, Part III, Chapter IX, for evidence on the contact between Johnson and Mercier.
"true tragedy". He praised the freedom of English drama from rules and restrictions, and he read into Johnson's account of Shakespeare's plays a desire to appeal to every citizen in the State, even to the extent of borrowing the language of the crowd: his concluding exclamation was: "Voilà Shakespeare, voilà le Poète".

Then he used the example of the English playwright to defend his idea of a new kind of drama, which was to be distinguished from tragedy and comedy, and might supersede them.

The most obvious ground for the statement that Mercier took his ideas from Johnson is the appeal to Shakespeare's authority in justifying a departure from the rule of the "unities"; but the general trend of the references in the Nouvel Essai points to the conclusion that Mercier borrowed the idea of a "national" drama from the same source.

Thus, through Mercier, Shakespeare and Johnson contributed to French criticism certain new values: in consequence, serious plays entered into possession of a still wider field, and tried to appeal to the multitude, while the defiance of long established conventions in tragic writing was encouraged.

(1) pp. 207-8, Nouvel Essai, op. cit.
(2) p. 39, p. 97 (note a), p. 188, p. 256, p. 280 ibid.
The Nouvel Essai seems to be the only work which shows the influence of Shakespeare on "tragédie bourgeoise". Usually, the English dramatist's work was discussed in connection with heroic tragedy; and it was during the famous quarrel over "Pierrot-Letourneur" and "Gilles-Shakespeare", that Mercier's arguments were taken up by La Harpe. In 1778, La Harpe put the responsibility for "drame bourgeois" to Shakespeare's credit. This opinion was due to his position as Voltaire's follower in the attack on Shakespeare, and it has a certain interest because it recognized Mercier's originality as worthy of comment. La Harpe brought it out in the Preface to his Barneveldt in 1778 as follows:

"Le Nouvel Essai] n'est pas pourtant fort connu, ni, par conséquent, fort contagieux. Mais comme il est le premier fondement du nouveau système dramatique que les traducteurs et les enthousiastes, vrais ou faux, de Shakespeare, ont cherché depuis peu à élever sur les ruines de notre théâtre.... il n'est pas inutile de faire connaître... les règles de leur poétique."

While Baculard and Mercier had been modifying the original conception of "tragédie bourgeoise" with new elements borrowed from Young and Shakespeare, the older members of the

(1) pp.20-21, Préface de Barneveldt, La Harpe, Oeuvres, tome II, (éd. Paris 1820). In this preface he seems to be making the best of both worlds, in heroic and domestic tragedy.
"philosophic" group had become less enterprising and less inclined to be enthusiastic about English ideas. As early as 1765, d'Holbach's journey to England had imbued him with distinctly unfavourable ideas of the manners, politics, food and even the literature of that country, and Diderot reflected this mood about the same time. Grimm wrote quite bitterly, in 1774, "Avec tout l'esprit dont nous nous piquons en France, nous ne cessons d'user de celui de nos voisins. Nous sommes trop légers, trop frivoles: je ne crois pas, à l'exception de la toilette et des lettres de cachet, que nous ayons rien inventé. Le goût de la philosophie, qui nous a rendu la littérature des Anglais si familière et si précieuse nous a donné aussi tout naturellement l'idée de nous approprier les beautés originales qui distinguent leurs ouvrages dramatiques, mais je ne crois pas jusqu'à présent que ce dernier essai nous ait trop bien réussi, soit par la faute de ceux qui s'en sont mêlés, soit par le peu de rapport qu'il y a entre les convenances de ce théâtre et celles du nôtre." A few years later, Sherlock's Lettres d'un Voyageur Anglais mentioned a too-sedulous aping of English manners as the only fault of the French nation, in one of the author's conversations with Voltaire.

(2) p.502 t.X (oct.1774) Correspondance Littéraire, op.cit.
(3) p.146, Lettre XXIV. (Voltaire et Sherlock) Lettres d'un Voyageur Anglais. Martin Sherlock, Londres 1779.
This change of spirit in the leaders of reform in drama could no longer affect the course of the new tragedy. It was at the height of popular favour during the years that followed the famous revival of the Père de Famille in 1769; and the great quarrel over Shakespeare showed how persistent was the dissatisfaction with heroic tragedy, and how Voltaire feared the effects of Shakespeare's influence on tragedy.

The popular success of "drame" was due to the factors that Mercier described as follows: "L'exemple de nos voisins plus rapproché de nous, la lecture des voyages nouveaux, les Gazettes multipliées.... le mélange de tous les peuples de l'Europe, tout nous a appris que.... tel caractère bizarre qui nous frappoit s'est trouvé vulgaire chez nos voisins, et conséquemment justifié par leur conduite." Domestic tragedy no longer seemed strange, after a greater familiarity with English letters.

Although 'drame' was a success, the critics on either side were not tired of discussing it: and everyone referred to the English origin of the reform. Mercier, who was always ready with a paradox, defended the English ideas in this type of play against the 'admirers of Antiquity' with the words: "Il y a cinquante ou soixante années que les Anglois nous ont devancés presque en tout genre, et nous

(1) pp.137-139, 145 Nouvel examen de la Tragédie Française, Yverdon, 1778.
sommes à leur égard ce qu'au nôtre sont aujourd'hui les autres peuples.  

The latest stage in the development of "drame bourgeois" was marked by the appearance of Cubières-Palmezeaux' parody, *La Manie des Drames Sombres*; and by the tone of certain comments in *Le Nouveau Spectateur, ou Journal des Théâtres.*

Cubières' play was based on the English origin of 'the tragedy of middle life', and although it was not successful, it is a very useful indication that the foreign element in "drame bourgeois" had captured the public attention.

*Le Journal des Théâtres* was founded by Fuel de Méricourt in 1776, and it consistently represented Beverley, *Le Fabricant de Londres* and other plays of the same type as "too atrocious even for the English"; while it censured Molé for acting too powerfully in Beverley, as such a vivid representation of this gloomy character might turn the French nation into a people as morose and phlegmatic as the English.

It seemed almost inevitable to ascribe anything new and strange in drama to England. The larger issues raised by Diderot were forgotten; "drame bourgeois" was firmly installed in popular favour, and it fell into the state where

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(1) Note a., pp.1 and 2, ibid.
(2) *La Manie des Drames Sombres,* Cubières de Palmezeaux, written in 1776, enlarged edition Paris 1777; see the Preface, and Acte I, sc.iii., sc.vi, Acte II, sc.iii.
it lost its facility for assimilating new ideas, and could expand no further.

Cubières de Palmezeaux, however, had not realised this fact even in 1784. In his Théâtre Moral, he confessed the error of his satire in La Manie des drames sombres, and his obligation to Diderot and Marmontel, who had shown him a long view of the theatre, and given him fresh standards of criticism: "J'étais jeune quand je fis le Dramaturge; mes idées avec le temps se sont éclairées et rectifiées; je me suis rapproché de l'horizon que je croyois fermer la voûte céleste, j'imaginois pouvoir toucher le ciel avec la main, et j'ai vu que le ciel n'avait point de bornes." Cubières' words were the last expression of the belief that "drame" might go on developing new characteristics.

When he published the Théâtre Moral, the general attention was being more and more absorbed in politics, while literature was neglected. This was reflected in the fashionable affectation of English dress, and the adoption of English political ideas in France. The Journal de Paris in 1785 indicated this change by the order of the words in the following enumeration of modes imported from England: "des jokes, des wiskis, des Riding-coats, des clubs, de la métaphysique, et des drames noirs". It is easy to pick

(2) quoted by Suard, p.336, t.III, Mélanges de Littérature, (ed. Paris 1806.)
out the newest of these, for they had not yet found a French name. Marmontel described the new movement of thought more eloquently: "Le voisinage des Anglais, l'usage plus fréquent de voyager dans le pays, l'étude de leur langue, la vogue de leurs livres, la lecture assidue de leurs papiers publics, l'avid curiosité de ce qui s'est dit et passé dans leur parlement, .... enfin, jusqu'à l'affectation de se donner leurs goûts, leurs modes, leurs manières, tout annonçait une disposition prochaine à s'assimiler avec eux, et véritablement, ce spectacle de liberté publique et de sûreté personnelle, ce noble et digne usage du droit de propriété dans l'acceptation volontaire, et dans l'équitable répartition de l'impôt nécessaire aux besoins de l'État, avait droit d'exciter en nous des mouvemens d'émulation." Here Marmontel describes the state of affairs in 1789; after that, the Revolution banished all interest in literature for a time.

In conclusion, the evidence that has been examined makes it clear that Lillo's Merchant, reinforced by Moore's Gamester were of capital importance in Diderot's creation of the French 'plays of private woe'.

Circumstances had prepared Diderot's mind to receive ideas from English domestic tragedy, when he began to set out his theory of a similar type of play for the French stage.

(1) p.38, t.IV, Mémoires, Marmontel. (ed. Paris 1804.)
His philosophic thought had adopted "Élargissons Dieu" as a device: and from his early acquaintance with science and moral doctrine, as exposed in English works, he contracted a habit of scientific reasoning, and grew to mistrust the decrees of authoritative opinion. Thus, when he realised that Lillo's work was an experiment in drama, which defied tradition, it evoked his sympathetic consideration, and he accepted it as a model for his own similar innovation.

A comparison of Lillo's Prologue and Dedication to the Merchant, and Diderot's critical writings on the subject of "tragédie bourgeoise" shows how close was the parallel between these new varieties of drama that came into popular favour in England and France. It is not possible to affirm that the English plays were the sole inspiration of the French "drame bourgeois", but it is clear that their example supplied the effective power to break through the barriers of convention which lay in Diderot's way.

The article written by Diderot in 1755, under the title Encyclopédie, with the Entretiens and the Projet de Préface of his later years, prove this most convincingly, in spite of Diderot's argument that Landois was the first to write domestic tragedy in any country.

There is further support for the idea that English literature supplied France with examples which most aptly illustrated Diderot's theory, in the fact that nearly every
critic of the time noted the connection between his experiment in drama and the work of English writers. It followed as a natural consequence that later playwrights like Baculard and Mercier, should turn to England for help in broadening the scope of the "lesser tragedy". Although these men made some interesting changes in the theory of "tragédie bourgeoise", as a result of their contact with Young and Shakespeare, yet they brought to it nothing of vital importance. They afford valuable illustrations of Diderot's genius for inspiring others with his own notions, and of the peculiar appeal which the imitation of English models possessed.

This conclusion must of necessity ignore much of the delicate play of influences between writers in France and in England. It is useful to remember Suard's words\(^1\) as a corrective: "Ainsi, dans tous les genres, les conceptions de l'esprit anglais et de l'esprit français se suivent presque en se touchant; elles s'entraident par leurs analogies dont la ressemblance va souvent jusqu'à l'identité, ... et par leurs diversités, qui rendent les sillons de lumière plus larges, par leurs contrastes même, qui, en étonnant l'esprit, fixent l'attention et la fortifient."

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\(^1\) p.49, Vol.II, Mémoires sur la vie de Suard. D.J.Garat. (Paris 1820.)
Chapter III.

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH IDEAS ON THE MORAL AIM AND THE APPEAL TO SENTIMENT IN "Drame Bourgeois".

This experiment in drama, which Diderot initiated towards the mid-century, not only endeavoured to "enlarge the graver kind of poetry", but also attempted to unite an appeal to the feelings of the audience with the definite aim of promoting virtuous action.

Early in the eighteenth century, there had been a gradual drift of thought towards the opinion that right action did not necessarily depend upon right belief in the religious sense. Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and the other English Deists had strengthened the influence of Bayle in spreading this view.

Once the close connection between the doctrines of the Church and the laws of morality had been severed it became possible to imagine other ways of propagating ideas on moral reform. Circumstances combined to suggest the stage as a suitable instrument for this purpose, and the drama in France assumed a new duty.
The rise of "comédie larmoyante" had proved that certain themes most effectively induced good living, by moving the spectators to tears. Meanwhile, writers such as Prévost, Nivelle de la Chaussée and Voltaire had pointed out English comedy and Richardson's novels as a source of inspiration for plays of this kind.

Further, ever since Bossuet's attack on the theatre in France, the publication of Collier's pamphlet in England, and Fénélon's Lettre à l'Académie, playwrights had done their utmost to prove that the spectacle of majesty fallen, the perils of great place, and the sorrows of princes might be a guide to right living, and that comedy might do much to correct vice by ridicule.

The more progressive writers of the time, however, did not consider the traditional forms of comedy and tragedy or even the later "comédie larmoyante" as suitable vehicles for the lessons they had to impart, because they did not touch the sympathies of the audience in quite the right way. Diderot was guided by the example of La Chaussée's plays, and by his own interest in philosophical thought (as appears from his early translations of Shaftesbury) when he sought to lay down the principles of a new, moral, sentimental, serious, and natural variety of drama.

Both these forces disposed him to turn to England for new ideas that would help him to create the type of play he
wanted, for they both pointed to English writing as a treasure-
house of examples and doctrines fit for his purpose. As a
result, he elaborated the theory of domestic plays.

Three English writers gave Diderot material aid in this
work, and their influence imparted a bias to "drame bourgeois"
which it never lost. They were; Shaftesbury, who had shown
the connection between morals and sentiment in philosophy,
Lillo, who re-stated it in drama, and Richardson, who found
in it the creative principle of his novels.

This chapter has to deal first with those aspects of
these three writers' work which affected Diderot's theory. At
the same time we must discover the links which brought them
into contact with his work; and give some explanation for his
choice of those particular ideas. The difference between the
French and the English view of the relationship of feeling to
right action must be brought out. Then the evidence of
Diderot's use of thoughts from Shaftesbury, Lillo, or Richard-
son, is to be examined, and, after that, the discussion over
the newly-established "drame bourgeois", since it throws
light on their effect upon later dramatists. This argument
also brings out some references to fresh examples drawn from
English precedent, and illustrates the change from Diderot's
early attitude of optimistic belief in the efficacy of the
stage as an agent of reform in society, to the more cynical
view which he and some of his followers held later in the
century. It should then be possible to estimate the effect of English ideas on the sentimental appeal and the moral aim of the new type of play in France.

Shaftesbury was the first of the English writers just mentioned to be known across the Channel. Early in the century, translations of the Characteristics came from Holland, while the interpretation of his thought in Pope's poetry, and in Bolingbroke's writing and conversation, increased his prestige.

In 1745, Diderot published a translation of the Essay Concerning Merit and Virtue. Another version had been published that same year, but Diderot's work was the more popular. He claimed that it was a re-statement, rather than a translation, of Shaftesbury's Essay, but it really followed the original text quite closely. Shaftesbury's doctrines coincided with Diderot's own idea of the social and moral reform that he wished to accomplish through his dramas. The results of this contact between the English thinker and his French interpreter were to be seen when Diderot began to write his dramatic criticism, more than ten years later, although by that time he had passed from the Deist phase of philosophical speculation to a system of ideas dependent upon sensation. Thus, Diderot's early work was the link between Shaftesbury's thought and French drama. His chief borrowings
from the Essay were a definition of virtue, and the doctrine of the "moral sense".

Virtue, according to Shaftesbury, is social; it is attained when each man has found his appointed place in the great system of nature; happiness depends on this good order. The unhappy man is that unsocial being who cannot see that his personal interest is closely linked with that of society. The beneficent Ruler of the universe has endowed man with an innate sense of what is just and what is unjust: if this "moral sense" is not hampered by superstition, right action is inevitable. The impulse to live virtuously is natural, but it is greatly helped by the knowledge that happiness depends upon fitting into the scheme of nature, and still more by the power of "enthusiasm", which is the driving force of virtue, a passion for the true and beautiful, most natural to man, which controls his acts, unless there is some disease in the soul, or some wrong belief, to pervert its influence to evil ends.

After Shaftesbury, Lillo's work came to Diderot's knowledge, and suggested to him that, as Johnson put it, "the passions rise higher at domestic than imperial tragedy". Thus Diderot came to see that "domestic" tragedy would be a better means of impressing his moral doctrine on the public than either the heroic tragedy, or the less serious form of sentimental drama, which already existed in France.
This was in fact Lillo's purpose in writing the London Merchant, and although Diderot probably knew nothing of the prologue and dedication in which Lillo declared his intention of showing the consequences of evil doing, and of imparting a lesson that would 'do the greatest good to the greatest number of persons' by touching their hearts, the text of Lillo's play was enough to make the author's aim perfectly clear to the French writer.

Lillo defined virtue in a way that did not agree with Diderot's idea of it. He was a religious man, of the Dissenting persuasion; and like most of the middle-class writers in England, he held a realistic view of the aims of literature. For this reason, he made use of his 'tales of private woe' to show the remorse that must follow any breach of the code of Christian morality, to inspire a wholesome fear of the punishment meted out by society for such errors, and to teach his audience the right way to act when faced by some common temptation of everyday life. Lillo had a firm belief in the power of the emotion aroused by tragedies of this kind to do the work of religious admonition.

There were several earlier dramatists in England who had professed similar aims in their writings\(^1\): Lillo was

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(1) The first of these writers was the unknown author of the Rival Brothers, whose work is described on p.81 of H.W.Singer's Das bürgerliche Trauerspiel in England (Leipzig 1892). This play drew attention to the strong emotional appeal of "domestic" tales in the tragic manner: it was the story of the Orphan, in a bourgeois setting. In 1721, Aaron Hill's Fatal Extravagance was written to

(Footnote continued on next page)
better-known and more successful because he had worked out a complete theory of touching moral drama, and had been more fortunate in his choice of subject: it was the striking qualities of the story told in *The Merchant* which made the play so popular in England and in France. There is a passage in a letter written by Aaron Hill which very aptly describes just those features in English domestic tragedies which Diderot considered suitable for imitation in his own work.

"It might be possible", said the English writer, "to surprise... the noble and most powerful part of the audience... into correction. I considered that the passions, being the springs of the heart, when they are powerfully struck at by the writer, and as strongly represented by the actor... ought to force their way over the will, and... appropriate the influence of the stage to the source of wisdom and virtue."

(Footnote continued from previous page)
prove that dramatists could act as unofficial ministers of religion, and that the moral aim was the chief end of tragedy: this was expressly stated in the introduction and preface of the first edition, in 1721; and Lillo must have known the work, as it was very successful on the stage, as well as the author, since Hill was friendly with Richardson, just as he himself was.

(1) see Vol.III, Drury Lane, June 22, 1731 Some Account of the English Stage, by Genest, (Lond. 1852) for a story of an apprentice to a capital merchant, who committed theft, and was so struck by the performance of *The London Merchant*, that he confessed his error, and mended his ways, and lived to become an eminent merchant himself.

Lillo's play was an outstanding example of this use of drama to promote right living, and this was why Diderot chose it as a model when he came to think out the principles of "drame bourgeois", since he had the same purpose in mind.

French writers before Diderot had discovered this quality of 'striking at the passions' in Lillo's play, and they had also realised that the writer had a moral end in view.

Prévost, who first introduced the London Merchant to French readers, described its profound effect on the spectators:- "a deep silence, so sad, that to imagine it, you must feel the emotion which produced it". Clément introduced his translation of the play in 1748 by saying that it was "meant for those who knew the pleasure of shedding tears; its moral was not for vain, frivolous, unfeeling debauchees". When he described the success of this translation, in the Cinq Années Littéraires, he pointed out the prison scene as making the strongest appeal to feeling, in terms that reveal the self-consciousness of the sentiment which was so fashionable at the time: "C'est effectivement un des morceaux les plus forts et les plus touchants que je connaisse... cet affreux cachot, lugubrement éclairé par cette lampe sépulcrale, ces pierres, ces chaînes, ces deux amis désespérés qui se jettent

(1) Nombre XLVI, Vol.IV, Le Pour et Contre, (op.cit.) 1734.
par terre, l'un après l'autre, qui s'embrassent, qui se
serrent, qui savourent leur douleur, qui s'abysment
délicieusement dans la plus profonde et la plus amère
tristesse." Diderot was eminently qualified by temperament
to feel the force of "délicieusement" applied to that
situation, and the power of such scenes to point a moral.

The Mercure de France criticized Clément's translation
from a very similar standpoint\(^1\): "Le principal devoir d'un
Auteur Tragique est de remuer. C'est ce qu'à Londres on
lui demande avant toutes choses. Pourvu qu'il remplisse
cet objet, on lui passe des fautes qui ne seroient pas
tolérées ici .... Nous nous contenterions de remarquer que
l'ouvrage de M. Lillo est de nature à produire un grand effet
sur toutes les personnes sensibles, de quelque condition, et
de quelque nation qu'elles soient.... à Paris, à Madrid,
à Rome, à Ispahan, à Pékin, comme à Londres, le malheur d'un
jeune homme né pour suivre les conseils de la vertu, et
qu'un fatal amour entraine malgré lui dans les crimes les
plus déshonorants et les plus atroces, sera une leçon
effrayante. Partout, on sera vivement touché du repentir
sincère de cet infortuné, et des larmes qu'un maître généreux,
un ami tendre, et une fille adorable donnent à son sort
funeste." Here is valuable evidence of the contrast between
Lillo's practical moral lesson, and the abstract principle

\(^1\) pp.137-138, Le Mercure de France, novembre 1748.
(Nouvelles littéraires.)
which French writers were inclined to deduce from George Barnwell's story.

There is still the influence of Richardson's novels to be considered. These works showed the power of sentiment to induce right action even more vividly than Lillo's Merchant had done, and French writers, as well as English critics, were fully aware of this quality, in Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa especially, before Diderot wrote the Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel and his other treatises on drama, so that his mind was prepared to receive all that Richardson could teach him on this subject.

The minute study of the details of character, and the most exact particulars of feeling and action gave the semblance of truth to Richardson's writing. As he had chosen the narrative form of expression, he was free to command ample time and space, and to use every possible device to wring his readers' hearts, and instruct them in their duty. Further, the stories of injured innocence in Pamela and in Clarissa were read at leisure, and thus exercised an influence more widespread and lasting than that of The Merchant, hampered by the necessary limitations of drama, or of Shaftesbury's writings, which appealed to philosophers rather than to ordinary men.

Richardson's work enjoyed the same advantages when it was translated into French: Prévost brought out a version of Pamela
in 1742\(^1\), and translated Clarissa before 1757, when Diderot published the Entretiens. These two novels played a more important part than Grandison in preparing the way for Diderot's use of "sad, true tales" to spread abroad his philosophy of right behaviour. Pamela and Clarissa were able to accomplish this because they expounded a similar theory that right feeling led to good living, and because the character and actions of Richardson's heroines illustrated it with the gripping force of drama.

The moving power of these novels may be seen from a picturesque account given by Aaron Hill of his reading Clarissa. It corresponds very nearly with Diderot's well-known opinion in the Éloge de Richardson: "O mes amis, Paméla, Clarisse et Grandisson sont trois grands drames". Hill's words in the letter to Richardson\(^2\) show the similarity between Richardson's art and domestic drama: "You move through every not to be described enchantment of this amiably killing progress, more forcibly than all the Tragedies of all the world, from Athens down to Otway. I buried the dear, dear Girl by three o'clock this morning, and now I can scarcely see the pen wherewith I tell you that you put my eyes out...... How I do long that you would turn your inimitable flow of life into the scenic channel,

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(1) see F.H. Wilcox, Prévost's translations of Richardson's Novels; California University Publications, 1927.
and do everlasting honour to your country by some triumph of the stage that would teach century after century to weep diversion into virtue."

Besides this inherent dramatic force, and the example of Richardson's skill in the use of sentiment to teach certain ethical values, there is definite evidence in Pamela to show that the author admired nothing in drama unless it had some 'improving' purpose. As the translation of Pamela was unusually faithful to the original, these opinions on drama which were put into Pamela's mouth did not fail to impress French readers of the book.

Pamela, married to Lord B***, visited London and was taken to the play. She saw Ambrose Phillips' version of Andromaque, his Distressed Mother; and instead of obeying Steele's admonition in the prologue 'to attend in silence, and applaud with tears', Pamela disapproved of Racine's treatment of love: "I should have been more pleased had not the softest passion in nature been treated as such a flaming Thing as cannot be a worthy example to female minds." She could not sympathise with Hermione because she was not a picture of injured innocence; and she roundly condemned the practice

(1) The question of Prévost's authorship is not important in this connection. A comparison of the English Pamela and the translation of 1742 shows that very few changes were made in the French text. A study of this version is made in F.H. Wilcox's essay, cited above.
(2) Letters LIII, LIV, Vol. IV, Pamela or Virtue Rewarded, ed. Lond. 1902.
of reciting Epilogues - it seemed as if the writer "feared the audience should go away improved by the representation".

Pamela had something to say on comedy, also. Even Steele's Tender Husband "forgot the moral all the way". The psychologist in Richardson was offended by Mrs Clerimont's "instant conversion". Steele's humour was "ridiculous" to Pamela: the only "innocent suffering" character she saw in the play was that of Humphrey.

These opinions are important, not for their value as judgments on those plays, but because they point to those qualities that made Richardson a master in moral, sentimental writing. He had lost the humour and urbanity of the first generation of middle-class writers like Steele; but it must be acknowledged that he had the power which arises from great sincerity of purpose, and the consciousness of the struggle between good and evil in human nature.

Richardson was recognized as a great moral writer by the translator of Pamela, and in the French version of the novel, nothing important in the account of the triumph of Christian precepts over the passions was lost. Richardson's art, which lay in suggesting the extreme significance of everyday occurrences as steps towards everlasting felicity or eternal damnation, was accurately represented in the French Pamela.

This moral teaching, however, just as in the case of Lillo's Merchant, was praised and neglected, because the beliefs that inspired it were Puritan in sympathy, and it would therefore be dangerous or distasteful to writers who might attempt to reproduce it in France.

It is thus evident that there lay, ready to Diderot's hand, congenial ideas gleaned from Shaftesbury's philosophy, from a type of drama, exemplified by Lillo's Merchant, which was peculiarly fitted to convey a moral doctrine of some kind, and from the inspiration of Richardson's mastery in the art of using sentiment to make his lessons in right living appeal to the public.

Diderot's own work, and the translations by Prévost or Clément had made Shaftesbury, Lillo and Richardson familiar to the French public; and when Diderot turned to the elaboration of his dramatic theory, he had every facility for recognizing the importance of these writers as guides in his endeavour.

Diderot took advantage of the general disregard shown to the Christian morality taught in the works of Lillo and Richardson to substitute for it his own "philosophic" morality, which included some of Shaftesbury's ideas on virtue and the "moral sense".

There was another important modification of the relationship between virtue and sensibility which French writers
introduced into the ideas they found expressed in the work of Lillo and Richardson.

A hint of this change was conveyed in Richardson's account of Pamela's sympathy for the fish she caught, and in these lines of the Prologue to *The Fatal Curiosity*.

"The Breast which others' Anguish cannot move,
Was ne'er the Seat of Friendship, nor of Love."

Both Richardson and Lillo implied that feeling, or the power of sympathy, was the sign and prerogative of virtue, as well as the first step towards right conduct.

In France this suggestion was developed into a complacent admiration of sensibility, and a conscious enjoyment of feeling for its own sake. Even before the works of Richardson and Lillo were known to French readers, this quality was evident. Prévost showed signs of it in *Manon Lescaut*; he seemed to consider that intensity of feeling was the prerogative of a superior mind when he said¹: "Le commun des hommes n'est sensible qu'à cinq ou six passions dans le cercle desquelles leur vie se passe, et où toutes leurs agitations se réduisent...
Mais les personnes d'un caractère plus noble peuvent être remuées de mille façons différentes; il semble qu'elles aient plus de cinq sens, et qu'elles puissent recevoir des idées et des sensations qui passent les bornes ordinaires de la nature. Et comme elles ont un sentiment de cette grandeur qui les

élève au dessus du vulgaire, il n'y a rien dont elles sont plus jalouses."

Inevitably, all the hints in *Pamela*, *Clarissa* or *The Merchant* which connected feeling with a generous and noble nature were taken up by French writers, and their use of sentiment in drama was coloured by this different view of it. The tendency was prevalent, even in obscure writers like Rémond de Sainte-Albine, who wrote in 1747, with reference to the heroes of tragedy: "Plus nous sommes touchés de leur sort, plus nous montrons que nous connaissons le prix de leur vertu, et le titre de justes estimateurs de la grandeur flatte notre sensibilité. On se place dans la classe des ames généreuses."

Diderot was ready to take the same view of sensibility as Clément, Prévost, or Rémond de Sainte-Albine, about the time when he wrote the *Entretiens*.

The letters written by Diderot to his father and to his future wife\(^2\) betray the fact that he took pleasure in his own capacity for feeling, and considered this quality a sign of virtue. This necessarily affected his use of the ideas he took from Lillo and Richardson; as appears from his treatises on drama and the *Éloge*. Meanwhile, *La Nouvelle Héloise*

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carried to its logical conclusion the theory that sensibility was essentially virtuous, and that feeling might be enjoyed for its own sake. Rousseau's work set the fashion for the rest of the century, and so the difference between sentiment in English writing and in that of the French dramatists increased with the progress of time. The smug self-satisfaction latent in the sentimentality of Barnwell or Pamela was emphasised in France, because the work of Prévost and of Nivelle de la Chaussée had previously been admired for a very similar quality; and this determined the distinguishing features of the appeal to feeling in the plays of Diderot and his followers.

Before searching the writings of Diderot for evidence that points to the influence of Shaftesbury, Lillo, and Richardson on his conception of drama, it is useful to recall the fact that public opinion was being prepared to accept "drame bourgeois" by certain changes in the opinions generally held on the art of the theatre. It was generally believed that tragedy must profess some moral aim: this was part of the movement of thought which turned away from the teaching of organized religion to look for guidance to philosophy and ethics outside the Church. Even amongst the leaders of religious thought in France, like Fénélon, there was a view that the drama might be turned into account as an instrument of moral teaching, although they naturally desired that it should inculcate the lessons of their faith. There were then, two
distinct currents in the stream of influence which led up to the new variety of drama.

Again, Diderot's references to English precedent were more readily appreciated because The London Merchant, Pamela, and Clarissa were regarded as works of high moral significance, although their doctrines were not always acceptable to French thought. Just before the publication of the Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel, a reference to the spirit of moral reform that might be seen in English drama was made by Patu (1), who described Dodsley, the author of some of the plays included in the Collection de petites pièces du théâtre anglais as "un honnête homme, un écrivain philosophe, qui ne perd jamais de vue le grand objet de la scène, la correction des moeurs, et la proscription du ridicule".

Lastly, the appeal to sentiment in "drame" was preceded by a very similar device in the novel and in "comédie lar-moyante", which had greatly pleased the general taste.

Thus when Diderot worked out a new connection between moral aim and emotional quality in his reflections on the art of drama, his ideas were fairly certain to please the public and the more progressive critics.

It is possible to point out the share which English influence had in his theory, from examination of the Entretiens

sur le Fils Naturel, the discourse which followed the Père de Famille as well as from scattered observations in letters and fragments written between 1757 and 1762. Some of his later opinions on morals and sentiment in the theatre are not considered here, because they belong to a different phase of his thought, and enter into a later stage of the growth of "drame".

Diderot's theory that drama should teach right living by appealing to emotion had something in common with Shaftesbury's view of nature as a system, and of the "moral sense" which controlled action through "enthusiasm", while Lillo's plays occurred to his mind as examples of this theory which had been successfully brought into dramatic composition. Then Richardson's novels had indicated the pleasure that was to be expected from sympathy with virtue in distress. Diderot was not slow to incorporate these suggestions in his own theory of drama. Finally, Moore's Gamester, and Aaron Hill's Fatal Extravagance supplemented the effect of Lillo's work by showing Diderot the power of irony and terror in impressing the moral of some "sad, true, tale" of middle-class life.

The signs of Shaftesbury's contribution to Diderot's thoughts on play writing may be seen in the Entretiens and in two passing references in other works.

A passage in the Second Entretien sur le Fils Naturel seems to be an echo of Shaftesbury's definition of virtue and a kind of innate moral sense¹: "Mais dans l'art, ainsi que

dans la nature, tout est enchainé; si l'on se rapproche d'un coté de ce qui est vrai, on s'en rapprochera de beaucoup d'autres.... Je définis la vertu, le goût de l'ordre dans les choses morales; le goût de l'ordre nous domine dès la plus tendre enfance; il est plus ancien dans notre âme.... qu'aucun sentiment réfléchi: il agit en nous sans que nous nous en apercevions; c'est le germe de l'honnêteté et du bon goût; il nous porte au bien."

Diderot here adopts Shaftesbury's statement of the connection between morality in art and in society. The taste for order expressed by both men had its origin in a rational belief: but Diderot was very easily touched, so he brought a new force into the argument, that of emotion. This appears more clearly in his repetition of the idea that some instinct compels a man to follow virtue. It may be found in the "observations" published with Le Père de Famille\(^1\), and in the famous rhapsody on "enthusiasm"\(^2\), where Diderot adapted Shaftesbury's description of that sentiment to suit his own temperament. When the French writer applied the ideas he had gathered from the Characteristics to drama, he concluded that drama should reflect the progress of moral and social philosophy\(^3\). It is just, then, to argue that Diderot's view

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\(^1\) p.312 'd'une sorte de drame moral' ibid.
\(^2\) pp.102-103 ibid.
\(^3\) p.128 ibid.
of virtue and his idea of a moral sense were coloured by his English predecessor's philosophy.

The new edition of Diderot's *Pensées Philosophiques* which embodied a great deal of Shaftesbury's thought, came out in 1757: and so Diderot must have had the English writer in mind at the time, while in 1769, his interest was still strong enough to encourage him to translate the *Letter on Enthusiasm*.

Shaftesbury's influence alone was not enough to suggest that this view of morality, and its connection with sentiment could best be expressed in drama. The example of Lillo's *Merchant* and Moore's *Gamester* was necessary to enable Diderot to complete this process of reasoning.

It was the sentiment in these plays which seemed most attractive to Diderot. The *Gamester* is quoted in the *Entretiens* as a model of 'real-life' tragedy, but since it was unknown in France before 1757, and since *The Merchant* was already familiar to Diderot's public at that date, he drew upon Lillo and Richardson for illustrations of the feeling scenes he considered proper to "weep diversion into virtue".

In the essay on dramatic poetry accompanying *Le Père de Famille*², and in the criticism of Dorat's *Lettre de Barnevelt*³,

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(2) pp.365 ff. ibid. (Vol.VII.)
(3) pp.450 ff. ibid. (Vol.VIII.)
Diderot qualified Lillo's power of writing dialogue that reflects the delicate quick motion of a sensitive heart in a way that can only be appreciated by those born with a similar faculty, as sublime and unspeakably beautiful. The prison scene between Barnwell and Truman is declared equal in power to Phèdre's speeches, or the famous words of Racine's Agamemnon "Vous y serez, ma fille". Diderot further compares this scene in the Merchant to the episode of Clementina in Grandison: for he ranks Richardson's novels with the great dramas of literature.

Richardson and Lillo were also coupled in their influence on Diderot's view that drama must use its appeal to feeling in order to strike home the moral of its tale. Lillo insisted on the punishment and unhappiness of Milwood, Richardson on Lovelace's terrible fate, in spite of his brilliant qualities; and they both tried to inspire pity for unhappy innocence. Diderot brings out these points repeatedly in his argument.

In the Éloge de Richardson, which was reprinted with all the later editions of Richardson's novels in France, Diderot gave widespread popularity to the theory that sympathy with persecuted innocence proves the virtue of the person who is able to feel that sympathy, and prompts him to live aright. He quoted the instance of a lady who broke off a correspondance which she considered perfectly harmless until Clarissa showed
her the possible consequences: and he described the delightful results of reading Clarissa in the proper frame of mind—"combien j'étais bon, combien j'étais juste, que j'étais satisfait de moi".

He linked this up with his ideas on drama by proclaiming, in the Éloge, that Richardson's novels were "three great dramas", and by analysing, in a very penetrating manner, the means by which the English author made his novels so dramatic; ending with a declaration that Richardson's creations obsessed his imagination when he attempted to write.

In 1760, Diderot wrote to Sophie Volland, describing Aaron Hill's one-act tragedy The Fatal Extravagance, which the Comte de Bissi had sent to him. It was impossible, at that date, for this criticism to find a place in the Entretiens or the observations published in 1758, and since Diderot made no further mention of it in his writings, it cannot be reckoned as part of his considered theory of drama. As it is very likely that Saurin came to know of the play through Diderot, and that he made use of the story in the plot of his Beverley, it cannot be passed over without comment.

Diderot's opinion of the Fatal Extravagance is also of some importance because he recognized it as a play of the same

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type as the Gamester, drew attention to the author's use of irony in the dialogue of the final scene, and compared it with the Oedipus of Sophocles. The tragic situation of the English hero, said Diderot, was even more terrible than that of the blinded Greek king; and this comparison was the first hint of that similarity between the "terror and pathos" in Greek and English plays which was perceived by later critics, and repeated in their judgments of the "drame bourgeois".

The influence of Shaftesbury, Lillo and Richardson does not account for the whole of Diderot's dramatic theory. A similar use of moral and sentimental elements occurs in "comédie larmoyante", and Diderot's work was in part a development of that previous experiment.

The English writers broadened and enriched Diderot's conception of "drame bourgeois". He neglected the instruction in the work of Lillo and Richardson, because it was founded on Christian doctrines, and placed in its stead his own social philosophy, which included some of Shaftesbury's ideas. He was indebted to Lillo, Moore, and Hill for concrete examples of touching didactic plays. Richardson's novels taught him the most telling way of presenting a picture of injured innocence so as to convey his own doctrines of reform to the audience.

There is one well-marked characteristic of English domestic tragedy which was entirely neglected by Diderot and the other writers of "drame", although it had appeared in the French novel some time before this, notably in Prévost's Manon and Cleveland. This was the use of Fate as a tragic principle. It was not accepted in the French theatre of that day because a catastrophe which arose from a cause outside human control could teach no valuable lessons, and it contradicted the optimistic belief in right action as the inevitable consequence of right feeling. Marmontel, Beaumarchais and Mercier gave this explanation of this difference in the attitude of Greek, English, and French drama to the idea of Fate.

The discussion of Diderot's ideas on the relationship of morals and sentiment in drama began as soon as he published the Entretiens in 1757.

Palissot opened it, by giving the opinion of an "antiphilosophe" on the Fils Naturel in the Petites Lettres. He blamed Diderot for creating "metaphysical characters", and writing "philosophic discussions" instead of natural dialogue.

(2) v. pp.413-4 Correspondance Littéraire, tome VII, sept. 1767. Grimm did not agree with this view.
(3) p.32, note, Nouvel Essai sur l'Art Dramatique, L.S.Mercier, (Amst. 1773.)
Palissot could not avoid the admission that he had been "touched for a moment" by the play, but he disapproved of the use that Diderot made of the appeal to sentiment. These arguments were repeated in the *Supplément d'un Important Ouvrage*, by the same author in 1758, where he showed how the illustrations from English literature had captured attention:

"Il nous faut des voleurs, des assassins, des cadavres, des bourreaux.... qu'est-ce que les passions, la pathétique, les crimes des Rois, près de l'artifice d'une Courtisanne, des troubles et des remords d'un Meurtrier, des agitations alternatives d'un Joueur dans l'une ou l'autre fortune." This pamphlet was chiefly concerned with the question of Diderot's supposed imitation of Goldoni, but Palissot neglected nothing that helped him to prove Diderot incapable of original work.

After Palissot's outburst, Rousseau, the *Journal Étranger*, Thomas, and the *Gazette Littéraire* may be quoted to show the effect of Diderot's ideas on writers who sympathised with him. Their observations and explanations lead us to Beaumarchais' *Essai sur le Genre Sérieux* of 1767, when new influences from England began to develop the theory of sentiment in "drame" along different lines. At the same

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(1) pp.57-58, *Supplément d'un important ouvrage.... avec une lettre à Dorval, etc.* (with a satiric reference to Diderot's plagiarism in the naming of the publisher "chez François Goldino, à l'Enseigne del Fido Amico.

The book was actually brought out in Paris, in 1758.
time, the broad principles of the moral teaching to be conveyed by these plays were generally taken to be those set forth by Diderot.

Rousseau showed in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* how common interests, and perhaps, past friendship with Diderot, had brought to his mind an idea of virtue which owed something to Shaftesbury. The great popularity of the novel spread this idea of virtue in every sphere of society, and intensified the action of Diderot's similar theory on the stage, that moral and aesthetic beauty are akin. "J'ai toujours cru" said Saint Preux to Julie¹ "que le bon n'étant que le beau mis en action, que l'un tient intimement à l'autre, et qu'ils avaient tous deux une source commune dans la nature bien ordonnée.... que le goût se perfectionne par les mêmes moyens que la sagesse, et qu'une âme bien touchée des charmes de la vertu doit à proportion être sensible à tous les autres genres de beautés. On s'exerce à voir comme à sentir, ou plutôt une vue exquise n'est qu'un sentiment délicat et fin. Voilà, ma charmante écolière, pourquoi je borne toutes vos études à des livres de goût et de moeurs." The logical conclusion of this association of virtue and sentiment, was a snobbery of "belles âmes" and Rousseau helped to form it, by expressing his deductions from Shaftesbury in that particular way.

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In 1761, the *Journal Étranger* inserted an article which demonstrates the way in which Richardson's popularity facilitated the success of the new plays. The writer states that the English tragedies had the same pleasing qualities as *Clarissa*, and, in contrast, suggested certain weaknesses of "heroic" tragedy: "Vous ne voulez pas lire les tragédies anglaises, mais vous lisez Clarice.... dites nous par quel art, par quelle magie.... l'auteur nous inspire plus d'horreur et nous arrache plus de larmes que lorsque vous faites mourir mille héros."

Thomas "à la tête concave" thought of tragedy, in Diderot's way, as a powerful instrument of propaganda: "Je cherche des plans de tragédies, je voudrais surtout des sujets modernes." In his next letter to Barthe, he wrote "Je prévois que je vais me jeter à corps perdu dans la tragédie.... on tient sa nation sous sa main, on ordonne aux âmes d'avoir les sentiments qu'on veut." He thought of subjects that combined philosophy and history: but he wrote no tragedies, although his testimony is useful to show how Diderot fired the imagination of his younger contemporaries.

Poinsinet in *Le Cercle* expressed the aristocratic view of "tragédie bourgeoise" in 1764: "un tintamarre d'incidents

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(3) *Le Cercle*, sc.III; (Vol.XXXIII. Petiot, Repertoire.)
impossibles, un assemblage de maximes que tout le monde sait et que personne ne croit.... en vérité cela vaut bien la peine d'avoir les yeux battus et le teint flétri." His criticism grants the power of sentiment, and shows its spreading influence.

Lillo, as the author of the Fatal Curiosity, inspired an article in the Gazette de Littérature de l'Europe, in 1765. It is entitled "La Fatale Curiosité, tragédie véritable," par M. Lillo, à Londres chez T. Davies". The story of the play is given, with the following comments: "Le sujet est un des plus atroces qu'on ait jamais exposés sur la scène; nous avouons que nous n'avons pu lire ce drame sans être fortement émus, non de cette tendre et généreuse pitié qui plaît tant aux âmes sensibles, et que doit surtout se proposer d'exciter tout Poète Tragique, mais d'un sentiment triste et douloureux qui flétrit l'âme en la déchirant..... Cette tragédie bourgeoise chez les Anglais.... [Il] se proposait, dit-on, de corriger les moeurs et croyait que les sujets qu'il avait choisis étoient propres à prévenir les crimes qu'il mettoit sur la scène. Malheur à la nation qui auroit besoin pour corriger ses moeurs de semblables spectacles! Mais Lillo se trompait sur le but et

l'effet des représentations dramatiques. Le Poète ne doit pas faire l'office de l'exécuteur de Justice et les âmes atroces ne se corrigent pas au spectacle. On veut être ému au théâtre, mais on ne veut pas l'être de toutes sortes de manières. Il y a des émotions qui blessent, et d'autres qui répugnent... On a dit que le drame était une imitation de la nature et l'on en a conclu que plus le Poète s'approchait de la nature, plus il approchait de la perfection de son art. Ce principe a égaré bien des critiques... La vérité dramatique a aussi ses limites. Il y a des cas où il ne faut pas être trop vrai. Dans les moments les plus attendrissons d'une tragédie, le plaisir que nous éprouvons à répandre des larmes tient au sentiment même que nous avons de la fiction."

The writer of the article also supplies some details of the life of Lillo, from T.Davies' biography, and finally expresses the hope that his criticism of the Fatal Curiosity will instruct the public in the true principles of "drame bourgeois".

This discussion of the principles of "drame" à propos of The Fatal Curiosity shows that the English origin of the new variety of drama was obvious to the writer. He desired to give a more detailed account of the English author whose plays were accepted as models for the French "tragédie bourgeoise".
The Gazette de Littérature raised a question treated in Baculard's preface to the Comte de Comminge in the same year. The writers of the lesser tragedy in France were divided into two camps: those who believed, on the authority of Young and Baculard d'Arnaud, that the most sombre themes were legitimate in drama, and those, like the writer of the article just quoted, who held that the charm of sentiment lay in its delicacy, that "illusion" was necessary on the stage, since realistic "atrocities" converted nobody.

Before 1765, there had been no definite statement of Lillo's aims written for French readers; and in the Gazette de Littérature the realism of his performance was emphasised. The writer's dislike of Lillo's harrowing story did not attract much attention, and even he had to confess that The Fatal Curiosity was very moving. Any effect that this account of Lillo's work might have had was checkmated by the great popularity of Young's Night Thoughts in France, which demonstrated that gloomy and "atrocious" subjects appealed to the public of that period.

Baculard's play, Le Comte de Comminge showed that the recent publication of some English works had helped him to define his new "drame sombre", which made use of the "horror" and "gloom" condemned by previous writers, to induce the audience to act virtuously.
The novels that appeared in France just before 1765 were imitations of Walpole's Castle of Otranto, and similar English tales; - there is a list of such works given in the Année Littéraire, which was an effective instrument in the spreading of literary fashions.

There were other poems and novels of a sombre, or sentimental type, introduced to French readers at the same time. Diderot translated passages from Ossian for the Journal Étranger, the Gazette Littéraire published a translation of the first Nuit d'Young in 1762, by Diderot's friend the Comte de Bissi; the second Nuit, by the same author, followed in 1765. The Gazette reviewed Sterne's Tristram Shandy and the Sermons d'Yorick in 1764 and 1765, while Sterne's visit to Paris in 1762 had aroused great interest in his work.

Therefore, there was a suitable atmosphere for the composition of "drame sombre", when Baculard worked at his Comminge in 1765. The prefaces he wrote to the two editions which came out during that year made it plain that Young was one of the chief influences which inspired Baculard's

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(1) see the list in P. Van Trighem's L'Année Littéraire comme intermédiaire en France des littératures étrangères. (Paris 1917.)
(3) Chapter IV, on "Les matières anglaises contenues dans le Journal Étranger" (which includes the Gazette Littéraire) in A.C. Hunter's book, J.B.A. Suard, Paris 1925.
(4) ibid.
definition of his variant of "drame bourgeois".

"J'ai cherché" he wrote in the preface to the first edition of the Comte de Comminge, "à répandre dans ma pièce ce sombre qui est peut-être la première magie du pittoresque, partie dramatique que les Anciens ont si bien connue, et que les Modernes parmi nous ont ignorée, ou entièrement négligée. Jettons les yeux sur les grands maîtres..... nous voyons Rembrandt, Rubens, le Poussin atteindre par cette route le sublime de la peinture; qu'on lise l'Enfer du Dante, le Paradis Perdu de Milton, les Nuits du Docteur Young, et l'on sentira combien cette branche du pathétique a d'empire sur tous les hommes."

He outlined his position in the argument over the degree of sentiment needed to induce right action as the result of witnessing a play in the following words:

"On seroit tenté de croire que nous sommes nés pour le douleur, pour le ténébreux. Il y a encore un autre avantage à employer ce ressort dramatique: il fait mourir autour de nous toutes les illusions de la dissipation, nous porte à réfléchir, nous fait replier en nous-mêmes, nous rend enfin l'humanité plus propre, et l'on n'ignore pas que ce sentiment approfondi excite nécessairement les vertus, les belles actions....."

(1) p.vij, Premier Discours qui se trouve à la tête de la première edition, du Comte de Comminge; [in the 4th edition, Yverdan 1768.]

(2) p.viij ibid.
He supported this claim with examples, one of them being Lillo's play, in the preface to the second edition of his *Comte de Comminge*. "Malgré toutes les règles qu'on m'objectera, je ne doute pas que tout ne puisse s'offrir aux yeux, quand on a l'heureuse faculté de faire passer dans l'âme du spectateur le trouble qui est censé déchirer celle du personnage. Un génie heureusement audacieux présenterait avec des applaudissements, ou je me trompe fort, Barnewelt assassinant son oncle, Médée égorgeant ses enfants; mais qu'on prenne garde que j'ai dit un génie: sans cette qualité, si puissant, si rare, la terreur refroidie devient l'horreur dégoutante: plusieurs de nos auteurs l'ont éprouvé." He quoted further the example of Shakespeare, and translated the fifth scene of the last act of Richard III to prove Shakespeare's mastery of the "sombre".

In the discourse which accompanied the third edition of the *Comte de Comminge*, he further enlarged on the power of sentiment, and in the preface to *Euphémie*, both published in 1768, he referred to Young's work as the greatest example of the "sombre" in writing. Baculard considered the nation so enervated that a great poet need spare no attack, however brutal, on their feelings, to stir them into virtuous action.

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(1) p.xxvj, *Discours Préalimaire en tête de la deuxième édition*, ibid.
(4) p.xii, *Préface d'Euphémie*, Yverdon 1768.
This resulted from his contact with Young's poetry, Milton's epic, the drama of Lillo and Shakespeare; although these were by no means the only authorities he quoted to justify his experiment with "horror" in drama. His strong religious feeling, as well as the new admiration for this quality in English works, helped him to proclaim it as one of the features to be imitated in French drama. His two plays were not acted until much later in the century, for it was some time before Baculard's views on morality and sentiment in the theatre were generally accepted.

This is evident from Beaumarchais' Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux\(^1\) which served as a preface to his Eugénie in 1767. His description of the sentiment that would teach a useful lesson to society was an elaboration of Diderot's judgment on the art of Richardson.

"Il faut demander si ce qu'il entend par le mot drame, ou pièce de théâtre, n'est pas le tableau fidèle des actions des hommes? Il faut lui lire les romans de Richardson, qui sont de vrais drames\(^1\)." Further on\(^2\), he explained the function of sentiment in the theatre, in a way that suggested the English writer's love of portraying the suffering of virtue "Je chéirai le spectacle qui m'aure rappelé que je tire de l'exercice de la vertu la plus grande douceur

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\(^1\) p.2, Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux, en tête d'Eugénie, Oeuvres de Beaumarchais. (éd. Tournier, Paris 1876.)

\(^2\) p.iv, ibid.
à laquelle un homme puisse prétendre, celle d'être content de soi, et je retournerai pleurer avec délices au tableau de l'innocence ou la vertu persécutée."

Beaumarchais' definition of the use of sentiment in drama would not cover the powerful stimulus to action that Baculard desired: the Essai sur le drama sérieux inclined to the pleasures of complacent self-admiration that arose from a facile sympathy; and these could not be given by the harrowing emotions presented in the Comte de Comminge.

Barthe was another writer who remained faithful to Diderot's theories. He mentioned Richardson in La Jolie Femme, la Femme du Jour, as the greatest of the writers who combined the appeal to feeling with a strong moral purpose.

Baculard's plays brought up the question of the degree of sentiment most effective in "drame bourgeois"; and Palissot, one of Beaumarchais' "barbares et classiques" attacked Le Comte de Comminge and Euphémie for their lugubrious themes, declaring them "nothing more than a disgusting show of skulls, graves, and coffins".

Palissot showed great good sense in another comment on the use of sentiment in plays of private woe: "Au jugement de leurs auteurs, ces succès semblent confirmés par les larmes

(2) p.21, article Baculard d'Arnaud, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de notre Littérature (1769) ed. Londres 1771.
(3) p.298, Palissot, (article Sedaine) Mémoires, op.cit.
qu'ils voyent répandre aux représentations. Ces Messieurs ne se doutent pas encore que les mêmes marques de sensibilité n'annoncent pas toujours une impression semblable; qu'il ne faut pas comparer, par exemple, les pleurs que font verser aux âmes délicates l'éloquente douleur de Phèdre à ceux qu'arrache à quelque lecteur une situation intéressante quelconque, fût-elle amenée sans vraisemblance, et présentée par l'écrivain le plus maladroit."

Such a wise judgment, however, passed unnoticed in the storm of criticism raised by the first performances of Beverley, Saurin's imitation of The Gamester. Grimm\(^1\) was angry with Saurin, because he had paid very little attention to Diderot's suggestions for the treatment of Le Joueур, so he pointed out the "atrocities" of Beverley, and its offence against the law laid down by Richardson and Diderot, that the hero must be virtuous, and that his tragic fate must proceed from some very slight fault. Finally Grimm observed that 'true sentiment' would not enjoy Saurin's play\(^1\). The conclusion was unkind, in 1768, for sentiment was so much admired just then, and English sentiment especially, that Sterne's Sentimental Journey had brought a new adjective - sentimental - into common use in France.

The more orthodox writers of "drame", who enjoyed the pleasures of "delicate feeling" were in the majority at this

\(^{1}\) Correspondance Littéraire, t.VIII, pp.74 ff., mai 1768, op.cit.
time. Bacoùlard, and even Saurin, were considered "extreme", and the right 'tone' of feeling was set by the Père de Famille. This play was triumphantly revived in 1769; and even Madame Diderot shed tears over it\(^1\); while Bachaumont said \(^2\) "on comptait autant de mouchoirs que de Spectateurs; des femmes se sont trouvé mal, et jamais orateur chrétien n'a produit en chaire d'effet aussi théâtral".

Mercier took up a position rather like Grimm's when he declared in the Preface to Jenneval, that his English originals had to be very considerably modified to provide the pleasure of refined emotion for a French audience. Like Diderot he emphasised the practical aim of the moral teaching in his play, but he extended the appeal to every class of society: and again he repeated, after Diderot and Shaftesbury, that "moral forces" would work for good in human nature, and lead to an improvement in society, by the 'instinctive' method of the "cri de la nature", without recourse to shocking the emotions. As Shaftesbury's works were re-published in 1769 at Geneva, this may have reminded Mercier of these doctrines; but it is far more likely that he merely presented Diderot's theory anew.

Mercier's other writings show that further acquaintance with English literature added nothing of importance to his definition of the part to be played by sentiment on the stage,

or to his estimate of its ethical value. He seemed quite content to reproduce Diderot's ideas; and his frequent references to Richardson, and his attachment to Shaftesbury's idea of an innate sense of right seem also to be inspired by Diderot.

Thomas concurred with the belief that English works had introduced unsuitable elements into the French theatre. He sent a letter to his friend Barthe, in 1769, with a copy of Young's Night Thoughts. Here he showed disapproval of the English writer's influence on drama: "Nous sommes menacés d'une inondation, d'un débordement de drames mélancoliques et sombres. La nation, ne pouvant plus être gaie, à la fureur d'être sensible; mais comme elle ne l'est plus, elle a besoin d'être trainée de ce coté là avec des cabestans. On lui donne des convulsions pour l'agiter." Thomas pointed out the fundamental insincerity of a violent appeal to emotion; when this was generally recognized, "drame" fell from public favour.

Dorat objected to the undisciplined feeling in Saurin's Beverley for a different reason, which also stresses the artificial quality of the emotion so enjoyed by the spectators. He thought that English melancholy was too terrible; it should be replaced by tenderer, more subtle sentiments, which would

(1) Lettre de Thomas à Barthe, du 15 mai 1769, p.265, Vol.27 Revue d'Histoire Littéraire, 1920, (op.cit.)
(2) p.xxxj,Discours Préliminaire, Les Deux Reines, Paris 1770.
call forth delicious tears.

Nougaret praised the instructive side of the new drama, and he thought that tales of persecuted innocence were the best means of presenting a moral, and affording the delights of sentiment on the stage. It shocked him to see an audience enjoying a farce immediately after weeping over some tragedy of middle life; such fickleness destroyed his faith in human nature. Therefore he proclaimed the value of didactic writing, and followed Richardson's lead in connecting it with sentiment.

Grosley added his mite to the discussion, by describing his experiences at a London theatre, where he had gone to see a performance of Shakespeare, in almost complete ignorance of the English language. "Ce qui manque à ces Pièces du côté des Règles est abondamment compensé par le choix des situations les plus attendrissantes, les plus capables de déchirer l'âme". He could see the effect of the play on the audience; he knew that Shakespeare paid no respect to the "rules"; it is very significant that he forgave this fault, because of the pleasure he experienced in sharing the emotions aroused by the play.

A very unexpected opinion on the value of moral aim in drama was delivered by Restif de la Bretonne. He borrowed the

(1) pp.5-6, 11-12, 113-122 Vol.II, Nougaret, L'Art du Théâtre, Paris 1769. The Motto on the title-page of this book is interesting: "Instruction, lumière de la vie!/ Ah, par tes soins l'homme fut éclairé/ Viens diriger les efforts du génie/ Qui, loin de toi, est souvent égaré."

motto of *La Mimographe* from Young: "Le Plaisir est le baume de la Vie; le Plaisir, c'est la Vertu sous un nom plus gai". Restif followed Riccoboni and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his attack on the vices of the stage, but he preferred to reform plays and the lives of the actors, rather than do away with the theatre altogether, like Rousseau. He was in sympathy with the principles of "drame bourgeois", but he was less optimistic than Diderot, for he doubted the lasting effect of sentiment as the incentive to a life of virtue, and he feared the presentation of vice, even for the purpose of rebuking it. He decided that English tragedy was the only rival of the French, while his comments on English literature in general give weight to the supposition that he recognized it as the sponsor of the new variety of drama in France. Restif's treatment of the subject is curious rather than important.

With *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien* in 1770, Diderot plunged into the controversy over sentiment and instruction in the theatre. Although the chief interest of the pamphlet lay in the fresh light he threw on the art of acting, Diderot observed that violent agitation of the feelings was not suitable to French audiences, and therefore, the "butcheries" in English plays should be modified. He had touched upon a new method.

(1) pp.88,91,125,127,442, *La Mimographe*, Restif de la Bretonne. (Amst. 1770.)
of inculcating his doctrines of reform some time before, when he sketched the plan of Le Shérif\(^1\): and in the Paradoxe he cited this work to illustrate the power of history to touch and improve an audience. The choice of an English theme may be due to Shakespeare's reputation as a great historical dramatist, to the precedent furnished by Hénault's François II, or to the fact that England was held to be the home of philosophers who believed in moral principles like his own: but he did not develop "drame historique" any further.

Two years later, Diderot's sister wrote to ask him whether Gresset's Édouard Trois was a play suitable for representation by girls in a convent. His answer was definite: he objected to this play, because its theme was political, and so not suited to such performers, and although it was moral, it taught a worldly lesson. He advised her to recommend the "incomparable poetry" of Esther or Athalie; because these plays harmonised with the books, the pictures and the statues that would be familiar to young girls in a convent.

Diderot's words in this letter showed that his first happy security in the belief that good must result from the representation of moral and sentimental plays was passing:\(^2\):

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\(^1\) see the Letters to Grimm, iii, v, vii, of 1759, Vol.I. Correspondance Inédite de Diderot, Paris, 1931.

\(^2\) pp.123 ff., Lettre XV, t.II, Correspondance Inédite de Diderot. (Babelon fixes the date as 1772.) (éd. Paris 1931.)
"Je vous dirai donc très sérieusement que je n'approuve point les représentations théâtrales dans les maisons religieuses.... l'on n'en retient qu'un esprit de vanité et de dissipation qu'on a dans la suite bien de peine a réprimer.... Les pièces de théâtre ont leur utilité sans doute, mais ce n'est pas pour de jeunes personnes. La première écorce en est dangereuse, et elles ne voyent point au-delà. Les principes moraux qui sont cachés sous cette écorce leur échappent, et les impressions que les peintures du vice ont faites sur leur âme tendre, y restent quelque fois sans qu'elles s'en aperçoivent elles-mêmes. Dans une tragédie bien conduite, le châtiment du méchant ne dure qu'un moment, c'est le dénouement. Le reste de leur temps est employé à rendre les passions avec tous leurs charmes et avec toute leur séduction. Bannira-t-on de la pièce qu'on représentera les caractères intéressants et les morceaux pathétiques? C'est l'estropier, et la réduire à un tissu maussade de scènes sans force, sans couleur et sans vie."

About the same time, the discovery was made that sentiment like that expressed in "drame bourgeois" might be superficial, and even savour of hypocrisy. Mademoiselle de L'Espinasse's judgment of Diderot makes it clear that she could see this quality in him\(^1\): "Il me plaît fort, mais rien de sa manière ne vient à mon âme, sa sensibilité est à fleur de peau, elle ne va pas plus loin que l'émotion."

\(^1\) p. 20, lettre viii (du 24 janv. 1773) Lettres de Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse. (éd. E. Asse, Paris 1913.)
On the other hand there were still people who agreed with Mercier\(^1\) in the belief that sentiment had the power to teach virtuous living: "Les arts parlent à l'âme, y versent la sensibilité, mère des vertus, et le plaisir si nécessaire à sa nature".

Baculard d'Arnaud was one of these. In 1774\(^2\) he declared that his play, Mérinval, was entirely dominated by a moral purpose, and that he had written it specially for the small but distinguished public of "coeurs sensibles". He too, shared the peculiarly French idea that sentiment was a sign of virtue. In the Preface to Fayel\(^3\), he brought out the old idea expressed in Diderot's comparison of the Fatal Extravagance with Greek tragedy: "Les Grecs et les seuls Anglais après eux, dans quelques scènes, nous ont exposé de magnifiques tableaux de ce génie si tragique et si vigoureux". This brought him to the conclusion that moral lessons could be conveyed to "feeling hearts" even better by "terrible" scenes such as those in Mérinval or Fayel, than by his earlier plays, which were not so affecting.

La Harpe, again, accused "drame" of having failed to improve society, and denounced the excessive use of "sombre" or "terrible" effects. His Conseils\(^4\) advised the young poet to avoid:

(1) p.199, note a, Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique, Amst.1773. see also p.237 ibid, and the Introduction (passim).
(2) Préface de Mérinval, drame en 5 actes, et en vers; B. d'Arnaud. Paris, 1774\(^4\).
(4) p.245,Vol.III; Conseils à un Jeune Poète (1778) Oeuvres complètes de M.de la Harpe. (ed.Paris 1820.)
"Des lourds compilateurs la tourbe famélique,
Et des bâtards d'Young l'essaim mélancolique,
Ces drames qui font peur et qui ne font pas pleurer,
Ces apôtres du goût peu faits pour l'inspirer,
Docteurs sans mission, et du haut de leur chaire,
Prechant un siècle ingrat qui n'en profite guère."

Cubières de Palmezeaux, who owned Mercier as his master in the writing of plays, drew a sharp line of demarcation between Le Père de Famille, or Le Philosophe sans le Savoir, and 'farces', such as Le Comte de Comminge. The latter disgusted the truly sentimental by a parade of gravediggers, ghosts, skulls, and gallows. Such works were useless exaggerations of nature; the "drame bourgeois" should present some generous theme calculated to awaken that sense of probity and order which is instinctive in all men. Cubières echoed the famous quarrel over Shakespeare in this definition of domestic tragedy, and his allusions repeat the common objections made to the later English influence that had touched it.

Le Nouveau Spectateur made very similar observations in 1776. It praised Diderot's "moral" plays, emphasised the power of Richardson and Shakespeare, and their intimate knowledge of the human heart, while it severely censured the "atrocities" inspired by Young and Baculard d'Arnaud.

(1) Lettre à une Femme Sensible, published with the 1777 edition of La Manie des Drames Sombres, (Vol.I, p.3. Théâtre de Cubières. Paris 1806.)
In spite of the critics' love of refined feeling in drama, the public enjoyed horrors, and crowded to see Madame Vestris, as Gabrielle de Vergy, receive the "fatal vase" containing her lover's heart. One admirer described her thus:

"Mais où prends-tu, dis-moi, ce long frémissement, Ce sanglot progressif, ce terrible délire, Où te jette l'aspect du coeur de ton amant?"

It appears too, that English literature had never lost its reputation for sound thought, which was the particular excellence of its novels. La Harpe makes this point in his Preface to Barneveldt, written in 1778. After remarking on the truth and profundity of the contrast between Millwood and Barnwell in Lillo's play, he goes on: "l'on peut remarquer en passant, que l'art d'attacher de grandes leçons de morale aux ouvrages d'imagination, art qui caractérise un peuple penseur, distingue les bons écrivains anglais, tels que les auteurs de Tom Jones, de Clarisse". Such praise from a critic who professed admiration for the great traditions of the seventeenth century in France, shows the real strength of English influence far better than the obedient enthusiasm of Diderot's followers.

Naturally, La Harpe had to qualify his judgments. Lillo was often too shocking for a French audience; Fielding was only admirable when he wrote as a man of feeling; but

(1) see p.510 (Nov.3,1777.) Tome I. Anecdotes Secrètes (1774-1779) P.J.B. Nougaret; the title is given as "Epître à Madame Vestris sur son succès dans Gabrielle de Vergy" (ed. Paris 1808.)
(2) Préface de Barneveldt, t.II, Oeuvres de M. de la Harpe. (Paris 1820.)
Richardson was accepted without adverse criticism, for La Harpe's *Mélanie* is founded on the English novelist's principle of instruction through pity for an innocent woman wronged. This allows us to conclude that Richardson's influence predominated over that of the other English writers who came into contact with "drame bourgeois", since conservative critics like La Harpe, and more enterprising thinkers like Grimm or Diderot were equally sincere in his praise.

In the decade before the Revolution, much of the savour had departed from the controversy over the principles of "drame bourgeois". It came to life again for a little while, when the success of *Figaro* stimulated interest in the topic. About 1781, there was, too, a much keener insight into the real nature of the sensibility that was in fashion. Bachaumont revealed this new point of view, in his story of the parish priest of Saint Nicolas¹. The passage of sincere feeling into a hypocritical display of sentiment for the sake of self-praise and the distinction of being classed as one of the "belles amés" was now evident to the ordinary observer, and the influence of Sheridan's *School for Scandal* made it a subject for drama.

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¹ Mémoires... de Bachaumont, t.XVIII, p.123, le 31 octobre 1781: "Le curé de Saint Nicolas s'est aussi signalé par un cortège de 500 pauvres...auxquels, la cérémonie finie, il a donné un écu, et un pain de quatre livres pour chacun. C'est ce pasteur humain et ingénieux dont on a vu dans nos feuilles une lettre très plaisante à M. Élie de Beaumont, relativement à une charité où celui-ci avait mis plus d'ostentation que de bienfaisance." [ed. Londres 1782.]
Before examining this last development in the effect of English thought on sentiment in French plays, there is one more example of the optimistic attitude in this matter, which deserves consideration.

This occurs in the Théâtre Moral of Cubières de Palmezeaux, published in 1784. As the title implies, the author was seeking to improve society. His contribution to the argument was drawn from the literature of England. He discovered Dryden as an authority for the "saintly mission" of drama, and took great pains to prove him a model for plays of this type, in spite of his notorious comedies. The reference to Dryden is significant, because it discloses a wide knowledge of English letters, and a more sympathetic understanding of it. French opinion had travelled a long way beyond Collier's verdict on English comedy1. Cubières' rather paradoxical appeal to the authority of Dryden is a proof that the habit of reference to English precedent was deeply ingrained in French writers.

Then the triumph of Figaro came to discredit the excesses of gloom and horror, into which "drame bourgeois" had fallen. Plays like La Manie des Drames Sombres, and Monsieur Cassandre, ou les Effets de l'Amour et du Vert de Gris2, had already cast

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1 Cubières de Palmezeaux, p.64 ff. Essai sur la Comédie, t.I. Théâtre Moral. (Paris 1784.)
2 This was a two-act play, written by Coquelqay de Chaussepierre, never acted, published in Paris, in 1775, see pp.97 ff. Vol.I. Anecdotes secrètes. Nougaret op.cit.
scorn upon such extravagance. The following lines express the common opinion about 1784:

"La semaine couleur de rose.
Que le Parisien est un franc étourdi!
A fêtoyer le Drame il s'étoit enhardi;
Et par ce Figaro, follement applaudi,
Le voilà sous mes yeux encore ragaillardi!
Pour moi, que la gaiété n'aura point affadi,
Un joli Requiem, pour dimanche, à midi,
Item, chez Curtius, les Grands Voleurs lundi,
Item, chez Arlequin, Jenneval pour mardi,
Item, chez Poquelin, Beverley mercredi,
Le combat des Taureaux, près de Pantin jeudi,
Un spectacle infernal, où l'on sait, vendredi,
Ah! si, pour la clôture, on pendait samedi."

Figaro was an attractive lesson in the value of gaiety because the "horrors" in the plays of middle life were so crude, material and obvious. There was no change in the admiration for deep and sincere emotion. Because of this, Sheridan's gay and sparkling satire on the false sentiment so prevalent in the drama of both countries immediately fired the imagination of young writers in France. We may say, that without Figaro, the English play would have passed unnoticed.

One of the earliest plays or translations based on The School for Scandal was Chéron de la Bruyère's L'Homme à Sentiments, ou le Tartuffe de Moeurs, an attack on insincerity. Chéron neglected the scandal-mongering scenes of his original, and re-wrote it in a serious, even tearful style, for he

(2) Nougaret explains this as a reference to the opera, Les Danaïdes.
intended to draw a picture of the true form of sensibility as well as the false. The play is a symptom of the reaction against the easy optimism of Diderot's early theories or Mercier's dramatic work.

Very soon afterwards Bunel Delille wrote a translation of Sheridan's play, which proved its popularity, since he mentioned three other imitations or translations in the preface. He also remarked on the great admiration for English works that was the fashion of the day; and pointed out that the School for Scandal was a very apt satire on the less pleasant results of the belief in the virtue of sentiment for its own sake. "Il doit s'en débiter un nombre prodigieux d'exemplaires en France" wrote Bunel Delille, "où l'on révère tout ce qui paróit traduit de l'Anglais..... tout le monde doit être content, puisqu'il est scandaleux, et par conséquent dans les moeurs du jour, d'afficher la vertu, d'étaler les beaux sentiments, de vouloir séduire la femme de son ami et de convoiter surtout les riches héritières pour leur dot."

From a survey of the testimony adduced, it appears that the rhythm of English influences touching the moral aim and the emotional appeal of "drame bourgeois" was simple.

(1) L'école du Scandale ou les Moeurs du Jour, comédie par M. Shéridan traduite en français par M. Bunel Delille, avocat au Parlement de Paris. (éd. Londres, 1789.)
Diderot stated the connection between these two elements in authoritative fashion. There was some opposition to his theory when it was first advanced, and then, about 1769, it was generally accepted as a development of certain ideas from English sources. Young's influence on poetry and drama, as well as the new value attached to sentiment by Rousseau and Sterne disturbed the balance of feeling and instruction in plays of private woe. Some writers felt that scenes of violent distress and terror were best calculated to impress an audience; others believed that a less forcible excitement suited their zeal for reforming the age.

No contribution to Diderot's theory was sufficiently original to alter the principles on which it was founded, but the exaggeration of one or other of its points in the later decades of the century led to a realisation that this type of moving moral play was not entirely satisfactory as an instrument of social reconstruction. Then, just before the Revolution, Sheridan's *School for Scandal* inspired fresh protest against hypocrisy, gloom and false sentiment.

The English influences which acted upon the emotional quality of French plays, furnished useful examples of a similar variety of drama, taught French writers devices that would capture public attention, and finally provided an antidote for the excessive use of sentiment.
Lillo's Merchant and Moore's Gamester were the most vivid 'tales of private sorrow' present to Diderot's mind during his creation of "drame bourgeois": but they were not the only sources from which he could learn the value of tears in the inculcation of truth, for La Chaussée and Landois had already pointed this out. It may reasonably be claimed, nevertheless, that the English plays did most to impress that lesson upon him.

Richardson's influence was more subtle, and more persistent. He demonstrated the art of enlisting sympathy for an innocent victim so powerfully that most of the pathos in French domestic tragedy depended upon some similar skill. Diderot analysed Richardson's mastery in the use of sentiment so judiciously that later critics and playwrights merely admired and imitated Richardson in the same way.

There was a latent self-satisfaction and a confidence in the intrinsic moral value of the outward signs of feeling present in Lillo's plays and in Richardson's novels. These were already fully developed in the writings of Prévost, who had achieved success as a novelist before the English works were known in France. Diderot's temperament and his environment caused him to cultivate this complacent admiration of sensibility, and Rousseau completed the progress towards snobbery in fine feeling. Thus The Merchant, Pamela and Clarissa only suggested some of the features that distinguished
'the scene's distress'. A few years later, Young and Shakespeare taught Baculard to emphasise the gloom and terror in his plays, but he learnt nothing else that was new from them. Finally, Sheridan's *School for Scandal* marked the reaction against forced and insincere appeals to sympathy in the plays of middle life. Its imitation in France was a symptom of the "anglomania" prevalent in 1789, and at the same time a consequence of the enthusiasm over *Figaro*, but it came too late to make a permanent impression on the development of "drame bourgeois".

English ideas were used in a very similar way, in the representation of 'scenic virtue'. The lessons of Christian ethics in *Lillo* or Richardson were neglected, and Diderot infused his own doctrines of right living into his plays. His precepts owed something to Shaftesbury's philosophy, where Diderot saw a superior expression of his own thought, and a lucid statement of the relationship between morality and sentiment, so that this influence was not creative in its action upon the French writer. Diderot's followers preferred to discuss the question of sentiment in the lesser tragedy, rather than its reforming purpose. Baculard d'Arnaud alone was inspired by later English influences, to change this purpose, and preach Christian virtue.

Towards the end of the century, belief in the efficacy of the theatre as an agent of reform was less implicit. Diderot
himself was not so certain of its success, while La Harpe proclaimed its failure, although Mercier and Cubières de Palmezeaux did not lose faith in 'useful Mirth and salutary Woe'.

Although the creation of "drame bourgeois" cannot with justice be ascribed to English influences, yet they lent certain well-marked traits to the sentiment, and some profound reflections to the moral teaching of such plays. This caused unfriendly critics to apply the epithet "English" to the crude or horrible devices employed by writers who chose this mode of expression.

Diderot is the central figure in the history of the contact between France and England. It was his philosophy, his enjoyment of the emotion aroused by 'sad, true tales', and his confidence in their power to 'weep diversion into virtue' that guided the selection of ideas from Lillo, Richardson, and Shaftesbury. These foreign elements found an important place in his theory, and governed the thought of Beaumarchais, Mercier and Grimm on the same subject.
To treat a theme from middle life in the tragic manner was, according to the eighteenth-century interpretation of Aristotle, to disobey one of the most important rules of dramatic composition.

This heretical innovation was accomplished by Diderot, and it was the third important principle in his theory of a "lesser tragedy" that should spread abroad his philosophic and social doctrines, by means of an appeal to feeling. This conception of drama as an instrument of propaganda was a fundamental part of his thought, and he brought the bourgeois into tragedy because he believed that the representation of every-day life would make the theatre a more efficient medium of reform in society.

Although comedy had departed from its traditional function of showing up the follies of the middle classes, and tended to give a sympathetic presentation of their social difficulties, it was none the less daring to suggest that they were worthy to take the place of kings and heroes in tragedy.
In order to bring about this change, Diderot had to concentrate all that was living and progressive in the art of the theatre into his theory of drama. The unorthodox ideas developed by the new movement were not unconnected with the great effort made by the "philosophes" to think out new ideals in behaviour and in reasoning. They were interested in playwriting because it was a very powerful agent in the dissemination of their plans for the improvement of society. Only when they happened to be greater as artists than as "philosophes" - in the eighteenth-century sense of the term - did they forget this purpose in their plays.

The present chapter is concerned in the first place with the causes which led these men to look to England for a model of the drama that would fulfil their needs, and with the influences which prepared Diderot to undertake the task of creating a new species of tragedy, dealing with middle-class life. In order to estimate the relative importance of such influences, it is necessary to sketch the rise of domestic tragedy in England, and to indicate the relevant features in its development. We shall then consider the action of previous critical thought in helping Diderot to realise that attempts in the same direction had already been made in France, and in drawing his attention to the significance of Lillo's work. We shall examine the part taken by Lillo and by his imitator Moore, in shaping the principles of Diderot's
"tragédie bourgeoise", and compare it with the effect of Landois' play. We shall next describe the long drawn out discussion over the right of the bourgeois to appear as the hero of tragedy. We shall see that it involved the conflict of opinion over Diderot's attitude to "imperial" plays, and that, later on, Shakespeare, Richardson, and Fielding were called in to furnish new arguments in defence of these 'plays of private woe'. The equal weight of opposing views kept this debate revolving around the same point, without arriving at any settlement. We must determine the cause, and draw some conclusion as to the effect of English ideas upon Diderot's decision to put on the stage catastrophes that 'touched the common race of men'.

The first signs of the tendency to seek guidance from England for a new mode of serious dramatic writing appear in the work of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot. Amongst other things they taught their contemporaries to see in English thought, and in the English constitution a love of liberty, a respect for reason, a system of ideas founded on scientific observation and deduction, a morality and a religion that no longer recognized the principles of absolute authority. These ideas reinforced the influence of philosophers like Descartes and Montaigne, and played an important part in destroying the conventional supremacy of heroic tragedy in France, since it was based on the recognition of authority in criticism. This change prepared the ground for "drame bourgeois".
There were two processes of reasoning which governed eighteenth-century thought, and inclined French writers to draw upon English literature for fresh inspiration. First, there was the belief in the necessity of progress towards perfection. This destroyed the prestige of antiquity, both in the moral and the artistic spheres, and made it possible to imitate English independence of tradition. Second, a deep and widespread curiosity regarding men and manners outside France increased the value set upon originality, and provided a new standard of criticism. Comparison took the place of authority in matters of literary judgment. Here again, the interest in England, and the English writers' reputation for striking out new lines of thought helped on the introduction of new forms into French literature, and placed the discussion of experiments in drama upon a broader basis.

As heroic tragedy was notoriously governed by strict tradition, and as the artistic inferiority of the plays written by the poets who "continued Racine" led to the conclusion that the tragic matter sanctioned by authority was exhausted, the obvious remedy was to find new themes suitable for treatment within the same framework.

The stock epithet applied by way of criticism to 'imperial' tragedy was 'unnatural', so that all the attempts to improve it tended to bring it within some definition of 'natural'.

When Diderot began to ponder over a kind of play which might be used to effect social and moral reform, he had to
explain the exact sense of the term "natural". As far as he was concerned, a natural form of drama would be that which had most power to touch his audience, by presenting an image of life familiar to all of them. It should also help in the conduct of daily life, by the expression of some philosophy based on the playwright's own experience.

It was Voltaire who directed the end of this reasoning to the imitation of England. In the *Lettres Anglaises*, (partly to soothe his pride) he had praised the free and honoured condition of men of letters in that country, and commented upon the opportunities enjoyed by the middle classes to think as they pleased in religion and politics, and to mix on equal terms with the aristocracy.

Then a difference of opinion arose over the best method of reforming tragedy, so as to make it more natural. Voltaire became the most prominent supporter of change from within as a means of restoring the prestige of heroic plays. There were other writers who agreed with Diderot that it was preferable to create a supplementary form of drama. Most of these were middle class men, and they decided to write about people like themselves, rather than about the affairs of kings, for such subjects would be familiar, and so natural to them. Behind this decision lay the bitterness engendered by the privileges which were accorded by law to the nobility and clergy. The middle classes in France were rich and influential during this
period, and the comparisons drawn in the Lettres Anglaises between their lot and that of their English fellows strengthened the determination of French dramatists to claim for the bourgeoisie a share in certain privileges formerly allowed only to kings and heroes. This aim in literature fitted into their social philosophy, and supplied them with a sound reason for seeking to infuse English ideas into French drama\(^1\). Further, the happy lot of the man of letters in England (as Voltaire pictured it) where there was no Bastille to fear, and where entry into the best society on an equal footing was possible, aroused envy and emulation in France. This put a living force into the schemes for the regeneration of society proposed in French drama.

The "philosophes" were able to work out such plans in readiness for the new plays that were to impress them on the public because, during the period when Voltaire and Diderot were young, a bourgeois, provided he were very rich or very witty, was made free of any society, in spite of social prejudices, and they were thus in a position to gain experience and work out their ideas. The most eminent thinkers in France discussed the new philosophy that came from England at Madame du Deffand's gatherings, or even at Court. In the bourgeois

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\(^1\) Interesting information, relating to the position of men of letters in France about 1779, is given by John Moore in his View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland and Germany, p.28, p.29, p.32, Vol.I. (ed. London 1779.)
salons, like Madame Geoffrin's, and, later, Madame Necker's, the "philosophes" were more at home, and gained consciousness of their power as a group, and they could always meet informally at cafés, to continue their arguments, and plan their reforms. English travellers were welcomed in all the great salons, their opinions treated with respect, while gossip about English books and politics was quickly circulated. The middle classes could meet Englishmen in the cafés, or hear the latest news from England in one of the many journals that retailed it, and discuss the new novels or plays translated from the English.

Therefore English affairs were by no means outside the experience of the "philosophes" and the bourgeoisie in general. It was continually represented to them, that by imitating England, the French middle classes could attain their political and social ambitions. It was very natural that they should imitate English literature also, especially when the author of the *Lettres Anglaises* set them the example.

Voltaire had used his knowledge of English drama to renew the themes of imperial tragedy, and he had drawn attention to Shakespeare in particular by suggesting that his brilliant monstrosities were more pleasing than conventional French tragedies¹, but he made no essential change in the structure of tragedy.

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(1) *Lettre XVIII, Voltaire, Lettres Philosophiques.* (1734.)
A decade later, his comedy, *Nanine*, treated a story of middle life in the sympathetic fashion of "comédie larmoyante". The theme was adapted from Richardson's *Pamela*, and Voltaire's use of this material demonstrated the popularity of this English writer whose sentiment and realism so delighted the French public that a whole series of comedies was based on *Pamela*. *Nanine* also showed the parallel development of taste in England and in France.

The *Lettres Anglaises* and *Nanine* therefore directed the attention of those writers who were preparing a new variety of drama, to the social position and the literary achievements of the middle classes in England. Voltaire had described English life and letters in such a way that Diderot had but one step to make before he hit upon the idea of writing tragedy for the middle classes about their own sins and sorrows. Voltaire had too much wit, intelligence and irony to take that step himself.

Diderot was more a man of the people than Voltaire. He was more enthusiastic, and made a greater show of sentiment; thus he could more readily appreciate the English domestic tragedy. This was all the more likely because Diderot had always been in sympathy with English ideas, and had many English friends, while his fellow 'philosophes' kept him supplied with English books

When he first considered how best to express his message to the middle classes in drama, this habit of mind, even without the help of Voltaire's influence, would have sent him to English literature in search of ideas.

The fact that The Merchant and The Gamester were especially designed to appeal to the private citizen, and that they had successfully conveyed a doctrine of moral and social improvement, with their literary importance as a variation of heroic tragedy helped to give Diderot the root-idea of "drame bourgeois".

At this point, it seems pertinent to outline the development of domestic tragedy in England, in order to bring out the resemblance between the social purpose and the artistic experiment in the work of Lillo and of Diderot, and to account for the significant influence of English example on the French dramatist's theory.

As early as 1710, Steele foreshadowed Lillo's "lesser tragedy", when he wrote in The Tatler \(^1\) "When unhappy catastrophes make up part of the history of princes, or are represented in the moving language and well-wrought scenes of tragedians, they do not fail of striking us with terror, but they affect us only in a transient manner, and pass through our imagination, as incidents in which our fortunes are too humble to be concerned.... Instead of such high passages, I

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\(^1\) The Tatler, no.172, for May 16, 1710.
was thinking it would be of great use, if any body could hit it, to lay before the world such adventures as befall people not exalted above the common level. This, methought, would better prevail upon the ordinary race of men, who are so prepossessed with outward appearances that they mistake fortune for nature, and believe nothing can relate to them, that does not happen to such as live and look like themselves."

Steele here expressed the purpose of middle class tragedy. Lillo had reasoned along the same lines, helped by the example of "she-tragedies" of the Orphan type\(^1\), and of Elizabethan plays like *Arden of Feversham*\(^2\) which he adapted for the theatre of his time. He too believed that 'true tragedies' would improve men of his own sort, just as Hamlet "caught the conscience of the King" with a play appropriate to his condition.

Lillo expressed his opinion thus in the Dedication to the *Merchant of London*: "If Princes alone were subject to misfortunes arising from vice, or weakness in themselves and others, there would be good reason for confining the characters in tragedy to those of superior rank, but since the

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(1) such as Lewis Theobald's *Perfidious Brother*, in 1715, and Osborne Sydney Wandesford's *Fatal Love*, or the *Degenerate Brother*, of 1730; both plays contained "scenes as natural as they're just and true" according to the authors' opinions, and disdained "Regal Pomp and glaring Show".

(2) *Arden of Feversham*, by an unknown author, 1587. Another example was Aaron Hill's *Fatal Extravagance* of 1721, based on the *Yorkshire Tragedy* of 1608, (in the Shakespeare apocrypha).
contrary is evident, nothing can be more reasonable than to proportion the remedy to the disease."

Nothing could make it clearer, that since the middle classes in England had risen to a position of social security, political satisfaction and freedom from the overwhelming prestige of the aristocracy, they had leisure to cultivate the expression of their thoughts in literature. Moreover, the energy formerly absorbed by their conflicts in politics and religion was released, and turned into a zeal for reforming society according to their own ideals. They tried to accomplish this through the essay, a new form of writing invented by Steele and Addison, who addressed the "common race of men", the novel, invested with a new function of teaching morality through sentiment by the printer Richardson, and the "domestic" tragedy, whose purpose was defined by the jeweller Lillo as a remedy for the vices of middle life.

English domestic tragedy was also a revolt against the "imperial" form. Johnson indicated this in his criticism of Rowe's Ulysses: "We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes to expect any pleasure from their revival; to show them as they have already been shown is to disgust by repetition, to give them new qualities or new adventures is to offend by violating received notions." Here he gave a reason for the radical change in the nature of tragedy

which Lillo completed; and his words also explain why French writers came to desire a similar experiment in their own drama.

The change in the position and in the aspirations of the middle classes, as well as the idea that heroic tragedy had exhausted its power of vital growth, lay behind the common plea for "reality" and "nature" in the dramatic criticism of both countries.

In England, these reasons made Fielding write a prologue for Lillo's Fatal Curiosity and include many plays of the domestic kind in the repertoire of the Haymarket theatre, when he controlled it. Johnson, too, in the same spirit as he wrote the famous Letter to Lord Chesterfield, defined tragedy in the Dictionary as "a dramatic representation of a serious action": which could be made to cover both "imperial" and "domestic" plays. This is evident from the quotation from Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Dying which Johnson used to support this definition.

Both Fielding and Johnson were essentially fair-minded and reasonable critics, so that their approval of domestic

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(1) see the list of plays acted at this theatre, given in the Appendix to Professor Allardyce Nicoll's Early Eighteenth Century Drama, 1700-1750. (ed. Cambridge 1925.)
(2) The quotation runs: "All our Tragedies are of Kings and Princes, but you never see a poor man have a part, unless it be as a clown, or to fill up the scenes, to dance, or to be derided."
tragedy shows that the invention of this new variety really was part of the effort of middle class writers to discover a natural and satisfying drama, which would accomplish what the eighteenth century considered the essential function of tragedy, the reform of society according to their own ideals.

Lillo's *Merchant* and Moore's *Gamester* therefore furnished Diderot with good concrete examples of the type which he was trying to introduce, since in France the middle classes were engaged in the struggle to attain a liberty like that of their English fellows, and their leaders, the "philosophes" could recognize the use of domestic tragedy on the English plan as a weapon in this conflict: for it could just as well convey a philosophy of social and religious revolt as the principles of Christian morality which Lillo and Moore had put into their work.

On the more literary side of the question, the fact that Lillo was trying to make tragedy 'come home to men's business and bosoms' by presenting the misfortunes that befall 'the ordinary race of men' was a most apt solution of the difficulties which beset the French dramatists who complained that heroic tragedy had worn out the appeal of its themes by reiteration, and that the fall of kings and empires in the ancient world had no connection with real life, in spite of Voltaire's efforts to bring new vitality into this kind of writing.
Therefore Diderot praised Lillo's play, aroused curiosity about Moore's, and encouraged his friends to adapt them for the French stage. Because of the praise and sympathy that he accorded to these works and their French translations or imitations, the public firmly believed that England had invented "tragédie bourgeoise" as it was known in France, although Diderot made a great effort, in his various treatises on drama, to convince his readers that this honour was due to France.

It was quite true that the attempt to improve society, and to present a serious and sympathetic study of middle class life in the early comedy of the century, as well as Landois' curious play, Silvie, pointed in the direction of "drame bourgeois". Le Glorieux of Destouches, Voltaire's Nanine, his Enfant Prodigue, and Nivelle de la Chaussée's Paméla set out to prove that bourgeois virtues were more estimable than noble birth, while Marivaux had expressed social doctrines of a "philosophic" trend in the first comedies he wrote, such as L'Ile des Esclaves. These plays, and the "comédies larmoyantes" especially, were criticized in D'Alembert's adjective "mulâtre", denoting a mixture of light and serious scenes which has always been particularly distasteful to French minds.

There was only a small gap between the tearful comedy of La Chaussée and the "drame bourgeois" of Diderot. French
critical thought, however, seemed unable to bridge it until
the *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel* suggested that the conflicts
in middle class life could be treated with great dramatic force,
in a wholly serious manner. The example of Lillo and Moore had
enabled Diderot to complete this process of thought.

Landois described his *Silvie* in the words "tragédie
bourgeoise". The name had arisen from his attempt to second
La Motte in bringing tragedy down to the level of ordinary men;
Landois, just as Lillo had done, refuted the idea that heroic
tragedy was the best and most appealing form of drama. He put
this contention into the mouth of "L'Auteur", in the Prologue
to his play¹: "Je vous avoue, Monsieur, que ces termes de bas
et noble sont fort équivoques. Une pièce dramatique est une
représentation de la vie, et sans vouloir interdire la scène
aux vieux Héros, j'imagine qu'on peut y faire paraître des
personnages, dont la vie, ayant un peu plus de rapport avec
celle des spectateurs, devroit naturellement intéresser davant-
age. Mais bien loin de mettre les moeurs des particuliers sur
la scène tragique, je ne désespère pas qu'on ne prenne pas
dans la suite parmi les gens de qualité les personnages comiques
les plus ridicules." This last sentence betrays an antagonism
between the middle classes and the aristocracy which was absent
from Lillo's Preface or his Prologue; but the rest of the

(1) Sc.iii Prologue. *Silvie*, op.cit. (Paris 1742.)
passage quoted shows that Landois had arrived, quite independently, at a solution very like Lillo's, when he considered the problem of reforming tragedy.

In conjunction with the English plays by Lillo and Moore, Silvie helped to shape Diderot's "drame bourgeois". There are, however, certain other observations on the English domestic tragedy, made before 1757, which must be examined before we can fairly estimate the importance of Landois' work in this connection.

Prévost was the first to show interest in English plays of this description; but his accounts of The Merchant of London and of Charles Johnson's Caelia prove that he had not understood their value as "attempts to form plays on a new plan".

In 1734 he published some notes on English merchant life, where he tacitly compares the honour and consideration shown to the middle classes in England with the way they were treated in France. Voltaire's far more brilliant treatment of this theme eclipsed Prévost's effort, but there is interest in the fact that Prévost borrowed the very words of Lillo's description of merchant power, in the first scene of the first act of

(1) see p. 36, nombre II, Vol.I, 1733, (Caelia) nombre XLV, Vol.III, (1734) and nombre XLVI, Vol.IV, (1734) Le Pour et Contre, op.cit. Prévost could not see that Caelia, (which was played in 1733) written in prose, and telling a story which anticipated that of Lovelace and Clarissa, without comic relief, was not a true comedy; for he defined it as "comic".

(2) pp. 5 ff., nombre XLVI, Vol.IV. Le Pour et Contre.
George Barnwell, and practically translated the speeches celebrating the dignity and moral worth of commerce, in the first scene of the third act, without reference to their real author. The article in Le Pour et Contre concluded with high praise of the English merchant's ideals, and so, in this unexpected way, Lillo's tragedy did something to create an atmosphere favourable to the reception of "drame bourgeois" in France.

More than ten years afterwards, La Place published a translation of Rowe's Fair Penitent. He wrote a letter of explanation to accompany it¹, where he defended Rowe's inclusion of "low" characters in tragedy with the argument that although such a procedure was contrary to the custom of the French theatre, it was true to life. He went on: "C'est ainsi que les Anglois s'attachent plus que nous à peindre la nature dans le commerce ordinaire des hommes. Ce qu'on peut leur reprocher, c'est de le peindre dans le laid. Mais ce moyen d'émouvoir les Spectateurs, dont le Peuple fait la plus grande partie, ne vaut-il pas autant au moins que lui montrer des Musulmans polis et galants comme nos jolis François, ou cette vertu farouche et gigantesque des Romains et des Grecs? Nous les admirons, parceque nous ne les connaissons pas; nos idées sont montées sur un ancien préjugé de grandeur, que par

¹ p.280, Vol.V. Théâtre Anglois (Londres 1747); in the Lettre à Mme La Comtesse de *** La Place stated that the translation was not his own work.
succession de temps nous avons fait aller au-delà de la nature." Then follows a description of Barnewelt as an example of moral tragedy in the English style, and he concludes that such plays have "a certain merit".

This translation of the Fair Penitent, and the accompanying letter drew attention to concrete examples of "natural" tragedy in English, and to the advantages it possessed, in comparison with its French counterpart.

Since La Place's Théâtre Anglois enjoyed a widespread circulation, he was an important agent in spreading the idea that England possessed a natural form of tragedy, which was preferable to the French heroic kind. In a later translation La Place made known the criticism which Sarah Fielding had written of the Marchant, and this, too, led to a similar conclusion.

Collé admitted the possibility of a "tragédie bourgeoise" which would really be the comedy of La Chaussée transformed by the exclusion of all comic elements. In order to arrive at this, however, he argued from the example of Lillo's Barnwell and Landois' Silvie. Thus, English precedent seemed indispensable, to help French critics to realise what the various new elements in their own drama would combine to produce.

Then in 1750, Marmontel reminded dramatic writers that criticism necessarily varied according to time and place: an observation which did much to prepare the way for the *Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel*.

By 1757, Diderot had been turning the question of "tragédie bourgeoise" over in his mind for some time. Following the lead of Voltaire, and guided by the pressure of circumstances in contemporary thought, no less than by his own inclinations, he had gone to English literature for help in the formation of his theory of drama. The general interest in England, the new comparative criticism, the success of "comédie larmoyante", and the dissatisfaction with heroic tragedy all added to the weight of specific observations on English domestic plays by La Place and Collé, and to the effect of Landois' previous attempt, in making the author of the *Entretiens* see that it was the right time to lay down the principles of "natural" tragedy. For him, this had acquired the meaning of a serious play which, by dealing with the experiences of middle class people, would touch the spectators and induce them to lead better lives.

The example of Lillo and Moore was more conducive to such an end than that of any other English writers who had treated the question of rank proper to characters in tragedy. Richardson helped indirectly by showing the power that lay

in a tale of middle class life to evoke sympathy and reform vicious tendencies, while he also stressed the conflict between the different sections of society in his portraits of noblemen like Lord B*** and Lovelace. These did not fail to tell upon French thought.

The problem of the bourgeois as a hero of tragedy involves Diderot's statement that Landois was the first to write a play which dealt with 'private woe'; and brings up the relative importance of Lillo, Moore, and Landois in giving Diderot an example of the new kind of drama.

Landois' precedence over the English writers was possibly a theory which Diderot accepted in all good faith, since Landois claimed to be the founder of "tragédie bourgeoise" in his Prologue: or this idea might have been the effect of patriotic feeling on Diderot's part, which caused him to pass over the facts that Lillo wrote the Merchant in 1731, and that Prévost had described it in 1734.

The Merchant, the Gamester and Silvie were the three examples that Diderot quoted when he first talked of creating

(2) scène dernière, Prologue, Silvie, op.cit.
(3) On p.111, Second Entretien sur le Fils Naturel, t.VII, Oeuvres, Diderot, a conversation between Dorval and André may reflect Diderot's change of opinion with regard to England: - Et qu'est ce qu'on dit encore? - Que vous êtes fou de ces gens là (les Anglais) - André! - Que vous regardez leur pays comme l'asile de la liberté, la patrie de la vertu, de l'invention, de l'originalité - André! - à présent, cela vous ennuie.. Et bien, n'en parlons plus!" There are speeches on pp.52 ff., ibid, in Sc.VII, Act III. of the Fils Naturel that bear out this supposition: and the Seven Years' War might account for Diderot's lack of enthusiasm for England.
a lesser tragedy in France. The English plays had powerful and unusual plots, and previous critics like La Place and Collé had drawn attention to their merits as plays which fulfilled the ideal of a "natural" tragedy. Silvie was a short play; by an obscure writer, and although Landois suggested in the Prologue that a tale of everyday life might become the subject of tragedy, the play itself did not have the recommendation of success that Lillo's work carried with it, or the attraction of an intensely pathetic story, and of a definite moral, which Diderot recognized in the Gamester and the Merchant.

Thus it is easy to see that the rather artificial importance given to Landois did not outweigh the real influence of Lillo and Moore on Diderot's thought: a fact which arises more obviously from Diderot's remark: "Silvie... suffit pour éveiller un homme de génie, mais il faut un autre ouvrage pour convertir un peuple".

When the drama that 'was to convert a nation' was given a name, it was called "tragédie domestique et bourgeoise": and Diderot added, "the English have the Merchant of London and the Gamester, in prose". The same passage recalled the example of Voltaire's Enfant Prodigue; and the idea of "converting" an audience to some belief was common to the English plays and to Voltaire's comedy. This was the most

(1) see pp.119-120, Second Entretien sur le Fils Naturel, t.VII, Diderot, op.cit.
important feature of Diderot's innovation. Since Landois' play lacked this purpose, and since Diderot so clearly described the influences that helped him to fashion his theory, it is evident that the idea of bourgeois tragedy was not complete in his mind until he had read the plays of Lillo and Moore\textsuperscript{1}.

Further on\textsuperscript{2}, he emphasised the value of the description of "low" life in domestic tragedy, and gave the story of the Gamester as a typical 'subject', elevated, yet simple and natural. There is nothing to show that this argument was based on a knowledge of the theory which Lillo had put forward in his prologue and dedication to the Merchant of London. Diderot arrived at this idea by following a train of thought suggested by the English plays themselves, just as La Place had done; because these works provided a better example of a "real life" supplement to heroic tragedy than anything to be found in French drama.

In Diderot's opinion such plays should deal with the themes that lay between the confines of heroic tragedy and gay comedy. They had a nobility peculiar to themselves, and could do a great deal towards reforming the social evils of the time, a power which had departed from the older form of

\begin{enumerate}
\item p.140, Troisième Entretien, ibid, in addition to the reference in note 1, p.159 above.
\item p.147 ibid: "je ne peux tirer mes exemples d'un genre qui n'existe pas encore parmi nous."
\end{enumerate}
tragedy since it had lost the art of presenting noble sentiments in a new and striking way. To prove this, Diderot brought in the story of the Gamester, although he did not mention the title of the play, in the following passage:\footnote{1}

Dorval: "Mais la tragédie domestique aura une autre action, un autre ton, et un sublime qui lui sera propre..... Elle est plus voisine de nous. C'est le tableau des malheurs qui nous environnent. Quoi! vous ne concevez pas l'effet que produiraient sur vous une scène réelle, des habits vrais, des discours proportionnés aux actions, des actions simples, des dangers dont il est impossible que vous n'ayez tremblé pour vos parents, vos amis, pour vous-même? Un renversement de fortune, la crainte de l'ignominie, les suites de la misère, une passion qui conduit l'homme à sa ruine, de sa ruine au désespoir, au désespoir à une mort violente, ne sont pas des événements rares; et vous croyez qu'ils ne vous affecteraient pas autant que la mort fabuleuse d'un tyran, ou le sacrifice d'un enfant aux autels des dieux d'Athènes ou de Rome?"

The Merchant of London may count for something in the theory of "conditions" that Diderot proposed to substitute for the study of character in the "genre sérieux". The story of George Barnwell was an excellent example of a play based on the examination of duties, dangers, and advantages

\footnote{1} pp.145-6, Troisième Entretien sur le Fils Naturel, t.VII, op.cit.
proper to the calling of a merchant, and it is reasonable to suppose that Lillo's work suggested "merchant" in the list of "conditions" given in the *Entretiens*, as well as certain points in the further elaboration of this theory, when Diderot exposed its connection with social duty and moral benefit, in the treatise which was addressed to Grimm.

The final opinion expressed by Diderot as to the part played by English drama in forming "tragédie bourgeoise" was that although Landois had preceded Lillo and Moore, just as Marivaux had preceded Richardson, England had left France far behind in the writing of such plays, and the bold genius of her dramatists had obtained for them all the credit of invention. He used this as a stick to beat the critics, whose folly and prejudice had killed the first attempt to reform tragedy, and were doing their utmost to prevent the success of his own effort. He emphasised the merits and the truly French origin of "tragédie bourgeoise" once more, when he complained that the sheep-like followers of tradition attacked it.

*Le Père de Famille* was played at Marseilles in 1760, and again in Paris a year later, while in 1769 it was triumphantly revived. Diderot saw in this the overwhelming success of a

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(2) pp.309-10, *De la Poésie dramatique*, ibid.
natural drama, representing common life: he explained it to Sophie Volland as follows: "C'est qu'à peine la première scène est-elle jouée qu'on croit être en famille, et qu'on oublie qu'on est devant un théâtre. Ce ne sont plus des tréteaux, c'est une maison particulière."

It must not be forgotten that the action of the Comte de Laraguais in 'clearing the stage' of the spectators who were formerly allowed to sit there, was a most important agent in the success of the new 'natural' plays after 1762. Without this change, the actors and spectators, dressed alike, would have been confused, and the lack of space would have given rise to many unfortunate incidents like that of the "ombre de Ninus".

Before passing to the consideration of further opinions on the English influences on "drame", and of the evidence that indicated fresh borrowings from the same source, it is necessary to emphasise that the new kind of play was not intended as a substitute for heroic tragedy. Diderot made it plain that it was an additional type, and he recognized the existence of barriers between tragedy and comedy which it would be dangerous to break down, as some English plays did.

(3) p.137 ibid: he referred to Otway's Venice Preserved.
The "drame" was a form which suited his particular purpose better than either of the traditional kinds, and it filled the gap between them in his scale of dramatic values, without infringing on their territory. His critics, however, insisted that he meant to do away with heroic tragedy, and gay comedy.

Further, both his own followers and the writers who disapproved of his innovation neglected the distinction made in the *Entretiens* between "tragédie bourgeoise" and "comédie sérieuse". Diderot himself sometimes used these terms loosely, but he definitely considered that the first-named was "still to be created", and it was this form which could profit by the example of Lillo and Moore. The second was "to be perfected", and he took it as a development of "comédie larmoyante". His own two plays were to serve as models. They were sufficiently alike to make their subsequent confusion immaterial in the history of English influence on "drame", but we must not forget that Diderot differentiated between them.

Again, in spite of Diderot's attempts to persuade the public that plays of the domestic kind had been invented in France, his references to Lillo and Moore, and the numerous judgments passed upon the moving tale of *The Merchant* made

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(1) p.147, p.161, ibid; see also p.308 as in note 2, p.163.
(2) He used the title "De la comédie sérieuse" for the section of his discourse in which he defined both "tragédie bourgeoise" and "comédie sérieuse"; pp.308 ff. ibid., while he considered both as belonging to the "genre sérieux".
critics ascribe the rise of the new tragedy to English forces.

Palissot, the first to comment on "drame bourgeois", touched on the "unnatural" quality of Diderot's plays. He put this down to the exchange of moral maxims, which served as dialogue. In *Les Philosophes*, he described them in the following words:

"Louant, admirant tout dans les autres Pays,
Et se faisant honneur d'avilir leur Patrie."

In the same play he suggested that the "purely domestic tragedy" was successful only because of a "cabal". Palissot only touched these points superficially, but he could see the "philosophic" propaganda in "drame", its domestic qualities, and evidences of its English origin.

After this, in 1758, Rousseau supported Diderot's innovation in characteristic terms, when he said "Ne serait-il pas à désirer que ces sublimes Auteurs daignassent

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(2) *Lettre II, Petites Lettres sur de Grands Philosophes*, (Paris 1757) op.cit.

(3) *Acte II, sc. v. Les Philosophes*. C. Palissot. (Paris 1760.)

(4) *Acte III, sc.iii. ibid.*

descendre un peu de leur continuelle élévation, et nous attendrir quelquefois pour la simple humanité souffrante, de peur que, n'ayant de la pitié que pour des héros malheureux, nous n'en ayons jamais pour personne." This sentimental reason for sympathising with the sorrows of private citizens portrayed in drama, has a closer connection with the sensibility apparent in Richardson's novels, than with Diderot's more scientific arguments for writing domestic tragedy.

The theory of conditions soon attracted the attention of critics. Voltaire referred to the character of Fréron in L'Écossaise as though he were adopting Diderot's idea. The observations on English literature quoted below form part of the bitter attack on Fréron, but they also have a certain value from our point of view, since they emphasise the share of English drama in bringing Diderot's experiment to fruition.

"L'un des deux illustres savants", wrote Voltaire, "qui ont présidé au dictionnaire encyclopédique, à cet ouvrage nécessaire au genre humain, dont la suspension fait gémir l'Europe, l'un de ces hommes, dis-je, dans des essais qu'il s'est amusé à faire sur l'art de la comédie, remarqua très judicieusement, que l'on doit songer à mettre sur le théâtre les conditions et les états des hommes. L'emploi du Frélon

de M. Hume est une espèce d'État en Angleterre.... Ni cet État ni ce caractère ne paraissent déjà du théâtre en France, mais le pinceau des Anglais ne dédaigne rien, et se plaît quelquefois à tracer les objets dont la bassesse peut révolter quelques autres nations. Il n'importe à l'Anglais que le sujet soit bas, pourvu qu'il soit vrai. Ils disent que tout ce qui est dans la nature doit être peint, que nous avons une fausse délicatesse, et que l'homme le plus méprisable peut servir au plus galant homme." The attack on Fréron in this play aroused so much interest that these remarks on "natural" characters in English plays were read by everyone, and penetrated into the fashionable circles, where the "gothic" sentiment in the new drama was a matter for ridicule.

About 1761 the serious discussion of the part to be taken by the bourgeois in tragedy began. One of the most intelligent interpreters of English literature to France, Suard, pointed out that Pope and Addison were the flower of a middle-class literature. He mentioned this in the Journal Étranger, in his comments on the translation of Thomas Smollett's Complete History of England. "Le génie de la littérature s'éleva de lui-même, et quoique négligé par les Grands, fleurit

(1) 'la comédie de M.Hume' existed in Voltaire's imagination alone.
(3) p.70, article III, Le Journal Étranger, Nov. 1761. (translation from Smollett, with comments by Arnaud and Suard).
sous la culture d'un public qui avait des prétentions au goût, et qui se piquait d'encourager le mérite littéraire. " Suard took this opportunity of striking a blow at the aristocratic tradition in literature.

It was the *Journal Étranger* also which described the "models" of "drame bourgeois". In December, 1761, appeared an article on Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson*, a play which owed a great deal to English domestic tragedy. Diderot knew this work, for he meant to include it in the collection of domestic tragedies that should have come out in 1762.

The *Journal Étranger* remarked upon the English setting of Lessing's drama, and expressed its view of "private persons" in tragedy in the following words: "Ce titre n'annonce rien d'héroïque, et en effet, le sujet de la Pièce n'est pas un de ces événemens qui fixent les yeux de la Terre, et nous touchent que de loin. Les noms des Rois et des Héros sont imposans sur le Théâtre, mais ce qui impose, n'intéresse pas. En fait de revers, il est vrai que l'élévation du Personnage contribue au Pathétique.... mais en général plus les personnages sont près de nous, plus leur situation nous intéresse. La Tragédie bourgeoise est dans le vrai spectacle pathétique."

The sixteenth volume of the *Encyclopédie* appeared in 1755. It contained the article on "le Tragique Bourgeois".

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by the chevalier de Jaucourt, and expressed the 'right wing' opinion of Diderot's group. The author, who had a very thorough, if uninspired, comprehension of English, concludes rather cautiously "Quoique la tragédie définisse la représentation d'une action héroïque, il n'est pas douteux qu'on ne puisse mettre sur le théâtre un tragique bourgeois. Il arrive tous les jours dans les conditions médiocres des événements touchans qui peuvent être l'objet de l'imitation poétique. Il semble même que le grand nombre des spectateurs étant dans cet état mitoyen, la proximité du malheureux et de ceux qui le voyent souffrir, seroit un motif de plus pour s'attendrir. Cependant, s'il est vrai qu'on ne peut donner le brodequin aux rois, il n'est pas moins vrai qu'on ne peut ajuster le cothurne au marchand. La tragédie ne peut consentir à cette dégradation.... Concluons que ce n'est pas d'un habile artiste de mettre sur la scène le tragique bourgeois, ou ce qui revient au même, des sujets non-héroïques."

Jaucourt may have been thinking of the London Merchant when he said "on ne peut ajuster le cothurne aux marchands", for the Philosophe sans le Savoir was not played until December 1765, and it was not a tragedy. The articles Tragédie and Tragique Bourgeois prove the very great prestige that attached to heroic tragedy, and express the prevalent, but inaccurate opinion that Diderot meant to set up domestic tragedy in place of the imperial form.
Like Jaucourt, the more conservative "philosophes" thus took up a position similar to Voltaire's: they disapproved of "tragédie bourgeoise" because they felt that heroic tragedy could be used to serve their purpose just as well, and because they considered it a higher form of art. It was Voltaire's influence that helped them to defend this view, right up to the Revolution.

Two years later, Beaumarchais opened the discussion anew, by bringing arguments from Richardson's work to support the old contention that domestic plays were more natural than heroic tragedies, and by inventing a new name for the drama of middle life\(^1\). He called it "drame", a term that conveyed what Diderot meant by "tragédie bourgeoise" and "comédie sérieuse". Beaumarchais thought it "barbarous" and "classic" to deny that an event which would draw tears from the spectators in real life, would do so if presented on the stage. Richardson's novels, which were so much admired, were true "drames", and faithful pictures of life: the "drame" in the theatre was the climax of a novel, and copied the daily round in just the same fashion. The *Essai sur le genre sérieux* repeatedly observed that "natural", "true" "domestic" tragedy was more affecting, and thus a greater power for good than the orthodox form. The reference to Richardson, due to the popularity of his novels, added nothing to Diderot's

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\(^1\) *Essai sur le genre sérieux, en tête d'Eugénie*, (1767)

*Oeuvres*, Beaumarchais, (Paris 1876.)
Éloge, but it is interesting since it showed the connection between "drame" and this other new form of expression.

Beaumarchais merely wrote a commentary on Diderot; his opinions were not original, except for the discovery of the convenient word "drame", to serve as a protection from hostile critics who declared the domestic kind to be no true tragedy. The use of this name skilfully guided the debate away from the claim of the bourgeois to be a hero of tragedy, and directed it towards the consideration of qualities common to all drama. The less subtle critics welcomed Beaumarchais' "drame" because it abolished the fine distinction between "comédie sérieuse" and "tragédie bourgeoise". This term marked a concession to the opposition: it was no longer such an obvious defiance of the law of heroic tragedy.

The appearance of Saurin's Beverley in 1768 provided further occasion for debating the proper name for this "lesser tragedy", and the problem of the middle classes on the stage was linked with it. Saurin himself, in the Preface to Le Joueu called the play "une tragédie bourgeoise", and said that it was definitely inferior to heroic tragedy, because the characters were of lower rank.

This rather meek attitude towards the older "imperial" form, stung Grimm into a vigorous protest, when he criticised Le Joueu in the Correspondance Littéraire: "Si Beverley est

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une tragédie, pourquoi est-elle bourgeoise? S'agit-il ici des malheurs qui ne peuvent arriver qu'à des bourgeois? ou bien, ce qui est tragique pour les bourgeois, est-il comique pour les princes?..... Il fallait appeler cette pièce tout uniment "Le Joueur", tragédie, parceque c'est "Le Joueur", tragédie."

Fréron, too disliked the name "tragédie bourgeoise". It was not because he thought that the old and the new types came within the definition of tragedy, but, contradicting Grimm, he said\(^1\): "c'est imposer le même nom à deux genres différents, c'est identifier les revers éclatans des Rois avec les malheurs domestiques des sujets.... Ces deux mots "tragédie" et "bourgeoise" ne sont pas faits pour être mariés ensemble; conservons aux genres nobles leur dignité, ne les dégradons point."

Grimm and Fréron represent the opposing points of view on the social question bound up with the argument over "domestic" and "imperial" tragedy: and while Grimm seemed to think that the new kind was a substitute for the old, Fréron adopted Diderot's view that they were two separate varieties, and he only pleaded for more distinctive names.

Fréron was prepared to admit that "drame bourgeois" - so long as it was not confused with tragedy - had a right to exist\(^2\): "J'ai dit, et je dirai toujours que ce genre est dans

\(^{2}\) ibid.
l'humanité, et tout ce qui est dans l'humanité, dit Térence, n'est point étranger à l'homme. L'orgueil, l'avarice, l'hypocrisie, la fureur du jeu n'enfantent que trop souvent des maux affreux dans la classe ordinaire des citoyens. Pourquoi ne pas vouloir que l'art dramatique présente ces vices sous leur aspect sinistre? .... Si l'on objecte que c'est introduire un genre mixte sur la scène, on se trompe. C'est un véritable genre, un genre à part, un genre indépendant, qui n'est la tragédie, ni la comédie. Dès qu'il est mixte, comme dans l'Enfant Prodigue de M. de Voltaire, il n'est plus un genre, il doit subir le sort du tragico-comique autrefois en vogue parmi nous, et qu'on a banni de la scène."

Further on, there is a reference to the general popularity of domestic plays in France. This, said Fréron, justified their existence, and might be explained by their power to move the 'common race of men', which surpassed that of heroic tragedy. Fréron's reference to "Monsieur de Voltaire" throws light on the unusual coincidence between his views and Diderot's; his honesty as a journalist forced him to confess that "drame bourgeois" pleased the public better than its more illustrious rival.

Again in 1768, Maucomble, who wrote Les Amans Désespérés ou la Comtesse d'Ollinval, practically repeated Fréron's

arguments. He recognized the two distinct types of tragedy, and declared that 'plays of private woe' were indebted to their English predecessors. He also realised how important was the part played in their development by the exhaustion of heroic themes and characters.

The Preface to Les Amans Désespérés puts it thus: "Les Anglois avoient déjà jetté la semence de ce genre; les traductions qu'on nous avait données de quelques-unes de leurs tragédies bourgeoises, malgré les irrégularités dont ces Pièces sont défigurées, nous ont convaincus de l'effet étonnant que ce genre pouvait produire lorsqu'il serait porté à sa perfection. Enfin l'auteur de Beverley, en nous arrachant des larmes, vient de répondre à toutes les objections si l'on doit juger de la bonté d'un genre d'ouvrage par ses effets.... Il y a quelque temps que l'on n'aurait osé prononcer le mot de tragédie bourgeoise, et celui qui aurait proposé, ou hasardé, d'intéresser nos coeurs par les tableaux de nos passions, pris dans la condition privée des hommes, aurait été regardé comme un écrivain sans goût, et dénué de toute connaissance des effets du théâtre."

Maucomble here defines the influence of Saurin's Beverley, in persuading the critics of the merits of domestic tragedy. He was fulfilling Diderot's forecast of the effect which the pathetic appeal of Moore's original might have upon

(1) p.7. Preface, Les Amans Désespérés ou la Comtesse d'Ollinval, tragédie bourgeoise en cinq actes, de Maucomble. (Paris 1768.)
French audiences. His repetition of the old argument in defence of a new field for tragedy once more focussed interest on the everlasting topic of the utility of "tragédie bourgeoise". He also appealed to fresh precedents in English literature, to add weight to his opinion.

Barthe's La Jolie Femme, La Femme du Jour appeared soon afterwards, and we may gather from his imaginary conversations between people of quality, that a more broad-minded attitude to domestic plays was now manifest. He contributed an intelligent appreciation of Richardson and Fielding to the advancement of "tragédie bourgeoise". Richardson ranked above Plutarch and Plato as a great moralist, Fielding drew a faithful picture of the common people. Barthe's words on this last point are worth quoting, for they are similar in spirit to Mercier's pronouncements:

"La Marquise: Ah! fi! le peuple! qu'avons-nous besoin de ses moeurs?"

Le Bel-Esprit: Eh, Madame... un tableau de Pater, de Chardin vous pique, vous enchante - pourquoi une autre sorte de peinture vous seroit-elle désagréable?"²

Palissot was on the opposing side in this debate, but he too, had to acknowledge the English origin of "these monstrosities"³.

(2) pp.69-70 ibid: for Mercier's views see pp.6-8, Préface de Jenneval (1769), t.I, Théâtre, (Amst. 1778 etc.)
(3) p.122, article Fréron, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Littérature, C.Palissot (1769) ed. Londres 1771.
In the next year, Restif de la Bretonne went on with the argument "about it and about". No value can be attached to his opinion, since he borrowed the exact words of Jaucourt's article on *Le Tragique Bourgeois*, but it does illustrate the widespread interest in the question of presenting the distress of common men on the stage.

Dorat was more enterprising. He defined domestic tragedy as a restricted form of the heroic kind; and said that to believe in the greater sentimental appeal of domestic misfortunes was to mistake the truth. An audience was more touched by the fall of the mighty: a catastrophe that the ordinary spectator need not fear, and one that gives him pleasure, when he reflects that all men are equal in being born to misery.

Mercier brought in the 'republican' argument, in a very different context, when he wrote to Thomas the academician in 1770: "Je me destine à suivre quelque temps la carrière du théâtre... On a cru qu'il fallait des Rois dans une Tragédie... il faut plutôt... montrer, je crois, que le courage, l'héroïsme appartiennent aux classes obscures de la société... que l'homme est tout, et les titres ne sont rien." This inclusion of the "classes obscures" with the 'bourgeois', was the logical conclusion of Diderot's first departure from the laws of heroic tragedy: and in the Nouvel

(1) p.397, *La Mimographe*, Restif de la Bretonne. (Amst.1770.)
Essai sur l'art dramatique, Mercier supported this extension of the term "tragédie bourgeoise" with examples from English literature.

In 1773, when the Nouvel Essai was published, Johnson, Young, Sterne, Thomson, and Shakespeare, had all stimulated thought in various provinces of French literature: and Mercier reflected, in some degree, the new familiarity with English letters consequent upon the popularity of these writers in France. Shakespeare, Richardson, and Fielding, were most often quoted in the Nouvel Essai, the influence of the others being directed towards questions foreign to the treatment of bourgeois themes in serious plays.

Mercier compared French tragedy to the formal gardens planned by Lenôtre, and celebrated the superior natural charm of the English variety, in the style of Watelet's at "Moulin-Joli", which was like the free English tragedy. The comparison was not very fresh, but it was connected with the example of Shakespeare, who served as a model for Mercier's "drame", which aimed at reforming the nation. The humblest of workmen appeared on the English stage, and they even celebrated, in pantomime, the benefits of republican government; so Mercier could not understand why it should be impossible in France to represent a King like Henri Quatre talking familiarly to his

(1) see pp.39 (note a), 97 (note a), 100, 112, 207, Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique, L.S. Mercier. (Amst. 1773.)
peasantry\textsuperscript{1}, or to bring before an audience characters who used tools and machines, since readers of the Encyclopédie had shown interest in such topics.

Fielding and Richardson\textsuperscript{2} were called upon to support Mercier's defence of "drame bourgeois". The following passage illustrates Mercier's usual train of thought in linking Richardson and Fielding with his definition of a "national" tragedy\textsuperscript{3}. "Eh! poète imprudent, détourné les yeux, oublie cette misérable espèce [les 'gens de cour'] laisse-la se morfondre à l'oeil-de-boeuf, c'est toi qui fixes son existence fugitive, sans toi la Ville ne s'apercevroit pas de ce troupeau.... Est-ce là l'homme, mon confrère? Sont-ce là tes compatriotes?... Ne cours plus après ces fantômes changeans, détourné tes regards qu'ils voudroient attirer; que t'importe l'orchestre et les petites loges? c'est le parterre qui te jugera.... Après une journée de travail, fuis ces soupers brillants, où l'on ne trouve que l'esprit du jour.... va souper amicalement chez l'honnête bourgeois, dont la fille innocente et modeste sourira de joie à ton arrivée. Là tu verras des moeurs franches, douces, ouvertes, variées, là tu verras le tableau de la vie civile, tel que Richardson et Fielding l'ont observé."

\textsuperscript{(1)} The Partie de Chasse de Henri IV was not played in public until 1774, although it was published in 1766.
\textsuperscript{(2)} see pp.190, 210, 320, 326 (note) Nouvel Essai, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{(3)} pp.83-4, Nouvel Essai, Mercier, op.cit.
In the same year, Marmontel rounded off Diderot’s theory with an estimation of English literature, which allowed for the new ideas absorbed since 1757, and yet was curiously faithful to the old prejudiced "judgments" of Muralt, Leblanc, and the early writers. It is a necessary corrective to Mercier’s opinion.

"Un peuple sérieux, réfléchi", said Marmontel\(^1\), "peu délicat sur les plaisirs des sens, et chez qui une raison mélancolique domine toutes les facultés de l’âme…. ce même Pays, qui n’a jamais produit un grand Peintre, un grand Statuaire un bon Musicien, l’Angleterre, a produit d’excellents Poètes… chez lui la Poésie aurait encore pour elle la force au défaut de la grace, la hardiesse, la vigueur, en échange de la régularité, l’élevation, la profondeur des sentiments et des idées, l’énergie de l’expression, la chaleur de l’éloquence, la véhémence des passions, l’intérêt des situations, l’âme et la vie répandue dans les images et dans les tableaux, enfin cette vérité naïve dans les moeurs et dans l’action, qui, toute inculte et sauvage qu’elle est, peut avoir encore sa beauté."

Marmontel then entered upon a consideration of the rank proper to a tragic personage. After due allowance for the glamour of a great name and its power to arouse pity and

\(^{1}\) pp.xxxiii De la Tragédie, Discours Préliminaire, Chefs d’oeuvre dramatiques, Marmontel. Paris, 1773.
terror, Marmontel went on to say, "Mais c’est faire injure au coeur humain, et méconnaître la nature, de dire qu’elle ait besoin de titres pour nous émouvoir. Les noms sacrés de père, d’amant, de fils, de mère, d’homme enfin, avec des moeurs intéressantes, voilà les qualités pathétiques. Qu’importe quel est le rang, le nom, la naissance du malheureux que sa complaisance pour d’indignes amis, et la séduction de l’exemple ont engagé dans les pièges du jeu; et qui gémit dans les prisons, dévoré de remords et de honte? Si vous demandez quel il est, je vous réponds, il fut homme de bien, et pour son supplice, il est époux et père.... Cherchez dans l’histoire une situation plus touchante, plus morale, en un mot, plus tragique; et au moment où ce malheureux s’empoisonne, au moment où, après s’être empoisonné, il apprend que le Ciel vient à son secours; dans ce moment douloureux et terrible, où à l’horreur de mourir se joint le regret d’avoir pu vivre heureux, dites-moi ce qui manque à ce sujet pour être digne de la tragédie? L’extraordinaire, le merveilleux, me direz-vous. Hé! ne le voyez vous pas, ce merveilleux, dans le passage rapide de l’honneur à l’opprobre, de l’innocence au crime, du doux repos au désespoir, en un mot, dans l’excès du malheur attiré par une faiblesse? La tragédie populaire a donc ses avantages, comme l’héroïque a

(1) p.XIX, Discours préliminaire, op.cit. 1773. Marmontel reproduced this passage, almost word for word, on p.961, t.IV, article Tragédie, in the [supplément] t.IV, Encyclopédie, in the 1777 Amsterdam edition.
les siens..... Quelle comparaison de Beverley avec Athalie, du côté de la pompe et la majesté du théâtre; mais aussi, quelle comparaison du côté du pathétique et de la morale."

This well-known passage is only an embroidery of a theme previously outlined in a passage from Diderot, quoted above\(^1\). Marmontel had the success of Beverley to encourage him in enlarging on the pathos of that story, but it is significant of the even balance held between the forces of tradition and those of innovation in tragedy, that nearly twenty years after Diderot, the argument should be very much in the same position. "Drame bourgeois" was certainly a success, from the box-office point of view, but the supporters of heroic tragedy had Voltaire on their side, and so, as far as the critics went, neither could claim victory, because Voltaire's prestige in the heroic kind was equivalent to the popular favour extended to domestic tragedy. Each party still criticised the other in much the same terms. Beaumarchais in the *Lettre Modérée sur la chute et la critique du Barbier de Séville* in 1775, wrote, as the injured author of two "drames"\(^2\): "... Entre la tragédie et la comédie on n'ignore plus qu'il n'existe rien; c'est un point décidé, le maître l'a dit, l'école en retentit, et, pour moi, j'en suis tellement convaincu, que si je voulais aujourd'hui

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(2) *Lettre Modérée ... sur la Chute... du Barbier de Seville*, (1775) p.67(Oeuvres de Beaumarchais, ed. Fournier, Paris 1876.)
mettre au théâtre une mère éplorée, une épouse trahie, une soeur éperdue, un fils déshérité, pour les présenter décemment au public, je commencerais par leur supposer un beau royaume... vers l'un des archipels, ou dans tel autre coin du monde, certain après cela que l'invraisemblance du roman, l'énormité des faits, l'enflure des caractères, le gigantesque des idées et la bouffissure du langage, loin de m'être imputés à reproche, assureraient encore mon succès.... Présenter les hommes d'une condition moyenne accablés par le malheur! Fi donc!"

Sometimes, one side gave way a little to the other. The Journal des Théâtres, a periodical which inclined to conservative views, gave the following advice to young writers\(^1\): "Si, dans quelque rang de la société que ce soit, vous trouverez un sujet intéressant, saisissez-vous-en, et faites un drame comme ceux dont nous vous verrons de parler." The plays to which the Journal referred were Le Père de Famille, Le Philosophe sans le Savoir, l'Ecosaise, le Fils Naturel, Eugénie, Beverley l'Honnête Criminel, le Fabricant de Londres: a list that demonstrated the grouping of "tragédies bourgeoises" and "comédies sérieuses" under the title "drame", and their relationship to the great social conflict that was gathering force\(^2\).

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\(^2\) see p.14, Vol.I, ibid. (1776) where sympathy is shown with the "honnête Marchand" and his rights in the theatre.
The principles on which Mercier had established his particular variety of "drame" first set the argument on a new plane, so that it became a matter of social, and even of political importance, to be interested in the affairs of "middle life". Events in France stressed this more and more, and they also explain the repetition of arguments in the conflict between the nobility and the bourgeois in tragedy. Moreover, the same reason partly accounts for the close of discussion on this point.

We can fix the date of that occurrence, and indicate the general trend of opinion which led up to it, from the testimony afforded by a list of items in the catalogue of a long-forgotten library in Lozère, and from a passage in one of Morellet's letters to Lord Shelburne.

There are four works in this library of a Protestant who lived in the South of France, which give a clue to the most penetrating influence from England at the different times when they were acquired. In 1754 a copy of Paradise Lost in Louis Racine's version was probably bought because of the owner's belief; then in 1776 the great interest in politics and social life led to the purchase of a Précis Philosophique et Politique de l'Histoire de l'Angleterre, traduit de l'Anglois; in 1778 a similar reason accounted for the presence

of a work that severely censured the French social system; L'Observateur Anglois, ou Correspondance secrète entre Mylord All-Eye et Mylord All-Ear, à Londres. Lastly the fashionable taste of 1785 was reflected by the purchase of *Éléments de la langue anglaise*, et méthode pratique pour apprendre facilement cette langue.

Morellet's letter also speaks for itself: "On m'a fait reprocher de votre part" he wrote to Lord Shelburne in 1780 "de ce que je ne vous avais envoyé aucun ouvrage nouveau... Mais, Mylord, il faut en accuser notre stérilité, et non pas ma négligence. Il ne paraît rien que des journaux, qui n'apprennent rien.... qui découragent les gens de lettres, et égarent le jugement du Public."¹

We may now resume our conclusions as to the part played by England in bringing the middle classes into French tragedy.

"Tragédie bourgeoise" was created as a supplementary form of the graver kind of poetry, because a new situation had arisen in thought and society which demanded a more natural mode of tragic expression, and this Diderot interpreted as the right of the middle classes to appear in serious drama.

France had looked to England for leadership in philosophy and economics, before English literature was known to her writers. Voltaire, through his comedies, his innovations in

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heroic tragedy, and the *Lettres Anglaises*, did great service when he pointed out that there was a storehouse of ideas in England for the new middle-class literature which France needed.

When Diderot eventually developed the "tragédie bourgeoise" Voltaire, as the "continuateur de Racine" would admit no rival in the art of Tragedy, so he led the reaction against the influence of English ideas in this direction, and the house of the *Encyclopédie* was divided against itself.

Diderot built up his new theory of drama from certain original ideas which caught his fancy, and some of these were English. They brought into French letters a sentiment and a realism which fed the anglomania responsible for the creation, growth, and popular success of "drame bourgeois".

Chief amongst Diderot's models for the tragedy of private life were *The London Merchant* and *The Gamester*, which previous critics had helped him to recognize as excellent vehicles for the propagation of his moral and social doctrines.

Numerous imitations of these plays found favour in the French theatre; and this proves that they were far more striking than Landois' *Silvie*, which was an experiment along similar lines. Although Diderot praised it generously, *Silvie* was soon forgotten; for Landois had not emphasised its possibilities as an instrument of social reform, and the English
plays were obviously suited to this essential purpose of the lesser tragedy. Therefore, the credit for effective inspiration must go to Lillo and Moore.

Some time afterwards, Shakespeare, Richardson, and Fielding suggested improvements in the theory of "drame bourgeois". Mercier declared that plays of this type should represent characters taken from the common people, as well as from the middle classes, and that they should aim at the social regeneration of all sorts and conditions of men.

Diderot set forth the arguments for "domestic" plays with the energy and enthusiasm that accompany creative effort. These were immediately countered by more conservative thinkers, with Voltaire behind them. The forces of innovation and of tradition were very evenly balanced, for there were "philosophes" and "anti-philosophes" on either side, and so the debate never came to a definite conclusion. Most of the writers who took part in it, however, agreed upon the English origin of domestic tragedy, and this confirms the importance of Lillo and Moore, who were the first to dispense with "Regal pomp and glaring Show", in order to portray "private sorrows".

Although the discussion apparently turned on a technical point in dramatic criticism, the real forces engaged were those which came into open conflict in 1789.

The ideas from English literature which took part in the development of tragedies describing catastrophes of middle-class
existence, stimulated Diderot into making the use of such themes an essential principle of his experiment in drama. These English influences also kept alive the dispute over the rank of the hero in tragedy, and they were responsible for the break with tradition in "tragedie bourgeoise", just as they had a similar disintegrating effect on poetry and the novel in France.

When it became obvious, about 1776, that the argument over "heroic" and "domestic" characters in tragedy was at a deadlock, once more the influx of ideas from England brought the underlying cause of conflict to light, and the debate moved into a different sphere.

Realism, and an effort to find a natural way of expressing the thoughts and feelings of the middle-classes, so as to improve their morals, and their social position, passed from English drama with Lillo and Moore, to Diderot in France. There the new plays held their own on the stage, until they were overshadowed for a time by the events which led to the summoning of the States-General in 1789.
PART II.
PART II.

Chapter V.

THE USE OF THEMES BORROWED FROM THE ENGLISH NOVEL IN "COMÉDIE LARMOYANTE" AND "DRAME BOURGEOIS".

The eighteenth-century novel in England had certain affinities with "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois". They were alike in professing a moral aim, which was to be fulfilled by "weeping diversion into virtue", and in choosing to portray characters of middle life, rather than of noble birth. Thus the popularity of certain English novels, inevitably suggested to French dramatists that they contained the material for successful plays.

The works from which incidents were borrowed for dramatization were Swift's Gulliver, Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa, Fielding's Tom Jones, and Mrs Frances Sheridan's Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph.

Richardson's masterly drawing from life, and his sentiment, Fielding's close-knit plot, and the truth of his pictures of English society, gave rise to more imitations than did Swift's grim satire, or Mrs Sheridan's ladylike work.
Before proceeding to the detailed examination of the motives behind this choice of subject-matter, there is an interesting negative explanation to be found in the study of some other English novels, very well received and widely read in France, which apparently had no attraction for the authors of "comédie larmoyante" or "drame".

The most striking example is that of Sterne's works. Although the current vocabulary had been enriched with "shandéisme" and "sentimental" as a result of their popularity, the only plays that showed any signs of borrowing from Tristram Shandy or the Sentimental Journey were vaudevilles or proverbs. The very individual style of Sterne's writing, and the absence of incidents that obviously suggested the plot of a play made it very difficult for the French dramatists to understand and appreciate his work.

Goldsmith also seems to have had no influence on this kind of dramatic writing, before the Revolution. Although the Vicar of Wakefield was translated and admired, the overwhelming popularity of Richardson's work frustrated any effect it might have had on French drama.

The Castle of Otranto and similar tales calculated to "make your flesh creep" did not attract French playwrights in search of a plot, because the sensations evoked by reading them were too violent to please a public which enjoyed a more sentimental pathos, and appreciated a more obvious moral
lesson. Indirectly however, the novel of terror did affect Baculard d'Arnaud's plays, but they show no sign of an immediate loan from any such work.

Positive evidence of these tastes is afforded by a more careful review of the plays which did use material taken from the English novel. For convenience sake, this chapter is divided into four sections, each devoted to the imitations of one novelist. Beginning with Swift, we shall continue with Richardson and Fielding, and close the series with Mrs Sheridan.
I. Swift.

Swift was the first of these writers to enjoy a great reputation in France\(^1\). His *Gulliver* was translated in 1727 by the Abbé Desfontaines, and though its influence only affected Marivaux, and did not touch 'drame bourgeois' directly, it is important enough to be mentioned here.

In 1727 everyone was interested in the argument which opened with Boissy's *Français à Londres*. Boissy had shown the English as thinking men, and the French as frivolous, repeating Muralt's estimate of the national character. When *Gulliver* was published in French, it was taken as another proof that the English "thought". Marivaux was tempted to join in the discussion, so in the preface to his moral play *L'Isle de la Raison*\(^2\) he stated the view that "reason" or the power to think justly, was not the prerogative of any nation. To clothe his own ideas on "reason", he borrowed the idea of *Gulliver* among the Lilliputians and used it in a symbolic way, for on the 'Island of Reason', ordinary people who were shipwrecked there seemed as small as the Lilliputians until they had overcome their "unreasonable" prejudices, when they grew to the same stature as the natives of the island.

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In Marivaux' account of the prejudices that hindered the development of reasonable beings, there is much that may be found in Swift's book. Both writers emphasised that humanity was degenerate because it had forgotten reason: but the details of Marivaux' argument may be found in his *Spectateur Francais* as well as in *Gulliver*, and thus it is not safe to conclude that he borrowed more than what he called "les petits hommes" from Swift. It is, however, certain that he employed the Lilliputians as a popular device to enforce his moral satire.

Although *L'Isle de la Raison* was not a successful play at first, it attracted enough attention, and its link with *Gulliver* was obvious enough, to be celebrated in parody. This was done by Dominique and Romagnesi in their *Isle de la Folie*. Since they included 'Gulliver' in their list of characters, and stated definitely that Marivaux had arranged ideas from Swift into a system in his play, it was evidently clear to contemporary thought that he had been inspired by the English work.

After 1727, however, the growing demand for sentiment to modify the dry quality of French reason and wit in comedy, or to drive home the sermon in a play, put an end to the influence of Swift on the French drama with which we are concerned.

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(1) *L'Isle de la Folie*, représentée par les Comédiens Italiens ordinaires du Roi, le 24 septembre, 1734, par les Sieurs Dominique & Romagnesi, comédiens du Roi. See Scene IX.
His *Gulliver* had the social satire and moral lesson which Marivaux wished to express in comedy, for Swift's ideas on reason agreed with the French writer's, and thereby stimulated the movement of French comedy from criticism of society to suggestions for its improvement, a step that was essential to the formation of "comédie larmoyante" and "drame".
The plays which were affected by the influence of Richardson's work on French dramatic writers have been discussed by M. Facteau in a thesis entitled *Les Romans de Richardson sur la scène française*.

They have all been carefully re-considered from the point of view of the general effect of English novels on French drama, so as to avoid a mere repetition of the facts and conclusions brought forward in M. Facteau's work. Examination of these plays from a different angle has led to certain deductions which contradict some points he makes.

When *Pamela* was translated into French, "comédie larmoyante" was already a flourishing genre, with its characteristic qualities of sentiment and moral aim well defined. The novel had aroused a controversy in England, and the French edition immediately became a centre of interest in Paris, especially as it was enriched with "portraits" of the characters, contributed by Richardson himself\(^1\), which had not appeared in the original English edition.

The arguments over the story in England, these new "portraits" - which made it easier to use characters in drama - the "sentiments of humanity and virtue" extolled by the critics of England and France, *Pamela*'s many trials and her reward,

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\(^1\) see the Préface du Traducteur, *Paméla*, éd. 1742, Amst.
made the book an obvious source of material for a "comédie larmoyante".

Nivelle de la Chaussée and Boissy both made use of it. As Boissy's play was not a true sentimental comedy, it lies outside the province of this chapter. Nivelle de la Chaussée's Paméla was written in the recognized style of "comédie larmoyante", and put into dramatic form the episode of Pamela's "captivity". It was played at the Théâtre Français in December 1743, and damned on the first night, for reasons evident to anyone who reads the play.

La Chaussée told the story of Pamela's attempts to escape from the guardianship of Mrs Jewkes, and ended with her marriage to Lord B... As the incidents in this part of Richardson's novel did not seem stirring enough, Nivelle de la Chaussée tried to improve their effect on the stage by adding Lord B...s attempt at suicide, to explain Pamela's return to his house, and to hurry on the wedding. He also brought Mrs Andrews into his story. She was chosen by Lord B..., (who did not know that she was Pamela's mother) as a successor to Mrs Jewkes. These changes complicated the story, without raising the interest.

(1) Paméla; de M. Nivelle de la Chaussée, représentée le 6 décembre 1743; see Vol.IV, Oeuvres de N.de la Chaussée, éd. Paris 1762.
(2) Paméla ou la Vertue mieux éprouvée, représentée le 4 mars, 1742, par les comédiens Italiens ordinaires du roi, (comédie en 3 a.v. et en vers libres, de M. de Boissy. [It is more a parody of Pamela than an imitation.]
Richardson's patient art in building up his characters, and his skill in unfolding the progress of their sentiments was bound to be lost during the transition from novel to comedy, but Nivelle de la Chaussée's psychology was needlessly crude, and his play failed because his explanations of Lady Davers' sudden affection for Pamela, and of Lord B...'s repentance were so weak.

Nivelle de la Chaussée attempted to reproduce the moral teaching of Richardson, but this became a series of dull platitudes when it was translated into the conventional language of French comedy, and divorced from the inner life of the characters. La Chaussée's flabby verse, and his removal of the qualities which distinguished the speech of Pamela from that of Mrs Jewkes, or Mrs Andrews, also detracted from the value of his play. Since the rules of comedy forbade the French dramatist to mention God and religion directly and with fervour, Pamela lost the very backbone of her character, and her complaints seemed querulous rather than pathetic. Respect for the proprieties was again responsible for the weakening of the conflict between Lord B... and Lady Davers, and the toning down of Lord B...'s brutality. Consequently Paméla lost dramatic force.

Nivelle de la Chaussée's consciousness of this loss very probably led him to change the story of Richardson's heroine; while his forced neglect of its religious aspect prompted him
to pick out the social theories in the English novel, and so to arrange his plot that he demonstrated the triumph of Pamela's virtue over the prejudices of Lady Davers and Lord B... in the marriage at the end, with Lord B...'s confession that 'he was proud to become the reward of virtue'\(^1\).

This social problem was not particularly stressed in Nivelle de la Chaussée's play, but it was quite as clearly shown to his audiences as it was to the readers of Richardson's novel. Although it was unsuccessful, the French comedy showed the general trend of English influence from that quarter, and later French dramatists renewed the debate over the question of marriage between two people of very different rank.

Voltaire was the first to do so. He understood the temper of his public very well, and he knew that a more outspoken statement on this point would be acceptable. The failure of previous attempts caused him to avoid the name Pamela, so he called his comedy *Nanine oule Prêjugé Vaincu.*

Its position in the development of French drama is that of a bridge between "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois"; for it was played in 1749, and Voltaire defined it as a comedy with pathetic scenes; he would not allow it to be called a "comédie larmoyante", while he had nothing but scorn for "tragédie bourgeoise". It linked together the influence of

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Richardson on these two varieties of dramatic art.

Unlike La Chaussée's *Paméla*, Nanine was a very successful play, and it was acted regularly at the Théâtre Français every year, up to the Revolution. Voltaire was warned by his predecessors' failures that a close imitation of the story was impossible, so he discussed the prejudice against the marriage of a nobleman and a servant, in the setting of French comedy, through the masks of characters who betrayed something of their English origin.

Richardson had come to the same conclusion as Voltaire on the question of marriage, but Voltaire put forward only the social aspect of the problem, and left out all the complications introduced by Lord B...'s attempts on Pamela's virtue, as well as the considerations drawn from Christian teaching that were in the English novel. The necessity for unity of action in drama, and Voltaire's "philosophic" doctrines determined his choice of that aspect of the story. His experience of the popular favour accorded to the *Lettres Anglaises* in 1734 had taught him what conclusions would be acceptable, when he used English material.

The story of Nanine makes use of a situation analogous to Pamela's; the Comte d'Olban loves Nanine, who is in a dependent position in his household, but some scruples on the score of the difference in their birth hold him back from proposing marriage to her. La Baronne de l'Orme who wishes to
marry him herself, for worldly reasons, intrigues against Nanine, and almost persuades the Comte that Nanine is in love with a mysterious stranger. It appears eventually that this man is her father, this, with Nanine's virtue, and her forbearance in her hour of trial, defeat the wiles of the Baronne, and win the consent of the Comte d'Olban's mother to their marriage.

In the first scene of his comedy, Voltaire made the statement that a marriage such as he proposed was more honourable than an alliance with a great family: and in the last scene he "proved" it with the words,

"Nous avons vu les hommes les plus sages
Ne consulter que les moeurs et le bien,
Elle a les moeurs, il ne lui manque rien,
Et je ferai par goût et par justice
Ce qu'on a fait cent fois par avarice."¹

These lines indicate the social philosophy that Voltaire preached in Nanine, and there are two more passages in which this philosophy is linked with an English book, which may very well have been Pamela.

In the first allusion to this book, Nanine tells la Baronne de l'orme - with a touch of malice² -

"Il est très intéressant;
L'auteur prétend que les hommes sont frères,
Nés tous égaux. Mais ce sont des chimères,
Je ne puis croire à cette égalité."

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² Acte I, sc. V, ibid.
Later, the Comte d'Olban asks her about this book he had
given her:

Naïvement dites-moi quel effet
Ce livre anglais sur votre esprit a fait?

Nanine: Il ne m'a point du tout persuadée.
Plus que jamais, monsieur, j'ai dans l'idée
Qu'il est des coeurs si grands, si généreux,
Que tout le reste est bien vil auprès d'eux.

If this is a reference to Pamela, Voltaire evidently wished
to emphasise that his idea of equality differed from
Richardson's; where Pamela and Lord B... were equal in the
sight of God, his Nanine and the Comte were equal in virtue;
a term that he used with its full "philosophic" meaning: and
both writers contrasted this equality with the difference in
the social positions of their characters.

In Nanine the Comte d'Olban and his mother are good
"philosophes"; while the Comte is also a gallant nobleman,
and the Marquise acts with the good sense of one of Molière's
"honnêtes gens". It would have been impossible to carry out
the intrigue of the play if Voltaire had introduced a char-
acter as brutally ardent as Lord B...; for the story depends
on the conflict between d'Olban's prejudice and his love of
virtue. The part of la baronne de l'Orme is to stir up this
conflict, and to impersonate prejudice. She bears a certain
resemblance to Madame Argaute in Les Fausses Confidences;
her character both in its jealousy and its attitude to social
differences, was not new to the French stage.

(1) Acte I, sc. VII, Nanine. op.cit.
Nanine herself had a slightly foreign air that proved very attractive. Voltaire gave her Pamela's meek obedience and a hint of her obstinacy. The letter-writing and her change into "peasant costume" were taken from the English novel, and were new traits in a French heroine of comedy. Nanine's patience in undeserved suffering, and her numerous acts of generosity were also copied from Pamela's character, and helped to fix the traits of a new type of heroine in the future "drame bourgeois".

The story of Pamela, owing to the greater attractions of Clarissa, was not used again in comédie larmoyante or drame after Voltaire's Nanine, until Mercier introduced it into his Indigent which was published in 1772.

Mercier took for his subject the differences which antagonized the poor and the rich, and treated it in the "domestic" style. One example of oppression by the wealthy was the incident of Deslys' attempt to seduce Charlotte. Deslys was a rich young man who unlawfully enjoyed a heritage that he should have shared with an unknown sister: but he made no attempt to find her. A poor weaver and his family lived in a house that he owned. He happened one day to see the daughter, Charlotte, and as she was very beautiful, he made use of a trick to persuade her to come to his room.

(1) Acte II, sc. IX, Nanine op.cit.
(2) Acte III, sc. I. ibid.
There he tried to seduce her with promises of wealth for her family. She exhorted him to virtue by quoting the example of Pamela. Her words had no effect, but as he offered her violence, she was saved by the accident of a gun going off; servants rushed to the spot, and the episode ended in the same providential way as one of Richardson's.¹

At the end of the play, Mercier solved the social problem in a more logical way than Richardson. Charlotte turned out to be Deslys' sister, so she shared his wealth and married the young weaver Joseph, whom she had previously loved as a brother.

The difference in wealth was used as a means of tempting Pamela in Richardson's novel, but it had not the importance it assumed in Mercier's play. It was quite possible that Lord B's attempt to bribe Pamela suggested to Mercier that he could make use of a similar incident in his play. The reason that lay behind Mercier's title L'Indigent, and the moral lesson of the play, was Mercier's very bitter consciousness of the sufferings of poor people in real life². They were turned out of their homes, disturbed by the noise of rich neighbours, and their women-folk were seduced, just as in the play, for Mercier's Tableau de Paris is full of such stories, and he must have been collecting material for the Tableau when he

(2) see his words in the later work, De la Littérature et des Littérateurs, published in 1778, on p.83. (ed. Yverdon 1778.)
wrote *L’Indigent*. Like all the "philosophes" before him, Mercier tried to improve matters by showing where true virtue lay, in the hope that good feeling would prompt some corresponding actions on the part of the rich. This essential theme of the play owed nothing to Richardson.

*L’Indigent*, after success in the provinces, was played at the Théâtre des Italiens in 1782. It was very popular, and Bachaumont's comment gives an idea of the changed attitude towards the proprieties on the stage; *L’Indigent* "... est imprimé depuis longtemps, et a vu du succès dans la province. Le Sieur Granger en a déjà fait l'essai à Bordeaux.... Au reste, il y a de l'interêt dans l’Indigent, le sujet en est vrai, et rempli de tableaux neufs et pittoresques, mais un coup de théâtre hardi au deuxième acte pourrait faire tort à l'ouvrage si le public n'est pas disposé favorablement, et surtout si l'exécution n'est pas précise et rapide comme l'exige la situation."¹

By 1782, however, the delicacy of the public was less quick to take offence at scenes like that between Charlotte and Deslys. Richardson's novels, with their vivid descriptions of Lord B's attempts to seduce Pamela, and Lovelace's treatment of Clarissa had helped to bring about this change: for no playwright would have dared to show the audience a scene of actual violence, at the time when Voltaire and Nivelle de la Chaussée were adapting Pamela. The popularity of

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¹ Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, vol. 21, p. 14, le 22 nov. 1782.
Richardson's novels, and their excellent reputation for virtue, made it possible for writers like Mercier to give the audience the pleasure of looking at vice in action, with the comfortable assurance that it would not be allowed to go too far, and that punishment was due and certain.

There was a deeper reason for the easy way in which the public accepted the novelties in Mercier's *Indigent*; it expressed a very well-known social grievance with just the right dose of sentiment. Mercier owed some of the details of his appeal to sympathy to Richardson's novel: and so it may be concluded that *Pamela* influenced the story, the moral, and the feeling that Mercier put into his play, although *L'Indigent* was also the expression of ideas that had nothing to do with Richardson.

Before considering the general effects of *Pamela* on "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois", we must describe the influence of *Clarissa* and *Grandison* on the latter, for these two novels were translated too late to have any effect on "comédie larmoyante".

*Clarissa* was translated into French in 1751-2, by Prévost, and unlike the version of *Pamela*, this was very free, and very elegant. Prévost's omissions made it more acceptable to his public; the more tedious passages of moral reflections were not missed, and the story moved less ponderously than in the original, for Prévost cut out as much of the repetition as he
could, and he made the descriptions of Mrs Sinclair's house less crude. This version of Richardson's novel was considered quite satisfactory until 1785; and Prévost's modification made the task of the dramatists who used the story in their plays rather more simple.

The opposition between a virtuous bourgeoisie and a corrupt aristocracy was more sharply defined in *Clarissa* than in *Pamela*; for Lovelace was incomparably greater than Lord B... as a villain, and the accomplished Clarissa was much more attractive than the humble Pamela, for her character was more subtly drawn, and her sad fate inexpressibly more touching.

The social problem in *Clarissa* marked it as a subject suitable to "drame bourgeois"; but it was the powerful appeal to feeling that really brought the theme into French drama.

Beaumarchais was the first to take it up. He used certain parts of *Clarissa*'s story to heighten the pathos in his *Eugénie*, but he gave it a happy ending.

The distressed innocence of the heroine in Beaumarchais' play, Clarendon's deception of her, her brother's behaviour when he hears of her seduction, and the proposal to marry her to Cowerly are the incidents in *Eugénie* which seem to be copied from *Clarissa*. It is difficult to measure Beaumarchais' debt to Richardson, for the influence of "Miss Fanni", "Miss Jenni", "Miss Polly" must also be taken into account. Beaumarchais
used these titles to denote the novels by Baculard d'Arnaud, Madame Riccoboni, and lesser writers, who aped Richardson: thus there are several possibilities to be considered. The *Essai sur le genre sérieux* enables us to decide upon a few direct loans from *Clarissa*, further than that it is unsafe to go.

In an early version of the play, the character of Eugénie herself showed a love of moralising akin to Pamela's. In the form which was eventually published, Eugénie reflected Clarissa's dignity in suffering, her resignation, and her conviction that one false step had caused all her suffering. Her innocence and her trials were stressed: Beaumarchais' *Essai sur le genre sérieux* made it plain that he had learnt this principle of his art from Richardson.

Clarendon is a feeble copy of Lovelace, pitiful rather than wicked. He is mercenary, where Lovelace is generous, a moral coward, where Lovelace sins courageously. There are faint echoes of the English original in some of Clarendon's speeches to his valet Drink.

Beaumarchais arranged his characters so as to enhance the interest in a natural way, and to concentrate it on the heroine. Overwhelmed by her father's proposal to marry her to Cowerly, by her aunt's thoughtless admiration of rank and

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(1) see p.26, Lintilhac, *Beaumarchais et ses Oeuvres*. (Paris 1884.) He points out a quotation from *Pamela*, which occurs in one of the lover's speeches in the first draft of *Eugénie*; but the influence of *Clarissa* superseded that of *Pamela* altogether.

fashion, by her brother's unkindness, and Clarendon's betrayal, she stands alone, persecuted, and virtuous. Richardson isolates Clarissa in much the same way.

Richardson suggested to Beaumarchais a method, as yet untried in French drama, of demonstrating the reactions of his various personages upon each other. Clarissa supplied a model for the heroine, indicated the feelings appropriate to her situation, and a few incidents which fitted into the plot of Eugénie.

Beaumarchais was intelligent enough to see the impossibility of creating a good play from any novel, however much admired. The peculiarly English qualities of Clarissa, the slow and involved march of events in the story, the painful nature of many episodes in it, forbade any slavish imitation on the stage.

Like Beaumarchais, La Harpe, who was the next to dramatise a theme from Clarissa, took the central figure of his Mélanie, and certain features of his plot from Richardson, weaving them into the fabric of a new story.

Mélanie was published in 1770. It is a "family" play. Mélanie was forced to enter a convent, so that her brother should inherit all their parents' wealth. Her stern father

(1) see Beaumarchais, Essai sur le genre sérieux; p.6 (reactions of characters) p.6-7 (the heroine), ed. Oeuvres, (Paris 1876.)
could not be persuaded to change his mind, and her gentle, peace-loving mother raised no effectual opposition. This plot has some resemblance to the situation of the Harlowe family. The conclusion of La Harpe's play is sad: Mélanie is driven to death by her father's action, and he is stricken with remorse; this too, is a loan from Clarissa. The duel between Ferval, Mélanie's lover, and her brother was probably suggested by the duel fought by Lovelace and Clarissa's brother, but La Harpe uses it in a very different way.

There is no hint of Lovelace in the character of Ferval. The father's inflexibility and the mother's weakness are copied from similar traits in Mr and Mrs Harlowe. The portrait of Mélanie herself, however, is a much more careful reproduction of Clarissa's personality. This point emerges when we compare La Harpe's description of Clarissa with that of Mélanie².

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarissa: (from La Harpe's Lycée.)</th>
<th>Mélanie. (Act II. sc.iv.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;un être vraiment céleste. Comme sa vertu est sans fard, sa patience sans ostentation, et ses plaintes sans emportement!&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Cette âme douce et pure, Épanchoit ses chagrins sans fiel et sans rancune, Et sans vous accuser, déploroit son malheur; De toutes les vertus le germe est dans son coeur.&quot;</td>
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(2) Mélanie, op.cit. Act II, sc.iv.
M. de FauCBS gives vent to his grief and repentance in terms that perhaps echo the sentiments of the Harlowe family, on learning of Clarissa's death. In the last words of the play, Mélanie's father said:

"Dieu vengeur! à quel prix m'avez Vous éclairé!"

Richardson's most important contribution to La Harpe's work was the character of the heroine. Mélanie continued the series of virtuous and much-wronged women, whose sufferings or death brought about the conversion or the punishment of their persecutors; a series that began with La Chaussée's Paméla. These typically Richardsonian heroines took root and flourished in French drama.

The actual incidents taken from Clarissa which appeared in La Harpe's play were not numerous, and they are significant only in so far as they reveal La Harpe's purpose of writing a "family" tragedy, with a moral aim very different from Richardson's. Mélanie was an illustration of the evil done by enforcing a woman to take the veil, against her will. La Harpe gave the fullest dramatic value to his argument, by creating the character of a priest, who supported Mélanie in her refusal to take the final vows. This was the lesson of the play, and it owed much more to Voltaire's guidance than to Richardson: it was so startling that the censor refused permission for public performances of Mélanie.
The next two plays inspired by Clarissa are not important except as a clue to the taste of their day. The first to be written was Madame de Montesson's Comtesse de Chazelles. It was published in 1785, while the second, Clarisse Harlowe, by Née de la Rochelle, was composed in 1786 and never published. The observations that follow are based upon M. Facteau's study of these dramas, and on Grimm's criticism of La Comtesse de Chazelles.

Madame de Montesson brought out her "comédie-drame" in the same year as Le Tourneur's translation of Clarissa. In spite of the author's sex and her connection with the duc d'Orléans, it was a failure.

Grimm picked out the sources of this play as follows:
"Le fond de la pièce est tiré en grande partie du roman des "Liaisons Dangereuses" de M. de la Clos, et de celui de Richardson. L'auteur a emprunté de ce dernier et le caractère de la jeune fille que Lovelace appelle son Bouton de Rose, et le catastrophe du dénouement." The heroine's character, according to Grimm, was modelled on that of La Présidente du Tournel, in de la Clos' novel, while the hero, Surville, was a compound of Valmont and of Lovelace; the "Nanine" of the play was far less appealing than the English Rosebud.

Grimm's criticism explains the failure of the play, and reveals a new motive for dramatizing the story of Clarissa.

(1) pp.149 ff., Vol.XIV, Grimm Correspondance Littérale, op.cit.
This was the profound interest in the theme of seduction which was characteristic of French writing between 1780 and 1789\(^1\).

Madame de Montesson had drawn upon *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and this novel was typical in its handling of the subject. One consequence of the importance which tales of seduction had assumed was the growing curiosity about the character of Lovelace, reflected in de Bièvre's comedy *Le Séducteur*.

Before coming to that play, Née de la Rochelle's *Clarisse Harlowe* must be mentioned, for it brings to light a second consequence of that interest. This "drame bourgeois" was written in prose, and was neither played nor printed. Née de la Rochelle presented the sufferings of Clarissa in Mrs Sinclair's house, her flight and her death. M. Facteau\(^2\) quotes the opinion of a critic who read the piece; it violated all the proprieties, both in matter and in form: but the very fact that it was written indicates less reluctance in touching such painful episodes in drama.

The character of a rake was the central point in the Marquis de Bièvre's *Le Séducteur*. It was one of the most popular new plays that came out in 1783. There are two reasons for considering it last in the series of French dramas inspired by Richardson's *Clarissa*. It is the only play

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(1) see Mercier's *Natalie* and *L'Indigent*, La Chabeaussière's *La Confiance Dangereuse*, Chéron de la Bruyère's *L'Homme à Sentiments*, etc.

(2) p.60 (note) *Les Romans de Richardson*, B.A. Facteau, *op.cit.*
which throws into relief the character of Lovelace rather
than Clarissa's; and it is not a true "drame bourgeois", or
even a "comédie-drame", but, like Voltaire's Nanine, a comedy
in the style of Molière, with pathetic scenes added.

The Marquis de Bièvre was helped by Palissot, especially
in creating the false philosopher Zéronès; the play is, how­
ever, usually attributed to him alone. The Introduction
gives a fair idea of the social circumstances that prompted
the author to choose this theme, and indicates his obligations
to previous writers.

"Dans une époque" writes the author "où la séduction
semble être devenue l'objet d'une étude profonde, j'ai pensé
qu'il n'était pas inutile pour les moeurs de mettre au jour
quelques-uns des secrets de cet art terrible.... Il est
sensible que je dois à l'auteur de Clarisse quelques traits,
quelques situations même de cette comédie, et surtout le
caractère principal, que j'ai toutefois revêtu de nos
couleurs et des formes de l'époque actuelle; mais le génie
bien plus rare que j'ai cité au deuxième acte, parceque son
nom immortel est souvent sur mes lèvres, et toujours dans mon
cœur, est le seul qui m'aït conduit dans mon travail."

This 'rare genius' is "notre cher Molière"; and as
de Bièvre intended to write a comedy in the old style it was
natural that he should claim Molière's 'guidance'. Le

Séducteur owes more than this to the seventeenth century writer, however. The figure of "Le Marquis" is in the tradition of "le grand seigneur méchant homme". Don Juan's pride, fickleness, and courage are reflected in de Bièvre's hero. The art of conducting several love affairs at the same time, the list of ladies who "persist in believing him constant", his defiant words when he is accused of wrongdoing make "Le Marquis" a true descendant of Molière's Don Juan.

It is easy to link up Richardson with the influence of Molière. The Marquis de Bièvre borrowed fresh traits and new settings for his dramatic portrait of "Le Séducteur" from the English work, because he recognized Lovelace as a reincarnation of the legendary figure who first appeared in Spanish comedy.

The scenes in which Le Marquis attempts to seduce Rosalie are largely inspired by Richardson. "Le Marquis" begins by teaching Rosalie's young lover Darmance his own arts of profligacy, just as Lovelace had a "school" of rakes. Then he prepares the ground for the scene where he persuades the girl to run away with him, by making her quarrel with her father, and suspect her friend Orphise of deception, so that she can turn to no one but her rakish lover for support. Like Lovelace again, "Le Marquis" introduces a servant of his own into the lady's household, to complete the preparations for the elopement. It is in the dialogue with Rosalie in the
fourth act, where "Le Séducteur" is most like Clarissa's lover. There are touches of the same conscious hypocrisy of feeling, with some real passion, and the same trick of feigning illness to gain sympathy and surprise some declaration of feeling from the lady.

The critics of the time agreed that "le Marquis" was a copy of Lovelace. Grimm declared him to be less ingenious and less striking, because he was not shown in action; and La Harpe thought that his plans to seduce Rosalie lacked the deep art of Lovelace. Both Grimm and La Harpe agreed that his personality overshadowed the other characters too much, and that the story of the play was too complicated to provide a suitable background for this figure.

Their criticism of the other characters in the Séducteur was sound: faint traces of Richardson's characters may be seen in the foolish father, Orgon, who is bad-tempered, but not vindictive; in Orphise, who is a reasonable and more balanced version of Miss Howe, and in Rosalie herself who is a weaker, younger, and more easily-led Clarissa, without the pathos of her unhappy fate, and the attraction of her unusual virtue.

It is Molière, not Richardson, who really inspired the Marquis de Bièvre: like Molière he was writing a comedy to strike at a contemporary evil: - there were the lives of men

(2) La Harpe, Lycée, t.X, p.574, (éd. Paris 1816..)
like the Marquis de Sade or the actor-writer Desforges to show it existed: - his hero was a type celebrated in the comedy of France, Italy, and Spain before entering into the novel with Lovelace or Valmont: and de Bièvre insisted on the fact that he wanted to show his hero as a type, and not as an individual, by naming him simply "Le Marquis" or "Le Séducteur".

There is, however, the testimony of the author himself, and that of his critics, to prove the reality of Richardson's influence. The point to be emphasised is that although the theme of Le Séducteur, certain situations of the play, and a number of traits in the character of "Le Marquis" as well as of minor personages, are borrowed from Richardson, they are treated in Molière's manner, with occasional lapses into the moral and sentimental style of "drame", while the original choice of the subject was very probably guided by the public interest in stories of seduction, and in the psychology of men of Don Juan's type.

Thus Le Séducteur obeys the law that seems to govern the imitations of Richardson: successful plays based on his novels borrowed only a part of their material and some of their characters from his novels.

The question of Sir Charles Grandison's effect on French drama still remains to be considered. M. Facteau asserts that the character of Richardson's hero influenced Diderot's conception of "Dorval" and "Germeuil".
The chief points of resemblance between Sir Charles, Dorval, and Germeuil, are their physical beauty, their character as models of virtue, and their infinite capacity for giving good advice and helping their friends, even to the extent of considerable personal sacrifices.

To support this theory, M. Facteau quotes the paragraph at the end of Diderot's Éloge de Richardson, 'Ses fantômes errent sans cesse dans mon imagination, si je veux écrire, j'entends la plainte de Clémentine, l'ombre de Clarisse m'apparait, je vois marcher Grandisson, Lovelace me trouble, et la plume s'échappe de mes doigts.'

The Éloge was published in 1762, some time after Diderot's plays: while the observations on dramatic art which accompanied the Père de Famille and the Fils Naturel, refer to Clementina and Clarissa, but not to Sir Charles. In his Correspondence, Diderot showed great interest in Lovelace and Clarissa, and very little in the character of Grandison: so that it would seem more reasonable to find some other cause to explain the qualities common to the heroes of Richardson and Diderot.

Quite possibly, Diderot dramatised one side of his own character in Dorval and Germeuil. His correspondence proves that he was accounted virtuous in thought and deed, always ready to give generously of his time, his ideas, or his advice. Thus the influence of Sir Charles Grandison on Diderot's plays

(1) p.110. Les Romans de Richardson sur la scène française. op. cit.
is doubtful, and the only other sign of it in "drame bourgeois" is to be seen in the plays dealing with clandestine marriage. Pamela, Clarissa and Grandison were most effective in the high value they set upon sentiment as a power in drama. Their popularity scarcely waned during the whole century, and dramatists adapted them for the stage in the hope of flattering the sensibility of the public, and so achieving success.

They found it necessary to avoid certain situations in the English novels. Some, like Clarissa's life at Mrs Sinclair's were too painful, and others, like Pamela's "captivity" were too slow-moving, to hold the interest of French spectators. Further, to compensate for the impossibility of unfolding the intricate personality of a Clarissa or a Lovelace within the limits of time and space set by dramatic convention, French writers had to invent new situations, so as to concentrate interest on these characters. This proved very difficult, and their copies of Clarissa and Lovelace were inferior to the originals. Nevertheless, a new type of innocent, virtuous, resigned, and long-suffering heroine flourished in French drama, and Richardson's portrait of a seducer gave fresh life to this character in the latter half of the century.

Philosophic doctrines generally took the place of the religious beliefs which underlay Richardson's work, as in Nanine or Mélanie. The social messages in Pamela and Clarissa,

(1) See below, Chapter VIII, section II.
on the contrary, were taken up in France. Voltaire showed
the virtue of overcoming social prejudice, de Bièvre the vicious
effects of seduction, and Mercier the goodness of honest poverty.
Sometimes these were conveyed by episodes borrowed from the
novels, and sometimes by quite different tales.

Richardson's heroines, his plots, and his social doctrines
had less power to change the nature of French drama than the
lesson he taught in the use of feeling. All the plays which
were founded on his novels met with but little favour unless
they presented the wrongs done to virtue in a really forceful
manner.

As usual in literary imitation, too great a fidelity to
the original did not succeed, but when the spirit was truly
reflected, the dramatist's reward was great.
III. Fielding.

In France, as in England, Fielding was overshadowed by the fame of his great rival. It was not until late in the century that "drame bourgeois" made any use of Tom Jones, and Fielding's other works seemed to have no attraction for dramatists. Tom Jones was translated in 1751, too late to have any effect on "comédie larmoyante".

Grimm could appreciate the comic genius of Fielding, and compared him to Molière for truth and power; while Barthé compared his art to Chardin's, and said further "[il est] moins élevé, moins pathétique, que Richardson, mais plus vivant, plus original; il nous attache autant que l'autre nous fait verser de larmes: il amène le sourire sur les lèvres, et la larme au bord de la paupière. Il est vrai que bientôt il la sèche, mais ce passage est tellement ménagé qu'il n'y a rien de brusque." It will be seen that the sentimental side of Fielding's work was more influential in French drama than the realistic strength of his picture of English life, although this was not altogether without effect.

(1) A.C. Hunter quotes a passage from the Correspondance Littéraire for 1753 in an article entitled "Les Opinions du Baron de Grimm sur le Roman Anglais". (pp.390 ff. Revue de Littérature Comparée, 1932.)
(2) Barthé, La Jolie Femme, la Femme du Jour, p.242, Vol.I. (Toulouse 1778, first published 1769.)
It was La Place's version of Tom Jones that was known to French playwrights, and the translator's omissions had the merit of making the original more attractive to his readers. In 1751 La Place explained his alterations in the text of Tom Jones as follows: "Que je serai content si le respectable père de l'amante de Jones daigne ne pas méconnaître une fille chère sous un habillement français.... si M. Fielding avait écrit pour des Français, il eût probablement supprimé un grand nombre de passages très excellens en eux mêmes mais qui leur paraîtraient déplacés. Une fois échauffés par l'intérêt résultant d'une intrigue pathétique et adroitement tissue, ils supportent impatiemment toute espèce de Digressions, de Dissertations, et de Traité de Morale.... comme autant d'obstacles au plaisir dont ils sont empressés de jouir. J'ai fait ce que l'Auteur eût fait lui-même."

Clément de Genève expressed opinions on the characters in this novel which were endorsed by later criticism, and by Desforges' treatment of them in his play. He wrote in 1750:

"Sophie est toute aimable et très intéressante; Jones l'est encore d'avantage, quoique moins parfait. Mr Alworthy, d'une crédulité quelquefois imbécille, à cela près, le plus respectable des hommes, figure admirablement avec son ami Western, dont les saillies, les incartades, la déraison, l'entêtement,

(1) pp.vij-ix Lettre à Mr Fielding, en tête de Tom Jones, traduit par M. de la Place. (éd. Londres (Paris) 1751.)
la grossièreté, la rudesse, la brutale bonté, la chasse, et
la bouteille forment le plus fieffé gentilhomme champêtre qui
soit dans la province de Somerset. Celui-ci a presque toujours
tort, mais de la meilleure foi du monde, et c'est un vrai
plaisir de l'entendre." Clément goes on to complain of
Fielding's discourses, and admires the story; which shows that
La Place estimated the taste of his day quite correctly.

The changes made by La Place allowed the excellent con-
struction of Fielding's plot to appear more clearly, and this
appeared to the French love of order. He made minor altera-
tions in the story itself, but it was not shorn of anything
that would leave a gap in the sequence of events. The episode
of Molly Seagrim was hurried over; so were Mr Allworthy's
homilies and the theological disputes between Thwackum and
Square. Squire Western, Mrs Honora, Partridge and the inn
folk all used decorous language in the French version; but
these modifications only made the novel a much more tempting
subject for dramatisation.

The first play founded on Tom Jones' adventures was
Poinsinet's "comédie lyrique" which appeared in 1765. It
was very successful, for there were at least four re-editions
before 1779. As this is not a "drame bourgeois", it need not
be examined in detail. The scene is laid at Upton. Poinsinet

(1) Tom Jones, comédie lyrique, de Poinsinet. (ed. Paris 1765,
Dresden 1766 etc.) (Théâtre des Italiens, Feb. 27, 1765.)
compressed the discovery of Tom's real father, and his marriage to Sophia into the series of events at the inn. The characters were toned down into the types familiar in French comedy, except that of Dowling, who was described as a Quaker, and made to play the chief part in the discovery of Blifil's hypocrisy. This innovation reflects the influence of Voltaire's *Lettres Anglaises*. Otherwise the action of Poinssinet's comedy was faithful to Fielding's story, and proved fresh and attractive. The success of this adaptation undoubtedly induced Desforges to try his hand at a similar attempt.

Desforges had given up acting, and settled down to write plays some time before he brought out *Tom Jones à Londres*. Bachaumont defined and criticized the play in these terms:

"point une comédie, mais un drame fort long, et fort ennuyeux... De bons traits de morale, quoique rebattus, un rôle assez noble, quoique froid et inutile, quelques vers heureux.... ont prolongé l'existence de la pièce au point qu'à la fin on a demandé l'auteur d'assez bonne foi."

Grimm praised it far less grudgingly. He mentioned its close resemblance to Fielding's story, and his criticism revealed insight into Desforges' use of it: "L'auteur... s'est borné à retrancher quelques personnes inutiles au fond de

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(1) *Tom Jones à Londres, comédie*. Desforges. (ed. Paris 1782.) (Théâtre des Italiens, oct. 22, 1782.)
l'intrigue, et qu'il eût été trop difficile de transporter au théâtre sans embarrasser la scène et même sans en blesser toutes les convenances.... peut être même n'a-t-on pas su assez de gré à l'auteur d'avoir osé leur conserver cette espèce de vérité locale qui les rend si piquantes dans l'ouvrage de Fielding. Si le rôle de Western a paru trop agreste, il faut s'en prendre surtout à l'acteur, qui, n'ayant pas su en saisir le ton, a mis plus de caricature encore dans son maintien et dans son discours. On a fort applaudi ces vers du rôle de Fellamar - (il s'agit d'un rival de Jones) -

"De mon amour jaloux on le croira victime,  
Car le monde est toujours pour celui qu'on opprime,  
Et le monde a raison."

The "local colour" that Grimm praises was taken from La Place's version of the novel, and further modified by Desfoüges; but the critic's appreciation of it shows how French taste was growing more catholic; and the lines quoted from the play are important, because they point to the social, almost political, maxims that Desfoüges found in Fielding, and brought out in his Tom Jones.

Desfoüges drew upon the story, as told by La Place, in the third and fourth volumes of L'Histoire de Tom Jones. This corresponded to the matter contained in Books XIII to XVIII, of Fielding's Tom Jones. La Place faithfully retailed Tom's adventures in London, only omitting the longer disquisitions on morality and the art of novel writing, because the events which
took place in that city were more easily appreciated in France, than the scenes from Somersetshire life. Desforges obeyed the unity of action by cutting out Nightingale, the Fitzpatricks, Jenny Waters, Black George and Parson Supple. Jenny Waters' story was too shocking for a French audience, and very difficult to include in a simplified version of the story; then Desforges shared out the parts of the missing characters amongst those he retained. Square took the place of Supple, Mrs Miller discovered the secret of Tom's parentage, and Lord Fellamar was allotted Mr Fitzpatrick's duty in the unravelling of the plot.

Lady Bellaston's relations with Tom were more delicately described in the play than in the novel, and her gifts of money were not mentioned. Lord Fellamar became more dignified and honourable; he offered no violence to Sophia, and he only consented to enter into Lady Bellaston's plot against Tom Jones after receiving written evidence of Mr Allworthy's wish to have him taken by the press-gangs, and hearing Blifil's testimony to the fact that Tom was a scoundrel. Jones himself was much more of an "honnête homme" than his original. Desforges insisted upon his fidelity to Sophia, and excused his affair with Lady Bellaston, as far as possible. The verse spoken by the French characters lent them a decorum and an elegance which mitigated the crudeness of Fielding's life-like representations, and enabled them to win favour in Paris.

Further changes had to be made in the arrangement of the story, in order to spread the interest over the five acts of
Tom Jones à Londres, and to unfold the plot without the help of Fielding's subordinate characters. The mystery of Tom's birth was explained in Act III. Desforges had to show Blifil confounded as the truth gradually came out, and to prepare for Tom's liberation from prison. Mrs Miller and Square between them convinced Mr Allworthy of Blifil's treachery, and the officer who conveyed Lord Fellamar's challenge to Squire Western also provoked Tom to a duel, that resulted in his imprisonment. Desforges only introduced one short scene of his own invention. When the officer challenged Squire Western, he answered the Squire's insult by attacking him. Tom appeared, and rescued Western, while Blifil ran away. This served to bring Tom into contact with the officer, and to mark the beginning of Blifil's disgrace.

On the whole, Desforges only altered the sequence of a few events, and distributed the action of his plot amongst fewer characters. It was a great tribute to Fielding that the French writer took so few liberties with his work.

The characters in the play, especially Mrs Western, Sophia, Lady Bellaston, the Squire, Partridge and Mr Allworthy, lost surprisingly little "vérité locale", as Grimm called it. Desforges had to bow to the spectators' prejudice against Partridge's Latin on the stage, but he clung to it in the printed version. He also refused to change Mrs Western's
part, because her affected interest in politics and Court news, contrasted well with her brother's bluntness, and because her help was necessary in liberating Sophia when her father had locked her in her room. Squire Western still loved hunting, and hated the fashionable ladies of quality, swore, changed his moods as suddenly, adored his Sophia, and persisted in forcing her to marry Blifil. Desforges could not follow Fielding into farce, however. The blustering and the rough and tumble of that episode in the novel when Fellamar challenged the Squire to a duel was turned into a much more orthodox scene of insult, when the usual etiquette of such affairs was observed. Western was not permitted to answer so roughly, and he acquired the sympathy of the audience through the really unprovoked attack on the part of the officer. Sophia retained much of the natural charm of the English heroine. There was no reason to modify the traits of Blifil, Allworthy, or Lady Bellaston, whose characters were quite familiar on the French stage.

It is interesting to note that in many places, the language of Desforges' play was no more than a facile versification of La Place's translation. This is particularly obvious in Fellamar's proposal of marriage to Sophia, and Western's answer, Mrs Miller's defence of Tom Jones, the scene where

(1) These points are made in the Preface to Tom Jones à Londres, (1782) op. cit.
(2) Desforges, Act II, sc.vii, cf. La Place, Tom Jones, pp.215-216, Vol.III.
(3) ibid. Act III, sc.xv, cf. La Place, Tom Jones, pp.102-103, Vol.IV.
Western tried to persuade Sophia into marrying Blifil, and the quarrel between Mrs Western and her brother over Sophia's punishment for her refusal of this match.

Desforges had chosen the right moment to present a play which reflected in a refined form, the realism of Fielding's novel. By 1782 the stereotyped characters of "drame bourgeois" had grown wearisome; and the rough geniality of Squire Western, Tom's frank confession of his shortcomings, and Sophia's individuality formed a refreshing contrast to the noble fathers, sententious heroes, and obedient heroines of previous plays. They contributed to the success of Mercier's effort to bring the language and humours of everyday life into his drama, and they helped to spread anglophobia.

Fielding's novel taught French drama how to unfold a mystery in a natural way, without any sudden surprises, or the aid of far-fetched coincidence. The original story was modified only in detail, and the characters remained English enough to impress French critics with their originality and vivid truth.

Desforges arranged the light and shade of his picture so that certain elements in Fielding's social philosophy stood out more boldly. Instead of Fielding's passion for justice - both that of the law-courts and of common humanity, - Desforges

(1) Desforges, Act III, sc. vii. cf. La Place, Tom Jones, pp.10-13, Vol.IV.
(2) Ibid. Act III, sc. iv. cf. La Place, Tom Jones, pp.24-25, Vol.IV.
tried to express his own ideas on social justice, and on that poetic kind peculiar to "drame bourgeois". This was why Lady Bellaston's rank aggravated her villainy, and Blifil was made subordinate to her, in Desfoiges' arrangement of the plot. Lord Fellamar was opposed to them, as the ideal person of quality. He was endowed with qualities particularly admired in France at that time\(^1\), - a fine sense of honour, a great capacity for self-sacrifice, and sympathy for those who were oppressed. On every occasion, Desfoiges attempted to aggravate the opposition between the middle classes and the aristocracy. The contrast between Sophia and Lady Bellaston, Squire Western's contempt for lords and ladies, the heroine's choice of Tom and not Lord Fellamar, were all a little more marked in the play than in the novel. This gave prominence to certain eminently bourgeois virtues. Another point was illustrated in Desfoiges' description of Sophia as a country girl, and in Western's and Allworthy's speeches in praise of rustic life. Here he tried to prove that it was easy and natural to lead a virtuous life in the country. Fielding had not definitely asserted this; but Desfoiges could not escape the pervasive force of Rousseau's thought, so he was bound to give prominence to this idea.

The refinement of Fielding's lively and varied speech into the conventional diction of French comedy was typical of

\(^{(1)}\) These qualities played a part in the voluntary sacrifice of their privileges which the aristocracy made in 1789.
most copies of an English model. A style that was both
elegant and familiar to the audience made it possible to
introduce variations in theme and character into the theatre,
without arousing criticism. Desforges' rearrangement of the
episodes to suit the unity of action was prompted by a similar
reason. His reproduction of English local colour stopped short
of disclosing the worst in Lady Bellaston, the boor and the
poltroon in Squire Western. Anything that savoured of farce,
or transgressed the limits of good taste as it was understood
in French drama, had to be ruthlessly excluded. There is one
interesting difference between the plays adapted from Richard-
son’s novels, and Desforges' use of Tom Jones. Not one of the
authors who followed the story of Pamela or Clarissa closely
was able to please the public, whereas Tom Jones à Londres
achieved marked success. Three reasons may be suggested;
Fielding's plot was much easier to dramatise; his philosophy
could better be harmonized with the ideals of social justice
current in 1782; and at that date, "drame bourgeois" was pre-
pared to welcome the note of realism sounded in Desforges' play.

The later play, Tom Jones et Fellamar¹ discloses nothing
new in the history of Fielding's influence on "drame bourgeois", for the characters are exactly like those in Tom Jones à
Londres, and the plot has no connection with the English novel.

It was played in 1787.
IV. Mrs Sheridan.

Mrs Frances Sheridan was the last of the English novelists with whose service to French drama we are concerned. Her Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph appeared in 1761. The book was dedicated to Richardson, and is written in imitation of his style. Dr Johnson's compliment to the author may be taken as a sound explanation of its popularity: "I know not, Madam, that you have a right, upon moral principle, to make your readers weep so much"1.

The novel was received in France, in a way equally gratifying to Mrs Sheridan. Her biography mentions a translation that appeared in 1762 "under the title of "Mémoires d'une Jeune Dame" by the Abbé Prévost. This faithful and elegant version the Abbé transmitted to Mrs Sheridan" with a letter conceived in terms the most complimentary."2 Grimm had no great opinion of Prévost's translation, which he condemned as careless, and he thought very little better of the novel itself, which he called 'a bad copy of Richardson'3.

The general public read the book eagerly; Bachaumont called it "le livre du jour" and René Robinet brought out another

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(1) p.113, Memoirs of Mrs Sheridan, by Alicia Lefanu. (ed. London, 1824.)
(2) p.111. Memoirs of Mrs Sheridan. op.cit.
rendering in 1762\(^1\). It was a painstaking and uninspired work.

Mercier eventually saw the possibility of founding a play on an episode from this well-known novel. He selected for this purpose the event which brought the heroine's sufferings from poverty to an end. Miss Sidney Biddulph had married, and was left a widow with two children: her husband's extravagance and her mother's death had deprived her of her fortune. Her brother Sir George, and his overbearing wife, Lady Sara, inherited the family property, and took no pains to find out whether she needed help. So Mrs Arnold had to support herself and the children, with the help of a devoted servant, by making and selling embroidery.

Mrs Sheridan then employed a device which her brilliant son was to make famous. An uncle of the Biddulphs, who had not been heard of for many years, returned from the West Indies, and visited his nephew and niece in disguise, pretending poverty, in order to discover their true characters. Sir George and Lady Sara were angry at the sight of such a shabby poor relation, insulted him, and refused to help him. When Warner, the uncle, discovered Mrs Arnold's poor lodging, and presented

(1) Mémoires de Miss Sidney Biddulph, extraits de son Journal. Amsterdam (par René Robinet) 3 vols, 1762. Robinet also translated the second part of Miss Sidney Biddulph when it came out some years later.
himself in the same way, she received him very kindly, wept
over the tale of his misfortunes, gave him a meal, and shared
her ready money with him.

This overcame Warner's feelings, so he shed tears, and
immediately told her the true state of his fortunes. He
settled a large income on her, and provided her with a mag-
nificent house. Then he forced her to humiliate Sir George
and Lady Sara by a more brilliant display of riches, and made
her punish their unkindness by accepting her brother's share
of Warner's fortune. Finally he invited Sir George and Lady
Sara to Mrs Arnold's new house, so that he could enjoy her
triumph over them.

Mrs Arnold at length prevailed upon Warner to be recon-
ciled to Sir George, for she persuaded him that her brother
really knew nothing of her poverty and sickness, since Lady
Sara had hidden the truth from her husband, and had told him
that Mrs Arnold was well off and staying with friends.

Mrs Sheridan laid stress on the inevitable punishment
of pride and unkindness, and the equally certain reward of
meekness, forbearance and generosity. Pride, rather than
avarice, was the besetting sin of her "villains", and she
showed generosity in the light of a Christian virtue rather
than as a social obligation.

Mercier had a different purpose in writing his play, and
he altered Mrs Sheridan's story, to suit this end. In the
preface to the Habitant de la Guadeloupe he acknowledges his
debt to the English novel, and points out the moral of his
play. "Le fonds de cette pièce", wrote Mercier (1) "est tiré
d'un roman anglais intitulé "Miss Sidney Biddulph", il ren-
ferme un trait de moral si important, et dont l'application
peut se faire si souvent dans le monde, que l'auteur n'a pu
résister à l'envie de le développer davantage, en le mettant
sur la scène. Il y a ajouté tous les accessoires propres à
faire ressortir les caractères principaux. C'est au grand
jour du théâtre qu'il a cru devoir exposer les maximes que
lui offroit le sujet de son ouvrage; son but a été de livrer
la guerre à la dureté de coeur et d'honorer les vertus com-
patissantes qui se cachent dans les rangs obscurs de la
société."

Mercier dealt with the conflict between avarice and
generosity, and illustrated his favourite doctrine that the
poor are virtuous, in his story of 'le bon riche', 'le
mauvais riche' and 'la parente pauvre'.

The three acts of Mercier's play could be summed up in
the three phrases just quoted. The first showed the wicked
and wealthy Dortignis, sending away Vanglenne, the West
Indian, when he came pleading poverty and asking for their
help. In order to enhance the moral effect, Mercier intro-
duced a new character, Mulson, who revealed Vanglenne's true

(1) Précâfâ dé l'Habitanâ de la Guadelouâ. Neuchâtel 1782.
(Drame en iii actes et en Prose.)
position as the wealthiest colonist of Guadeloupe, to the grasping couple. The second act relates the trials of the poor widow and describes her reception of Vanglenne. Here Mercier followed the original story more closely, and brought nothing new into his plot, for his "Madame Milville" demonstrated the kindness of poor people extremely well. In the third act, Vanglenne represented the good man of wealth, dealing out a just retribution by marrying the widow, and forcing the Dortignis to witness his marriage contract.

A more detailed examination of the play shows how all the alterations Mercier introduced into his plot served to emphasise the main points of his moral lesson.

He began by turning Sir George and Lady Sara, who were people of quality, into the financier Dortigni and his wife, so that he might expose the character of "le mauvais riche" more fully. The first scene of the play, as Grimm pointed out, was false to human nature, in presenting a cynical conversation between the Dortignis, that revealed their unscrupulous methods of making money, and their avarice. It was quite credible that Madame Dortigni might feign kindness to old invalids, in order to obtain a legacy, but she would not confess it shamelessly. The scenes between Vanglenne and the Dortignis are very like Mrs Sheridan's account of Warner's visit to his nephew. The new character Mulson took a necessary part in the conduct of the plot, for he told the secret
of Vanglenne's wealth, and he brought in a touch of real life, with his technical terms of finance, and his references to conditions in Paris at that time.

In the second act, all the incidents come from Mrs Sheridan. Brigitte, Madame Milville's faithful servant, is a copy of "Patty" in the novel; Vanglenne is more sentimental, and preaches Mercier's doctrines on every possible occasion. He has lost the sailor-like simplicity and bluffness of Warner: but the details of his story, even his rather disreputable youth, are repeated in the French play, although Mercier insists rather more than Mrs Sheridan had done, on his reckless spending, at that period. Madame Milville is very like Mrs Arnold, except that she is more conscious of her own virtue and sensibility, and less truly good-natured than the English heroine.

In the third act, to demonstrate the fulfilment of poetic justice, and to show the character of "le bon riche", Mercier found inspiration in Mrs Sheridan's story of Warner's meeting with Sir George and Lady Sara in the house he had bought for Mrs Arnold.

He altered the situation a little by making his Vanglenne a cousin, not an uncle, of the family, and rounded off his play with the marriage of Vanglenne to Madame Milville. This satisfied the conventions, and provided a dramatic punishment for the Dortignis, who had to make good their hypocritical
protests of disinterested affection, by witnessing the marriage contract which destroyed their hopes of sharing in his wealth. Mercier justified this conclusion with a change in the behaviour of Monsieur and Madame Dortigni. In his version, they were both deliberately unkind to Madame Milville in her poverty; in the English novel it was Lady Sara only who had known of Mrs Arnold's distress.

There are two speeches in the play which may be quoted, because they give a clue to Mercier's position with regard to the problems of poverty and of fine feeling.

In the second scene of the third act Vanglenne expressed Mercier's condemnation of the wicked man of wealth in the words "ils ont offensé le pauvre caché sous l'habit que je portais, c'est lui qu'ils ont outragé, et mon sentiment est juste"; thereby lifting the punishment of the Dortignis above the plane of personal revenge. Then, in the sixth scene of the second act, Madame Milville replied to her maid's attack on Madame Dortigni's character: "Plains-la plutôt; elle est assez punie d'être privée de ce sentiment sublime et doux qui fait goûter les plaisirs de l'âme, les seuls qui méritent d'être appelés par ce nom."

These two sayings mark the difference in spirit between L'Habitant de la Guadeloupe and the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph. The English novel has nothing that corresponds exactly with Mercier's teaching on these points.
It is not very easy to decide which of the two available translations of Mrs Sheridan's novel were used by Mercier. Prévost's translation is not described in detail by Harrisse, and there is no copy available in the British Museum.

A comparison of Robinet's version and the text of L'Habitant de la Guadeloupe shows some remarkable coincidences of expression. One example will serve to illustrate this: Robinet translates Warner's speech of indignation at Sir George's treatment of Sidney into words that are very like those of Mercier's Vanglenne in the same situation:

<table>
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<th>Robinet</th>
<th>Mercier</th>
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| "Comment un frère, du sein de l'abondance peut-il voir sa soeur manquer du nécessaire? Il n'a donc ni sentiment ni honneur? Il est donc sourd à la voix du sang!" | "Comment! un frère du milieu de l'abondance, aura pu voir sa soeur vertueuse manquer du nécessaire, avec ses enfants! Il n'a donc ni sentiments, ni entrailles, ni honneur!"

The comparison of further passages in this translation and in the play tends to confirm the idea that Mercier used Robinet's translation.

(2) p.142, Vol.III, Mémoires de Miss Sidney Biddulph; (Robinet) op.cit.
(3) p.86, Act II, sc.ii, L'Habitant de la Guadeloupe, op.cit.
(4) cf. Mercier, op.cit. Act I, sc.iii; and Robinet, op.cit. pp.128-134; 138-139 (Vol.III.) and Act III, sc.i; with Robinet, pp.154-158, (Vol.III.)
Mrs Sheridan's influence on Mercier was rather like that of Richardson on French dramatists: she gave him a typically innocent and virtuous heroine, and supplied him with the story of his play; but he infused a new spirit and a new moral lesson into it; and like all the other playwrights who adapted themes from the English novel, Mercier was careful to make his play fit in with the conventions of the French stage.

There were two singular features in Mercier's use of the incident from the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph. Both may be traced back to Mercier's great interest in the everyday life of Paris, and to his preoccupation with social problems. His Tableau de Paris revealed this interest, and so boldly expressed his theories for the reform of society, that Mercier retired to Switzerland; as a result, his plays found favour in Paris.

The first remarkable point is the realistic language of the play. The best example is the conversation between Mulson and Dortigni in the last scene of Act I, which bristles with the technical terms of finance. With this may be included the very careful setting of the action against a background of contemporary life. Madame Dortigni mentions the "rue de la Huchette", symbolic of the poverty-stricken quarters of Paris; Vanglenne quotes Sedaine's Épitre à mon Habite; there are allusions to the abandoned race of 'folliculaires', and the difficulty of finding work in Paris, which savour of truth, of Mercier's own
tastes, and of his experience as a man of letters.

The second was that Mercier reversed the usual process of adapting an English theme for the French stage. He gave a less refined tone to his characters, and suggested far less delicate motives for their actions than those which Mrs Sheridan had imagined. This he did to throw the moral lesson of his play into sharp relief, and to justify his detailed account of the greed and cruelty of the Dortignis.

L'Habitant de la Guadeloupe, according to Grimm, succeeded because of the valuable truths it preached. "Le tableau moral qu'il présente, et dont la société ne fournit que trop souvent le modèle, était bien fait pour assurer à cet ouvrage le succès qu'il vient d'obtenir." Grimm, who appreciated the realism in Richardson and Fielding, perceived a similar quality in L' Habitant de la Guadeloupe. Possibly, the success of Tom Jones à Londres which was produced later in 1782, added to the effect of Le Tableau de Paris in ensuring the popularity of Mercier's play. Another powerful cause, as Bachaumont points out, was the talented group of players who performed it. Granger, who took the part of Vanglenne always attracted large audiences.

There were no other plays founded on The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Biddulph. After 1782, the "drame bourgeois" reached

(2) p.20, Vol.XXXII, Mémoires Secrets, le 4 mai 1786. op.cit.
saturation point in its capacity for absorbing new influences.

The general reactions of French drama to the influence of the English novel may very briefly be resumed as follows.

One condition was necessary, to mark out the work of English writers as suitable for adaptation: popularity. This in itself was not sufficient: a striking new situation, a pathetic or unusual character, a lesson of moral or social reform, which could be turned to account in drama, guided the choice of French writers.

Swift's Gulliver supplied Marivaux with the novel idea of making physical size correspond to the growth of reason, and suggested some of the philosophic content of L'Isle de la Raison. The easy optimism which animated "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois" could not assimilate the Englishman's biting satire, so Gulliver's influence reached only the early moral comedy.

The traits of Richardson's heroines and some episodes from Pamela and Clarissa were reproduced in various plays. His peculiar use of sentiment pervaded a great proportion of what was written for the stage after 1745. His moral teaching was neglected, or accepted with much reserve; although his treatment of social problems found many echoes.

Fielding's influence was not felt until late in the history of "drame bourgeois". The well-wrought plot of Tom Jones made borrowing easy and pleasant. In spite of this,
only one 'domestic' play was taken from this novel, because Fielding's humour and the realism of his characters delayed appreciation of his work until the ten years before the Revolution. In 1782, Desfoiges took up some of Fielding's ideas on social justice, which were received with enthusiasm, for they fitted in with doctrines generally accepted at the time. The originality of the persons in Tom Jones brought a touch of real life into the theatre, which had so long employed Richardson's formula of awakening sympathy for the trials of virtue, that Fielding's more robust art was welcomed.

Mrs Sheridan's novel supplemented Richardson's work in "weeping diversion into virtue". She introduced one important personage into French drama. This was the 'uncle from America'; but it was her son who demonstrated the richest possibilities of this character.

Success in the use of a theme from an English novel depended on the choice of an apt moral lesson, modified so as to bear on the social problems which interested the 'man in the street'. Voltaire and Mercier were rewarded for their skill in presenting their subject-matter, accompanied by an appropriate message; while La Chaussée and Née de la Rochelle failed, because they were not sufficiently sensitive to follow the trend of public opinion.

No great plays, and no startling changes were produced as a result of imitating English novels. The gulf between
expression in the narrative and the dramatic forms is too deep to be bridged, except by the greatest creative genius.

Finally, all the French plays, described above, arranged their material in obedience to the conventions of the form they chose, and so the greater part of the native English characteristics disappeared. This standardized the themes, and allowed English influence to permeate the rest of Europe, which followed French taste in drama.
Chapter VI.

THE USE OF THEMES TAKEN FROM ENGLISH DOMESTIC TRAGEDY IN THE

"DRA ME BOURGEOIS" OF FRANCE.

Two English domestic tragedies, Lillo's Merchant of London, and Moore's Gamester provided themes for "drame bourgeois". Diderot's allusions to these plays had helped French writers to understand the aims of their own new variety of drama; while his praise of them as models stimulated curiosity, and awoke the desire to make practical use of them.

Consequently, a series of plays appeared in France, which may be divided into two groups, one including the adaptations of The Merchant, the other those of The Gamester. Lillo's play was known to the public some time before Moore's, so the history of its various reproductions in French drama will be outlined first.
I. Imitations of The Merchant in France.

In the group inspired by Lillo's *Merchant*, the only true "drame bourgeois" are *Jenneval* by Mercier, and *Barneveldt*, by La Harpe. We must, however, refer to the early account of Lillo's work, and the scenes turned into French by Prévost, the first complete translation by Clément de Genève, Diderot's appreciation of the *Merchant*, Dorat's *Lettre de Barneveldt dans sa prison à Truman son ami*, *Le Barneveldt François* by Anseaume, and Blin de Sainmore's *Orphans*, in order to see how the play came to be known in France, and to understand why Mercier and La Harpe modified the story in the way they did.

The first reference to Lillo's *Merchant* was Prévost's criticism in 1734, which he illustrated with several scenes translated from the English. He had been present at the first performance, and the strong impression made by the tragedy of Barnwell had prompted his description of the play in the *Pour et Contre*.

There were several other writers who mentioned *The Merchant of London* but none of them added anything of significance to Prévost's account, and most of them just alluded to it as an example of the "monstrous" tragedies of England.

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(1) e.g., Riccoboni, *La Place*, *Le Blanc*, *La Barre de Beaumarchais*.
All these references, however, helped to make Lillo better known in France.

Clément de Genève was clearly following Prévost's lead when he published *Le Marchand de Londres*. Prévost's critical observations were reprinted in full, in 1748, in the preface. Clément incorporated the scenes translated by Prévost in his own version. These two writers may thus be considered together.

Their work strengthened the impression that English drama was powerful, but inartistic and barbarous. It had no influence on the use of Lillo's theme in France until Diderot had drawn attention to the English play; after that, it became the foundation of new dramas on the same subject.

We must, then, point out Clément's modifications of the original text, and comment on his criticisms, for they foreshadow future changes in the story of Barnwell.

The 1748 edition of *Le Marchand de Londres* left out the closing scenes of Act V, which represented the execution of Barnwell and Millwood. By 1751, when the second edition of his work appeared, Clément had changed his mind; and he explained the change in the *Cinq Années Littéraires*, as follows:

"Le public, qui veut tout voir, a paru regretter quelques

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(1) These scenes were: Act I, sc.iii, Act III, sc.iii,iv, Act IV, sc.iii; they appeared in *Le Pour et Contre*, nos XLV, XLVI. (1734, op.cit.)

scènes de potence que j'avais jugé à propos de lui dérober; je les lui restitue cette fois-ci: j'ai supprimé au lieu de cela quelques notes qui n'avaient pas été approuvées." In the course of the translation itself, he inserted a note which gives his own opinion of the conclusion, "C'est ici que la Pièce doit finir, et qu'il faut cesser de lire, à moins qu'on n'aime à voir la Potence, le Bourreau, etc."

Clément suggested a further amendment; he thought the rôle of Maria 'indecent', and proposed that her generous gift to Barnwell in the third act should be made by Truman, so as to reveal the friendship between him and Barnwell in all its strength. At the end of the play, Maria should commit suicide when she visits Barnwell in prison; for although such a catastrophe would not be horrible enough to please English taste, it would suit a French audience better. Both these suggestions were taken up and carried out in the plan of La Harpe's adaptation of The Merchant.

Clément's translation was faithful, except when Lillo's imagery was too bold for him, when some of the expressions used by Millwood were too shocking, when Maria's "pious monologues" seemed too long, or when Millwood and

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(2) p.62, sc.ix, Act II, p.180, sc.v, Act V, Le Marchand de Londres, (2e éd. Londres 1751.)
(3) sc.v, Act I, ibid.
(4) sc.ii, Act IV, ibid. see note. see also sc.v, Act V.
Thoroughgood touched on the dangerous subject of religion\(^1\).

Thus, his preliminary alterations helped to make the play more acceptable to French taste, and his warm praise of Truman's visit to Barnwell in prison was the beginning of a chorus of enthusiasm, which Collé\(^2\), Diderot and Dorat continued. It was this scene which Diderot praised in the _Entretiens_ as an example of the emotional 'tone' proper to "drame". His words probably helped to give Dorat the idea of writing the _Lettre de Barneveldt dans sa prison à Truman son ami_, précédée d'une _Lettre de l'Auteur_.

The letter prefixed to Dorat's work points out the chief objections to the subject of the _Merchant of London_ as a plot, and it may be taken as representative of current opinion in 1763, the year of its publication. The first criticism was that Lillo's story was chaotic; no event was prepared, nothing was justified, no motives for the characters' actions were explained. The next difficulty was that of representing such a revolting series of crimes on the French stage. Further, the character of Millwood was that of a monster; such horrors might please the melancholy English, but were abhorrent to the more delicate taste of the French. Dorat could see, however, that the _Merchant_ without Millwood would lose life and colour, so he gave up the idea of writing a play in French on this subject.

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(1) pp.122 ff. sc.xii, Act IV, _Le Marchand de Londres_, (2e éd. Londres 1751.)
His Lettre de Barnevelt contained one modification of the original story which reappeared in nearly all the later imitations of The Merchant, for it supplied a further motive for the murder of the uncle. Dorat made "Sorogoud" the uncle; this was peculiar to his version; but he also showed this uncle as taking definite steps to separate "Fani" and Barnewelt: so that revenge as well as avarice prompted the murder.

There was also a more gallant air about Dorat's Barnevelt - he was less inclined to moralise over his lost innocence, and his love for "Fani" was less sensual, while his friendship for Truman was brought out more strongly than in the English play. The whole story was told in elegant verse. This refinement of language and sentiment made Lillo's play acceptable to a still wider circle of readers; and Diderot's observations on the Lettre de Barnevelt reinforced the impression left on the public mind.

Grimm included Diderot's criticism of this letter in the Correspondance Littéraire for 1764, and although it was by no means favourable to Dorat, it praised the "great scenes" of the original in a way that might tempt French writers to borrow from them. Diderot began by saying that "Dorat, soutenu du génie de Lillo, et riche d'une infinité de traits que celui-ci a repandus dans sa tragédie, n'a fait qu'une

épître médiocre, où il ne s'élève pas une fois à la hauteur de son modèle." 1 Dorat had lamentably failed in his reproduction of the uncle's last dying speech, according to Diderot, and his version missed the point of the repetition in Truman's famous reply to Barnwell's confession that he would have murdered his friend had Millwood wished it: "mon ami, embrassons nous, nous ne nous sommes pas encore embrassés d'aujourd'hui". Diderot's emphasis of the beauty of this speech was an effective reason for its inclusion in the later plays by Mercier and La Harpe.

Dorat had neglected one point in Millwood's character. This was her diabolic skill in preparing her victim to commit the crime. Diderot thought that this must be very carefully brought out, in order to make sure that the audience would sympathise with Barnwell. Mercier and La Harpe both tried to put this suggestion into practice. Diderot said that it was not Dorat's use of the conventional language of French poetry which made his 'epistle' lifeless, but the lack of true feeling within himself. This maxim explains many failures in the attempt to imitate; and it is especially true when the "model" is a foreign work of art.

In 1764, Dorat further exposed his aims in the Lettre de Barnevelt, and the effect he wished to produce in his description of the sad fate which overtook the young

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apprentice. "Les beautés de ce sujet ne vous sont point échappées, vous avez frémi en voyant les limites imperceptibles qui séparent la vertu et le crime. Barnwell assassin a excité votre indignation; il vous a arraché des larmes par l'ivresse de sa douleur, si j'ose le hasarder, et par la vérité de son repentir...." It is significant that Jenneval and Barneveldt endeavoured to arouse the same emotions, when Mercier and La Harpe wrote them, years later. Dorat had hit the general taste very accurately, in spite of Diderot's sharp criticism.

The series of plays based on the Merchant began with Anseaume's École de la Jeunesse, ou le Barnwelt François\(^2\), which was first played in January 1765, at the Théâtre des Italiens. It does not belong to the series of "drames bourgeois", for it was a "comédie à ariettes", but there were one or two features in Anseaume's use of his model that affected later plays, and thus it must be examined.

Anseaume's play was well received, and in 1779 he published a new edition with music by another composer. "Le Barnevelt français" was a youth named Cléon, who became infatuated with a young widow, Hortense, to such an extent that he neglected the virtuous Sophie, and was prepared to rob his

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(1) Lettre de Zeilla, jeune sauvage, esclave à Constantinople, à Valcour, officier français, précédé d'une Lettre à Madame de C... (nouvelle édition, Paris 1764.) (first published 1764.)

(2) Anseaume, L'École de la Jeunesse ou le Barnevelt François, comédie en 3 actes et en vers, mêlée d'ariettes; Paris 1765.
rich uncle, in whose house he lived. When he broke open his uncle's desk, he found a will, leaving everything to him: so he repented, gave up Hortense, and married Sophie.

The idea of making the French equivalent of Millwood a widow was a concession to the proprieties, and reflected the real conditions of society at the time. In the Tableau de Paris¹, Mercier makes it clear that the young widow in French society enjoyed a great deal of freedom, which might easily be turned to account in a disreputable way. La Harpe also employed this device to make the character of Millwood acceptable in France. The "moral" of Le Barnevelt François summed up a view of Barnwell's story that was peculiarly French:

"Souvent des coeurs bien nés et que l'honneur anime, Se trouvent renversés par un choc imprévu, C'est un bonheur pour eux de voir de près le crime Ils en connoissent mieux le prix de la vertu."

Like Anseaume, Mercier, who next used the theme of the Merchant, emphasised the moral advantage of becoming almost a criminal, rather than Lillo's more terrible lesson of punishment: and the history of the plays shows that as Mercier's and Anseaume's adaptations were most pleasing to French taste, this more optimistic ending reflected the morality of the ordinary man.

(2) Act III, sc. xiii, Anseaume, Le Barnevelt François op.cit.
Mercier called his play *Jenneval*. It was his first, and although he published it in 1769, it was not performed in Paris until 1776, when it appeared at the "Théâtre des Associés" without attracting attention. Its first effective representation took place at the Théâtre des Italiens in 1781. Before this time however, it had become a favourite play in provincial theatres; and its great success at Bordeaux, with the acting of Mme Verteuil as Rosalie, was responsible for the renewed appeal to the audiences of Paris. During these years, *Jenneval* was translated into German and Italian, and acted with much applause in those countries.

The reason for this applause becomes apparent when Mercier's departures from the original version are studied: *Jenneval* is much less shocking, and fits in better with the humanitarian philosophy of the later eighteenth century. Mercier explained and described his modifications in a rather lengthy preface. His selection of the story of Barnwell was determined by the success of Saurin's *Beverley* in the previous year, and by the fact that the moral of Lillo's play was a suitable counterpart to that of the *Gamester*.

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(2) pp.204 ff., 15 janv. 1778, No.XX, t.III, Le Nouveau Spectateur ou Journal des Théâtres, and No.XVII, 1er déc. 1777. Ibid.

(3) by Schroeder, 1781.

(4) by Madame Caminer; p.273, Vol.II, No.XIII, 1er oct 1776, ibid.
Before he could put The Merchant on the French stage, Mercier had to rearrange the very complicated action of Lillo's play in accordance with the simpler, more logical traditions of the French stage, and manipulate the character of Millwood, Barnwell's crime and its punishment very delicately.

He proposed to solve some of these difficulties in this way:\1: "J'ai conduit le jeune homme sur le bord de l'abîme. Je lui en ai fait mesurer toute la profondeur. Il m'eût été facile de l'y précipiter. Mais j'en appelle à la Nation. Auroit-elle vu sans pâlir un forcené, guidé par la soif de l'or et par celle de la Volupté, qui court plonger le poignard dans le sein d'un homme vertueux? Non! ...."

"J'ai donc été obligé d'abandonner la Pièce anglaise et de faire pour ainsi dire un drame nouveau. J'ai conservé le fond de deux caractères, et j'ai marché seul pour le reste. J'ai regretté de n'avoir pu faire entrer dans ma Pièce plusieurs beautés de l'Anglais, mais ayant suivi un plan tout différent, ces beautés n'ont pu trouver leur place. Enfin, travaillant pour ma nation, je n'ai pas dû lui présenter des moeurs atroces."

It is interesting to see how Mercier echoes the previous objections to Lillo's story. His Jenneval was nearer to the original Merchant than the words of the Preface quoted above seem to indicate. Mercier said that two only of the

(1) p.5, Préface de Jenneval, Tome I, Théâtre de Mercier, op.cit.
characters were like those in the English play: but except for M. Ducrône, there is a great similarity between the rôles in Barnwell and Jenneval.

Monsieur Dabelle, Mercier's Thoroughgood, was not a merchant, but a government official, with the same ideas as Thoroughgood on marriage, the bourgeoisie, and reform by kindness. As Mercier was anxious to do away with some of the complications of the English theme, and to make his play more acceptable to the critics, this change in the setting of the story was necessary.

The daughter, Lucile, was a more orthodox "jeune fille" than Maria. Acting upon Clément's advice, Mercier cut out the episode of her lending money to cover up Barnwell's theft, and he provided her with a "confidante" Orphise; but as this character was purely conventional and had no part in the action of the play, it was omitted in the acting versions of Jenneval. Mercier's Tableau de Paris, referred to above, explains why Lucile had such an unimportant part: the bourgeois 'jeune fille' of Mercier's day was very carefully guarded, and it was impossible for her to take any action independent of her parents, without grave scandal.

Bonnemer, who was the counterpart of Truman, was also a shadowy figure; sententious and devoted like the English character, but since the catastrophe and the prison scenes were not included in Jenneval, his importance is one of the
"beauties" that Mercier had to sacrifice.

Instead of Blount and Lucy, Millwood's accomplices, Mercier simplified the action in Jenneval by introducing a Gascon named Brigard, as the tool of Rosalie. Thus he represented a type more familiar to French audiences than the ruffianly Blount, or the equivocal Lucy. Rosalie is one of the characters that Mercier borrowed from Lillo. She is much more refined in language in the French play; but her love of money and her desire for revenge on mankind in general for the wrong done to her by the man who first seduced her, and her reflections on the power she possessed of making Jenneval do her will, are just like Millwood's.

Mercier's Jenneval is a young man reading law, and this change in his situation was due to the causes that turned Monsieur Dabelle into a government official. Like Dorat, Mercier gave his hero more of the conventional qualities of a young lover on the stage: bravery, sentiment, honour, gallantry and pretty speeches, and to these he added Barnwell's weakness and his consciousness of sin.

The one really new character in Mercier's play was that of Monsieur Ducrône, the testy, tyrannical, and extremely tactless uncle. His words and his actions, although prompted by excellent motives, served only to confirm Jenneval in his evil ways. Ducrône was a lesson in how not to govern youth; Mercier naturally converted him to the wiser methods of Monsieur Dabelle, in the fifth act.
There were two important differences in the plot of Jenneval and of The Merchant. The first was intended to supply a further motive for the murder; and to make the uncle take a really active part in the play. Therefore Mercier brought Monsieur Ducrône and Jenneval face to face, after Jenneval's first theft of money; there was a bitter quarrel, when Ducrône spoke very harshly of Rosalie, and threatened to disinherit Jenneval. The nephew retorted furiously in defence of Rosalie "vous lui donneriez l'affreux droit de vous hair, vous, et tous les hommes"¹, and seemed ready to revenge the insult. Monsieur Ducrône followed up his words with actions, and tried to have Rosalie imprisoned as a prostitute. Thus the threat to disinherit Jenneval, and the action of driving her from her own house to a poverty-stricken hidingplace, were the main arguments that Rosalie employed to justify her suggestion of murder to Jenneval.

The next change was necessary in order to avoid shocking the audience with the terrors of murder and the gallows. Thus Jenneval had to realise Rosalie's true character² before she could persuade him to murder his uncle. Her insistence on the question of money, and her confession that she had already dispatched Brigard to do the deed, in case she failed to persuade Jenneval, accomplished this. Mercier rather cleverly ended the fourth act with Jenneval's ambiguous speech about

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¹ Act III, sc.iii, Jenneval. Mercier, op.cit.
² Act IV, sc.vii, ibid.
shedding blood - but in the fifth act, the boy returned, having saved his uncle from Brigard's attack, and was properly repentant, pardoned, and rewarded with the hand of Lucile.

The actual text of some of the speeches in Jenneval reproduced phrases and sentences from Clément's translation of Lillo¹, although they were often assigned to different speakers, and used in other situations. This is strikingly illustrated in Mercier's placing of Truman's famous reply to Barnwell's confession of murderous intent, which had so aroused Diderot's enthusiasm. It was impossible to introduce it in the original situation, so Mercier put it into Monsieur Ducrone's mouth, as a reply to Jenneval's words²: "tremblez en écoutant un formidable aveu ... apprenez qu'il a été un moment, où ne voyant plus en vous qu'un inflexible ennemi, j'allois vous assassiner. Le ciel..."

Monsieur Ducrone: "Mon cher neveu, nous ne nous sommes point encore embrassés."

Mercier aimed at inculcating very much the same lesson as Lillo. Both men pointed out the inevitable sequence of weakness, temptation, crime, and repentance. Both showed

(2) Act V, sc. iv, Jenneval, op.cit.
the dangers of association with women like Millwood, and at
the same time argued in defence of the prostitute's attitude
towards society. In Mercier's time, the problem of "ces
femmes méprisables et charmantes" was of growing importance;
so this topical interest contributed to Jenneval's ultimate
success. Mercier laid more weight than Lillo had done on
the forbearance and sympathy shown to the erring young man.
Thoroughgood had been kind to Barnwell, but Dabelle's treat-
ment of Jenneval was more impressive, because it contrasted
with Ducrône's harshness; and then Mercier drove the lesson
home by convincing Ducrône that he had been wrong.

Secondly Mercier insisted on the virtue of sensibility,
in the form that Rousseau had made popular. Monsieur Dabelle,
Lucile and Bonnemer were sentimentalists, and they were the
most thoroughly good characters. Jenneval also was a man of
feeling: it was this quality that made him see Rosalie's
wickedness in time, and urged him to save his uncle's life.
In the last scene of the play, because he had obeyed the
dictates of his heart, he could very properly rebuke his
uncle for his past harsh and unsympathetic attitude, and tell
the patient Lucile "Je ne vous ai pas été infidèle; je vous
aime trop pour penser que j'ai cessé un instant d'adorer tant
de perfections réunies." Such a sudden change was not felt to
be ludicrous at a time when an optimistic philosophy modified
by works like the Nouvelle Héloïse, made it simple to forget,
forgive, and reform.
When Mercier's play was first published, it attracted no interesting comments. Nearly twenty years later, the performance at the Théâtre des Italiens, in February 1781, aroused wild enthusiasm and frantic opposition, which might be compared to the more famous "battle of "Hernani". Bachaumont describes it graphically¹: "on peut dire que la pièce est arrivé à la fin au milieu des huées et des plus grands applaudissements. Une partie du public s'écrioit: "c'est horrible"; une autre: "voila qui est beau, parfait, sublime". Les uns disoient "Quelle superbe leçon de morale on peut puiiser ici!" les autres, "Quel tableau affligeant pour l'humanité! Jamais il n'auroit dû paraître aux yeux du public français."

The Mercure de France gives an interesting explanation of these contradictory views². After a similar description of the noisy first performance, the writer goes on to say that those spectators who shouted favourable comments were thinking of the excellent moral of the play, while those who disapproved had in mind the conventional tragedy, and were shocked at Mercier's infringement of the "rules". This critic concluded that while certain scenes seemed to transgress the laws of tragedy, by disagreeably harrowing the spectators' feelings, on the other hand, terrible, and most timely truths emerged

(2) p.138, Le Mercure de France, le 17 mars 1781. (Paris 1781.)
from a play which described the dangers of prostitution, at an epoch when that vice was rampant. All men who had the least spark of love for virtue must join in praise of the author, who had the courage to defend honour and right living. Then he compared Jenneval with Lillo's Barnwell, and decided that the moral aim was better expressed in the English play. Barnwell was punished for his weakness, his deafness to friendly advice, and his sin; Jenneval was rewarded although absolutely undeserving, vicious, and guilty. In spite of the inferiority of Jenneval in this respect, the critic of the Mercure judged that Mercier was right in avoiding the murder and the gallows in his play, for such scenes would never be permitted on the French stage.

Thus it seems clear that Jenneval achieved this ultimate success because public opinion was advancing towards a more broad-minded view of novelties on the stage. Mercier had been careful to respect the audience's delicacy of feeling, while preserving enough of the rude strength of his original to give force to his play, and enough of the lesson of Lillo's Merchant to take advantage of contemporary interest in social problems. Jenneval had the attraction of a slightly foreign air, and the play was unusual enough to possess the charm of novelty without being too unorthodox: but Mercier had to wait twenty years before the public in Paris was ready to listen to his version of Barnwell's "sad, true tale".
The recent growth of this leniency in dramatic criticism appears still more impressively, when Mercier's work, and the criticisms quoted above are compared with Blin de Sainmore's preface to Orphanis. This was a tragedy, produced at the Théâtre Français in 1773. It was performed thirteen times between September and December in that year, which indicated a very creditable reception.

Blin de Sainmore's words in the preface, and the success of the play, show that a departure from the rules of heroic tragedy, and the presentation of "low" scenes was not yet a safe undertaking in the French theatre. Although there had been popular "drames bourgeois", and although Lillo's play was recognized as very terrible, moral, and pathetic, it was necessary to make radical changes in the story, before it was fit for the audiences of Paris, in 1773.

"Je ne dissimulerai point", said the author in the preface to Orphanis "que la lecture du Marchand de Londres a fait naître l'idée de cette Tragédie; cependant la seule ressemblance qui se trouve entre la pièce anglaise et la mienne, c'est qu'une femme artificieuse abuse de sa beauté pour conduire un jeune homme au crime; mais, les personnages, le lieu de la scène, l'intrigue, le noeud, le dénouement, l'action, la conduite, les moyens, sont absolument différents dans les deux ouvrages."

(1) Orphanis, Tragédie de M. Blin de Saimmore, représentée pour la première fois le 23 sept. 1773. (Paris 1773.)
This description of Orphanis in relation to the Merchant is quite accurate: for the French tragedy tells the story of an unfortunate young prince of Egypt, who was tempted to murder his uncle the king, by the ambitious Orphanis: but when he made the criminal attempt, he was disarmed by his uncle's courage and kindness: Orphanis was banished and the prince married somebody else. The conventions of classical tragedy are rigidly obeyed, and Blin de Sainmore furnishes the following explanation: "Les Tragédies des Anglois ressemblent assez à ces liqueurs fortes dont ils font usage et auxquelles notre delicatessen ne sauront s'accoutumer. Ainsi pour me conformer à notre goût, j'ai été forçé de prendre une autre route, j'ai changé l'action, j'ai ennobli les caractères, j'ai surtout adouci les couleurs trop sombres et trop horribles, j'ai retranché les personnages accessoires et superflus, et on ne saurait disconvenir que ma Pièce ne soit beaucoup plus régulière que celle de M. Lillo."

It is remarkable how well this description fits the process by which the successive imitators of the London Merchant adapted the original to French taste. In varying degree, from the translation and comments of Clément de Genève, to the heroic tragedy of Orphanis by Blin de Sainmore, they 'changed, softened, and ennobled' the story of Barnwell. They were all alike, too, in shaping the
English play in conformity with the rules of French drama:
of "drame" or "tragédie", according to their choice of form.

This holds good for La Harpe's Barneveldt, which appeared in the six-volume edition of his works in 1778. There was a very long preface: the first part stated that Barneveldt was not intended for public performance, and gave the reasons for this; the second part was a refutation of Mercier's Nouvel Essai sur l'Art Dramatique and had very little to do with the play itself.

La Harpe began in a characteristic way. He reviewed the previous works of Anseaume, Mercier, and Blin de Sainmnore, and dismissed them as weak, timid copies of a powerful play by commonplace, mediocre and unsuccessful authors.

He intended, in his own play, to keep as close as possible to The London Merchant. He was too uncertain of the reception which would be accorded to a faithful copy of the English play in the theatre, so he decided to publish it without attempting to have it performed.

He then explained his treatment of the theme in detail.

"Cependant je me suis rapproché autant que j'ai pu des convenances reçues sur notre théâtre, et je me suis permis tous les changements qui ne nuisaient pas à l'intérêt de la pièce,

(1) This was written before the success of Jenneval in 1781.
ni au mérite de l'original. J'ai tâché d'ennoblir le personnage de Milvoud, (que je nomme Sara), ne pouvant pas l'adoucir, et je lui ai donné plus de décence, sans lui rien ôter de sa scélératesse. Ce n'est pas une courtisane publique comme dans l'anglais, c'est une veuve qui a eu un état honnête, mais, qui, tombée dans la mauvaise fortune par la faute de son mari, s'est permis de honteuses ressources: c'est une femme d'un caractère violent et artificieux, aigri par le malheur et le mépris, et qui cherche des dupes et des victimes. Je la suppose liée depuis un certain temps avec Barneveldt, et employant pour lui en imposer, et pour l'éblouir, tous les avantages que les femmes de cette espèce ont sur la candeur et l'inexpérience. Elle ne s'est montrée que sur les plus beaux dehors, et Barneveldt n'a vu en elle que la beauté et le malheur. Ainsi j'ai laissé à la séduction tous les degrés dont elle est susceptible.

J'ai supprimé les deux domestiques de Milvoud, agents subalternes, mais trop méprisables pour paraître sur la scène.

Mais j'ai beaucoup ajouté au rôle de Marie, (que je nomme Lucie), de cette fille sensible et vertueuse qui aime Barnwell sans le lui dire, et fait ce qu'elle peut pour le secourir et le sauver, en voulant qu'il ignore tout. Ce rôle s'offre sous un aspect intéressant, mais dans l'anglais, il n'est qu'indiqué, et pour ainsi dire, derrière l'action.
Il y est plus lié dans mon ouvrage. Je l'ai développé d'autant plus que j'en avois besoin pour le dénouement. Car on sent bien que je n'ai pas imaginé de mettre la potence sur la scène française."

There were two scenes in the original that La Harpe particularly admired: "Le meurtre fait frémir, il fait horreur, mais ce moment que le suit, tout en déchirant l'âme, y porte l'attendrissement. C'est une des plus puissantes émotions dramatiques. Pour conserver cette situation, il fallait risquer le meurtre. C'est ce que personne parmi nous n'avait osé faire, c'est ce que j'ai fait."¹ The other touching scene was that of Truman's visit to Barnwell in prison. "La scène du cachot surtout est un chef d'oeuvre, on ne saurait aller plus loin, c'est là que les larmes coulent en abondance et qu'elles ne sont plus amères. Mais cette belle scène tient encore à la nécessité de mettre sur le théâtre le crime de Barneveldt."²

La Harpe's account of his treatment of the London Merchant is shown to be accurate, by a comparison of his Barneveldt with the original, the translation by Clément, and the later French plays based on Lillo's work.

The characters of Barnwell, Truman and Thoroughgood were left practically untouched. Barnwell was rather more

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(1) p.12, Préface de Barneveldt, op.cit.
(2) p.13 ibid.
sentimental, and more polished in manner, and less cowardly. Thoroughgood had less to do, for he had no part in the closing scenes of Barneveldt: but La Harpe was careful to preserve the atmosphere of Lillo's work, by introducing the worthy merchant's reflections on the duties of those engaged in trade\(^1\). Truman's friendship with Barnwell was brought into the foreground, but no new traits were added to his character.

La Harpe left out the Lucy and Blount of Lillo's play, because they were too despicable, and belonged to a class that could not be represented in French drama. The same difficulty arose over the social position of Millwood. It would shock the French public to see a prostitute ruin a young man, in La Harpe's opinion, so, like Anseaume, he gave his 'Sara' the convenient status of a widow. He further 'ennobled' Sara by representing the connection between her and Barneveldt as well established before the action of the play began. He thus avoided the scenes where Millwood crudely displayed her arts to charm Barnwell, and hinted at a long and complicated process of entanglement. Some of the more powerful of Lillo's scenes were lost thereby, but La Harpe could quote Diderot's authority in support of his change, and he felt sure it would please his readers. He abated nothing of Millwood's greed and treachery in his Sara.

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\(^1\) Barneveldt, La Harpe (op.cit.) Act I, sc.i.
Lucie, the Merchant's daughter, played a more important part in the action of Barneveldt than Lillo's Maria did in the original, and this set her generosity, patience, and fidelity in a stronger light. La Harpe created a confidante for her. Like Mercier, he felt it would not become his heroine to hold private conversations with Truman or Barnwell.

La Harpe altered the plot somewhat, in obedience to the conventions of the French theatre. In order to protect Lucie from the reproach of indecorous behaviour, and to enhance Truman's display of friendship, he acted upon a hint given in one of Clément's notes. It was Truman who asked Lucie for the money to replace what Barneveldt had stolen, so that Thoroughgood might not discover the theft. Lillo had made his Maria offer the money to Truman.

Then, in Barneveldt the uncle took strong measures to separate his nephew from Sara. This made their desire for revenge more plausible, and furnished an added motive for the murder. Both Dorat and Mercier had made use of it before La Harpe. There was a detail connected with this action by Barneveldt's uncle, which La Harpe invented, so as to bring a touch of irony into the scene just before the murder. This may be a reflection of the similar effect in the fifth act of Beverley.

(1) In Act IV, sc.ii. of Barneveldt by La Harpe, the uncle said:
"J'attendais Barneveldt, peut-être que sa vue Rapporterait le calme à mon âme abattue;"
As Barneveldt was expected to come and take his leave
(Footnote continued on next page)
La Harpe altered the last act of *The Merchant* drastically. As he had said in the Preface, he dared not send his hero to the gallows. Therefore, he followed a suggestion put forward by Clément in his translation of the *Merchant*. Lucie, like Maria, visited Barneveldt in prison; but she was the "messenger" who related Sara's unrepentant death, and she concluded the scene by committing suicide. Barneveldt took up the dagger and stabbed himself, while the confidante Polli looked on. The conversations between Barneveldt and Truman were substantially equivalent to the corresponding passages in Lillo's play.

Some idea of the way in which La Harpe followed the original thoughts and expressions of the English play may be gathered from a comparison of the scene where Truman and Barnwell meet after Barnwell's first theft.

Clément's translation, which reproduced the original meaning very faithfully, only omitting the last phrase in Truman's excuse for Barnwell's angry words to him, is very

(Footnote continued from previous page)
before going abroad to the post which his uncle had found for him in order to separate him from Sara (see Act II, sc.ii, Act III, sc.iv) this preparation for his "entrance" gave it greater dramatic value.

(2) Act V, scenes ii, iii, iv, v, vi, ibid.
(3) Lillo, *The Merchant of London*, (ed. A.W.Ward, Lond. 1906) Act II, sc.ii: Truman: "... Yet stay, perhaps I am too rash, and angry when the cause demands compassion. Some unforeseen calamity may have befaln him, too great to bear."
probably the foundation of La Harpe's play, for it was very seldom that he introduced any idea which was in the original and not in Clément. This may be gathered from the following comparison of texts.

Clément: *Le Marchand de Londres*, Acte II, sc. ii. (éd. 1751, Londres.)


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**Barnwel:** "Tout change enfin. L'amitié, tous les engagements cessent selon les divers circonstances, et puisque tu peux un jour me haïr, peut-être nous conviendrait-il mieux à l'un et à l'autre que tu commençasses à m'aimer un peu moins."

**Barneveldt:**

"Tu peux de tes bontés, un jour, te repentir. Ton amitié sans doute, est un bienfait insigne. Je puis avec le temps cesser d'être digne. Il peut être il vaut mieux que tu prennes sur toi. De ne me plus aimer, de renoncer à moi. Oublie un malheureux qu'il faut qu'on abandonne. Qui ne mérite pas les chagrins qu'il te donne."

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**Truman:** "Oh! c'est un songe! Barnewel me traite ainsi sans sujet! ... Adieu, lâche et ingrat jeune homme, je vais tacher de suivre tes conseils... (il s'en va, et revient). ... Mais quoi! peut-être je suis injuste, et que je me mets en colère lorsque je devrais être ému de compassion. Il faut qu'il lui soit arrivé quelque malheur inoubli."  

**Truman:**

"Eh bien! ingrat jeune homme, il te faut obéir. À tes cruels avis il faut s'assujettir. Je ne puis supporter cette odieuse offense. Et je m'éfforcerai d'éviter ta présence. Adieu... [à part] Mais à quel sort le vois-je s'exposer. Ah! ... dans les malheureux, il faut tout excuser."

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(1) It was the English text that suggested to La Harpe the name Sara for Milwood.
La Harpe sounded a more sentimental note in his version of the dialogue between the two young men. He also put a hint of self-pity into Barnwell's speech, and of pride into Truman's answer. The effect of his facile verse was to take away the nervous energy of the English original. This might have played a useful part, as the conventional language of verse cloaked the "horror" that La Harpe was so afraid of emphasising.

In all his modifications of the original text, whether of plot, character, or language, La Harpe showed extreme caution. All his major changes were suggested by one of the earlier critics or writers who had handled the theme before him.

La Harpe's boldest effort, the murder of Barneveldt's uncle before the eyes of the audience, was his reason for not daring to present the play at a theatre, even though the action of murder was to be carefully screened by a row of trees.

Had the play been performed, it is quite possible that this device would not have offended the delicate taste of the public, for Voltaire had arranged a very similar scene in Mahomet long before, with great success. In the fourth act of this play, Zopire was struck down by his son while he prayed, and murdered behind an altar on the stage; so that his last speech of forgiveness might be given as he died¹.

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¹ According to the Preface to Mahomet in the Kehl edition of the works, these scenes in Act IV of Mahomet were imitated from the London Merchant: quoted on p.96, Vol.IV, Garnier éd. Oeuvres de Voltaire. [it is Vol.III. Théâtre] op.cit.
It seems likely, however, that in 1778, after the success of *Beverley*, La Harpe’s timid efforts to combine Lillo’s strength with French delicacy, his lack of order and initiative in the conduct of the plot, would not please a public that was about to welcome Mercier’s much more daring *Jenneval*. *The Barneveldt* was too like a translation to be really suited to the French stage: it had no living force of its own.

A review of the influence exerted by *The London Merchant* on French drama shows that the impulse to imitate this play came from the early translations by Prévost and Clément, and from Diderot’s criticism. Various French writers obtained from Lillo the groundwork of their plot, some of their characters and a powerful moral lesson. They could not reproduce the English story exactly, for Millwood’s profession, and her temptation of Barnwell, the murder, and its punishment were too harrowing for a French audience.

Not one of them brought the gallows before his spectators. La Harpe was bold enough to represent the murder on the stage, but he felt bound to round off his play with a suicide, although it was not intended for public performance. Anseaume, Blin de Sainmore, and Mercier all showed Barnwell repentant and saved from both the crime and its retribution. Since these plays definitely pleased the taste of the time, we may conclude that their more optimistic view of human nature represented French opinion better than Lillo’s darker philosophy.
These happier endings were preferred because there was a real confidence in the tendency of human nature to return to virtue, and to conquer unworthy passion. At the same time, French dramatists were honest in their attempts to improve public morals, and if anyone had shown the hanging of Barnwell and Millwood, it would seem to them a deliberate pandering to brutality in the audience. Again, such scenes might be true, but they were not artistic, and the classic tradition was dominant enough to compel authors to arrange their themes with due regard to aesthetic pleasure.

The difficulties of representing Millwood's character were solved in different ways. Anseaume and Blin de Sainmore turned Millwood into a figure familiar to French theatre-goers. She became a mercenary widow in a fashionable set, in the first writer's "comédie à ariettes": in the other's tragedy, she was an ambitious and cruel princess.

La Harpe and Mercier tried to keep as much of Millwood's original personality as they could. La Harpe put her into the position of a free-living widow, since he dared not show her as a prostitute: but Mercier used her profession and the evils arising from it as the text of his homily, just as Lillo had done. When his play was brought on for the second time, this subject was of topical interest; for Palissot's *L'Écueil des Mœurs ou les Courtisanes¹*, rejected by the actresses of the

Comédie Française in 1775 on the score of indecency, was successfully played at the same theatre in 1782.

Only one "drame" based on The Merchant was really successful; Jenneval. This was due to its apt references to a social evil which absorbed attention in the decade before the Revolution, and to its bold re-working of the story into a characteristically French pattern, with fresh situations and new characters. Success in adapting an English play for the French stage lay in a knowledge of just what liberties to take with public prejudice and critical theories. La Harpe's Barneveldt, as he said himself, went too far in this respect, and Mercier's Jenneval had to wait until the canons of good taste were less strictly applied, before it could be triumphantly produced at the Théâtre des Italiens.
II. Imitations of The Gamester.

Moore's *Gamester* exercised its influence on French "drame" in much the same fashion as *The Merchant of London*. There were only two plays based on the theme of *The Gamester* written before 1789, but one, the *Beverley* of Saurin, was so popular that it had a certain effect in preparing the way for a new type of "drame", which, like Mercier's *Jenneval*, arose from public approbation of the "strong scenes" of English drama. The second was an obscure work by Pigault-Lebrun, who was more famous as a novelist. In *La Joueuse*, he inverted the theme of *The Gamester*, by telling the story of a wife who brought ruin on her family, through gaming. There was a third play by De Jaure on the same subject, but this was not published until 1790.

When *The Gamester* was first played at Drury Lane in 1753, it was not applauded with such general fervour as *The London Merchant*, although it was recognized as a play with a very timely lesson: 'Gaming wanted such a Caustic as the concluding scene of the play presented'\(^1\), said Genest. It seems also that its comparative lack of success was due to the anger of the 'Gamesters' in London society, who were attacked in the play. Garrick, however, was interested in *The Gamester*, and is said to have collaborated with Moore, so it was often

\(^1\) Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, Vol.IV, Feb. 1755, (Drury Lane).
performed, and the leading actors and actresses of the century appeared in the chief parts.

Its influence and its success on the French stage were more important than its reception in England would incline us to believe.

Diderot was the first to praise it, as a fine example of domestic tragedy, in the Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel, in 1757. Marmontel repeated and elaborated Diderot's criticism of the Gamester in his discourse on tragedy, and his articles in the Encyclopédie: so that the Encyclopaedist circle was soon familiar with the story of the play.

It was Diderot, again, who communicated his enthusiasm for Moore's tragedy to Grimm, to the ladies of the d'Holbach society, to Sophie Volland, and to Saurin, who made it famous in France. While Diderot was staying at La Chevrette in 1760\(^1\), he wrote a translation of the Gamester, which delighted Grimm, and which he considered suitable for the stage without a great deal of alteration: "Le Joueurest entre les mains de M. d'Argental, wrote Diderot in September 1760\(^2\), "qui en a désiré la lecture, nous verrons ce qu'il en dira. Je ne crois pas que les changements que votre goût présent exige fussent aussi considérables que vous l'imaginez."

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Just at the same time, Diderot read the Fatal Extravagance, by Hill, and it is quite possible that he talked about it to Saurin, who was also staying at 'La Chevrette'. There is in this play the incident of the gambler who poisons his children as well as himself, because he wishes to spare them a life of shame. In Hill's play, this sad ending is made more pathetic by the irony of the last conversation: Diderot described the effect to Sophie Volland as follows: "Imaginez que cet homme était sur le point d'être saisi et précipité dans une prison. Sa femme vient à lui et lui propose de prendre ses enfants entre ses bras, et de se sauver avec lui en quelque lieu de sureté. Toute la dernière scène roule sur la double acceptation des termes de voyage, d'asile, de demeure paisible.... de dernier terme des revers et des maux, de repos, qui conviennent à la fuite réelle ou à la mort.... la tendresse de ses discours, la présence de ses enfants en qui la mort circule font un effet plus terrible mille fois que le spectacle d'Oedipe qui a les yeux crevés. et qui se baisse pour chercher ses enfants."¹ In this contact between the earlier play by Hill and Diderot's enthusiasm there may lie the germ of the famous incident where Saurin's "Joueur" thinks of murdering his little son, and of the irony of some speeches in the last scenes of Saurin's play:

for Diderot might very easily have lent his copy of the Fatal Extravagance to Saurin, or told him the story, for a previous

(1) p.207, lettre XL, du 30 septembre 1760, ibid.
passage in the letter quoted above shows that Diderot recognized the similarity between the work of Hill and that of Moore.

Grimm said that Saurin used Diderot's translation as a basis of his own version of the play. With his usual generosity, Diderot gave his work to Saurin, since he was too busy to make use of it himself\(^1\). Saurin's play was not published until 1776, and its production at the Comédie Française was delayed until the spring of 1768.

Meanwhile, the general interest in the story of the Gamester was maintained by two translations that appeared. The first was that by the Abbé Bruté de Loirelle\(^2\); it was exact, but not elegant. In the age of "belles infidèles", the Abbé's industry in giving an almost literal version of the Prologue, the Epilogue, the rimed couplets at the end of the acts, must have deserved Grimm's epithets of "sotte" and "mauvaise". This translation, however, did some useful service in calling attention to the excellent construction of The Gamester, its true pictures of life, and the example it afforded of English force and pathos in tragedy.

Another literal translation, by a Monsieur Duplat de Monticourt, is mentioned in the Catalogue de Soleinnee, with the following note\(^3\), "Le Joueur, tragédie angloise, traduction

\(^{(2)}\) Le Joueur, traduit de l'Anglais, 1762; and a later edition, Londres 1767.
\(^{(3)}\) Tome IV, Catalogue de Soleinnee, no.4907 MS. by P.I.Jacob. (Paris 1844.)
de Lillo en prose, par Duplat de Monticourt, in - 8 de 234 p.

On lit dans une note préliminaire que cette traduction, qui a le mérite d'être parfaitement fidèle, a servi de modèle au "Beverley" de Saurin, à qui Monsieur de Monticourt l'avait prêté. Even though this is probably true, a literal version would suggest no new modification of Moore's text to Saurin, so that its influence on him is unimportant, compared with that of Diderot's translation.

The Joueuf, in Diderot's rendering, was quickly and rather carelessly turned into French. It kept close to Moore's divisions of act and scene, and yet touches of Diderot's own philosophy were brought into certain speeches, while he stressed the sentimental phrases rather more than Moore had done.

Diderot never lost the peculiar qualities and the characteristic tricks of his own style.

This may be illustrated by the comparison of the following short extracts from Moore and Diderot.

(1) Grimm, Quérard and Fréron all attributed the play to Lillo. Diderot did not mention the author's name, and Bruté de Loirelle, in his Preface, said he could obtain no information about the author. Grimm, in the Correspondance Littéraire (pp.74 ff. Vol.VIII op.cit.) said that none of the Englishmen he had asked could tell him the author's name - which perhaps explains his ascribing The Gamester to Lillo.
The Gamester, Edward Moore, Act II

Bates: "No Matter for Manners and Looks. Do you supply 'em with money, and they are Gentlemen by profession. The Passion of Play casts such a Mist before the Eyes, that the Nobleman shall be surrounded with Sharpers and imagine himself in the Best Company."

Le Joueur, Diderot:
Acte I, sc.ix.²

Bates: "Il s'agit bien de la figure, de maintien, du propos au jeu. De l'argent, de l'argent. Pourvu qu'on ait de l'argent, tout est bien. Prenez un malotru, placez-le à une table de jeu, donnez-lui de l'argent, et appelez-le lord, comte, ou baron, tout ce qu'il vous plaira, et il le sera, sur-le-champ. C'est une chose admirable que le jeu; rien n'établit aussi parfaitement l'égalité première entre les hommes. À peine un homme est-il assis autour d'un tapis vert, qu'une vapeur mystérieuse lui cache tous les objets, et ne lui laisse apercevoir que l'argent. De l'argent vous dis-je, étalez de l'argent, et le premier lord du royaume au milieu d'une troupe de bas coquins et de filous se croira parmi ses semblables."

An examination of Saurin's text shows that he was influenced by Diderot in his alterations of the original story, and most particularly in his treatment of Stukeley. In the French play, Stukeley was moved by jealousy to ruin Beverley, for he was still in love with Mrs Beverley, in spite of her

(2) p.435, Act I, sc.ix, Le Joueur, Vol.VII, Oeuvres, Diderot, op.cit. He only shows Bates and Stukeley in this scene; Moore included Dawson and the other ruffians.
preference for the Gamester. Moore had suggested this, in Stukeley's first monologue, but he did not develop the use of the motive. Diderot saw in this hint a possibility of improving the rôle of Stukeley, for the philosophy of "drame bourgeois" admitted evil characters only on sufferance and tried to mitigate their wickedness if possible. This tendency is apparent in the account of Diderot's sketch of Stukeley which Grimm published in the Correspondance Littéraire for 1768.  

Stukeley was to be represented as noble and generous, but warped by his vice of jealousy. Having squandered a great fortune, he became the victim of an irresistible love for Mrs Beverley. Diderot suggested that he should be described as taking great pains to avoid the Beverleys, and to overcome his passion. Circumstances were to bring them together, and then, in spite of remorse, Stukeley was to conceive the plan of ruining Beverley, so as to make a return of his fortune the price of Mrs Beverley's surrender. The first step would be to gain her entire confidence: then, in the final scenes of the fourth act, when Beverley was in prison, Stukeley might declare his love. Mrs Beverley would naturally reject his propositions with horror. Angry and desperate, Stukeley would throw the money he had won from her husband at her feet; and he might be conveniently killed in a duel with Leuson between the fourth and fifth acts. The tragedy would end, like Moore's, with

(1) pp. 74 ff. mai 1768, Vol.VIII, Correspondance Littéraire, (éd. Tourneux, op.cit.)
Beverley's suicide, and the announcement of his good fortune, too late.

Then Grimm went on to compare this version of the plot with Saurin's actual performance. He summed up the use of Stukeley's love for the "Gamester's" wife as a poor thing: and hinted that Saurin was as incapable of conducting a powerful intrigue as he was of inventing a plot of his own. This rather unkind criticism of Saurin's play was due just as much to Grimm's annoyance at his neglect of Diderot's counsel, as to the legitimate objection he raised against certain qualities in Beverley.

Saurin was wise enough to see that if he took Diderot's advice and made Stukeley into a sort of fallen angel, the essential conflict of good and evil influences struggling to control the Gamester, would be lost. Diderot's story weakens the interest in the Gamester himself, and in the problem of gaming, by introducing a rather conventional love affair.

Saurin therefore followed Moore, except for one incident that he brought in, a slight rearrangement of the order of events, the suppression of two characters, and some minor episodes.

The new incident was that scene in Act V where Beverley, after taking poison, saw his child asleep in the armchair, considered his future of poverty and shame, and drew out a knife to kill "Tomi". But Madame Beverley and Jarvis came back in time to prevent the murder. Grimm thought that this idea was taken from Prévost's Cléveland, but it is far more likely that Saurin
borrowed it from the *Fatal Extravagance*, to which he might have had access through Diderot in 1760.

His rearrangement of the scenes was planned to strengthen Stukeley's motive for ruining Beverley, and it was evidently a result of Diderot's suggestion. Saurin placed the scene where Stukeley declared his love for Madame Beverley, and tried to induce her to take an 'odious revenge', at the beginning of Act III; it was the last in Act III, in Moore's play. This new sequence of events furnished another motive for Stukeley's villainy, as Beverley had to suffer for his wife's virtue, and his friend's disappointment. Grimm evidently overlooked this change, which might have made him think better of Saurin's work.

The French play left out the scene in Act IV, where Stukeley refused Leuson's challenge to fight. Such an incident would be too degrading even for the worst character in a serious French play. Cowardice was only tolerated in low persons, and in comedy. Saurin also made no use of the scene between Mrs Beverley and her maid Lucy, which included a song, for although comedy might be written "à ariettes", the conventions of tragedy would never permit such a fantastic mixture of styles. Lastly he omitted Bates and Dawson, and the incidents connected with them, because they were too base and depraved for his noble conception of villainy.
The Gamester and Le Joueur were thus very much alike. The characters retained in the French play were very slightly modified forms of those in Moore's. There were few changes in the plot, and Saurin's verse softened the cruder expressions of the English dialogue. The alterations in Le Joueur were chiefly intended to ennoble the character of Stukeley, as Diderot had suggested, and to make the play fit into the scheme of French tragic drama.

Saurin's play was acted for the Duc d'Orléans, at his private theatre in 1767, with high praise, as Collé allows in his Journal. Collé disliked the story of the play, and refused to be touched by the tragedy of such a weak and vicious hero: but he admired Saurin's style, the construction of the play, and Molé's acting.

Fenouilllot de Falbaire made an illuminating reference to this performance of Le Joueur, which brings out the importance of Saurin's play in turning the tide of public favour towards "drame". He showed that Le Joueur was to accomplish what Le Fils Naturel, Le Père de Famille, or Eugénie had failed to do, in his preface to the unfortunate Honnête Criminel. Falbaire had seen the performance at the duc d'Orléans' private theatre, and hoped that Le Joueur would be presented in public: then, judging the play as a specimen of the new kind of tragedy,

(1) see pp.343 ff., Cap.XI, Vol.IV, Cailhava d'Estendoux, L'Art de la Comédie, Paris 1772.
he said: "Ce nouveau genre, apparu par un homme de génie, et tourné en ridicule par des critiques qui n'imaginent rien au delà de ce qui est, commence à n'avoir pas moins de partisans qu'il m'a eu d'adversaires. Les âmes déchirées par la lecture du Jouer Anglois se sont fermées aux railleries des plaisans, et si l'académicien estimable qui s'est emparé chez nous de ce sujet terrible fait représenter son drame, je pense que la mort du Jouer s'empoisonnant dans la prison fera répandre autant de pleurs que celle d'un prince ou d'aucun Héros."

Bachaumont mentioned another private performance, in December 1767, for the duc de Noailles, and he announced that it would soon appear at the Théâtre Français. However, owing to difficulties raised by the actor Bellecour, who objected to the part allotted to him, it was not performed until May 1768.

The critics agreed that it deserved its favourable reception. Bachaumont mentioned the truth of its teaching, and Molé's superb rendering of the hero's character. He regretted that the scene of Beverley's attempt to kill the child was too painful, for it was Saurin's original contribution to the play. The Mémoires Secrets then printed a poem, which gave a different judgment:

"D'un monstre forcené le spectacle barbare
Ne saurait attendrir, ne saurait corriger,
Nul père ayant un cœur ne peut l'envisager;
Cui, tissu mal construit, de tout point bizarre,
Tu n'es fait que pour affliger.

(1) p.14, Préface de l'auteur L'Honnête Criminel, drame en 5 actes et en vers, par Fenouillot de Falbair, Yverdon, 1767.
Puisse notre Thalie, amie de la Nature,
Ne plus rien emprunter à cette source impure."

Fréron's\textsuperscript{1} views were more liberal, and he appreciated Saurin's play very fairly. He too held that Beverley's suicide, and his wish to kill Tomi were too horrifying and too atrocious to awaken the true tragic emotions: they could only please a brutal taste, and must shock the better part of society. He too attributed the idea of threatening Tomi to the example of Cleveland.

He qualified Saurin's use of the child in his play, an unfailing, though rather cheap, method of gaining the audience's sympathy. He suggested that Tomi might wake up in time to persuade Beverley not to take poison, and in this way the dreadful conclusion of the tragedy could be averted, and Beverley given an opportunity to mend his ways. Fréron had evidently compared Saurin's version with one of the translations, or the original, for he deplored the omission of the "powerful and natural" scenes in the gaming house.

Beverley was condemned as uninteresting, because his part in the catastrophe was too passive. Mrs Beverley was too patient, and as she seemed to enjoy encouraging her husband in his weakness, her trials could arouse no pity in the spectators. Henriette was equally foolish, since she left her fortune in Beverley's hands, and provided him with the means to indulge his

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Lettre X, Vol.VII, L'Année Littéraire,} Paris 1768.
vice. Stukeley had none of the grandeur essential to a wicked character in tragedy; but, as Fréron remarked, this was a fault common to most villains in "drame bourgeois". He found nothing to praise, except in the delineation of old Jarvis and Lewson.

He summed up *Le Joueur* as a valuable contribution to the development of a new tragedy in France: so that his attitude was that of a broad-minded critic, who held conservative views, without prejudice.

Saurin, in obedience to the reactions of the public and the critics who blamed the catastrophe of his play, composed a new ending for the 1770 edition of *Le Joueur*. Grimm described this edition as follows:

"Comme beaucoup de petites-maîtresses, délicates à l'excès, ont surtout attaqué le catastrophe....
M. Saurin a fait imprimer dans cette édition deux cinquièmes actes, l'un fond noir, tel qu'on le joue, l'autre couleur de rose, parce qu'on ne laisse pas à Beverley le temps de s'em-poisonner et que sa femme et le vieux bon domestique reviennent à temps pour lui apprendre que son sort est changé, et qu'il n'est plus à la besace, malgré toutes les sottises qu'il a faites pour s'y réduire, lui et les siens... il n'y a pas l'ombre de jugement dans cette opération."

Grimm disliked the "horrors" of Beverley's threat to take his son's life, and thought that the real tragedy was the degradation of Beverley, not his violent death; so that this

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(1) Correspondance Littéraire, t. IX, p. 226, janvier 1771. (op.cit.)
artificially happy ending would certainly not please him. These "horrors" were enjoyed by the public, since they afforded an excellent opportunity for the display of Molé's talent as an actor, and their appeal to the emotions delighted the audience; for as "drame" came to be established, stronger stimulants were needed to produce tears.

Le Joueur was a confessed imitation of English drama, and in spite of Grimm's conviction that Saurin had weakened the original story, it was an honest rendering of Moore's *Gamester*. The 1770 edition without the suicide was not as popular as the stage version, in which there was comparatively little deference to French taste. The pathos of the theme, the strong construction of the plot, even the catastrophe, all proved attractive. It was the nice balance of qualities either fresh or familiar which made Le Joueur a greater success than any of the plays adapted from Lillo's *Merchant*.

This popularity may explain why so few later plays were based on the same story: it was difficult to vary the theme, and useless to imitate Saurin's version. Two attempts only are mentioned in a critical account of Moore's life and works by Mr Caskey\(^1\). One was a "drame" by Pigault-Lebrun, *La Joueuse*, produced at the Palais Royal in 1789\(^2\). The other was a short

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(2) Pigault-Lebrun, *La Joueuse*, drame en 3 actes et en vers, représenté pour la première fois sur le théâtre du Palais-Royal, le mercredi 17 juin 1789. (Avignon 1791, also Paris 1789.)
comedy by Bedeno De Jaure, which appeared at the Théâtre des Italiens in 1790. It was a re-working of the story used by Pigault-Lebrun. As it appeared in 1790, and as it casts no new light on the Gamester's influence on "drame bourgeois", we need not examine it more particularly.

Pigault-Lebrun's Joueuse is of interest, because it renewed the vitality of the Gamester them on the French stage, by changing the sex of the chief character, and by 'converting' the villains in the last act.

Mr Caskey suggests that besides the obvious influence of Moore, through Saurin's play, the peculiar modification of this theme in La Joueuse was inspired by a very obscure English imitation of The Gamester, Gorges Edmond Howard's Female Gamester, which was published in 1778.

Burke mentioned this play in a letter to Garrick. As his words form the only favourable criticism of the play which it has been possible to discover, they are worth quoting:

"As I know with what particular pleasure you receive a new dramatic performance of merit, I send you two of them, The

(1) Bedeno de Jaure, L'Époux Généreux, ou le Pouvoir des Procédés, comédie en un acte et en prose, représentée pour la première fois à Paris, le 15 février 1790. (Paris 1790.)
(2) see Chapter IX, J. Homer Caskey, The Life and Works of Edward Moore, op. cit.
(3) The Private Correspondance of David Garrick (ed. Boaden, Lond. 1831) Mr Burke to Mr Garrick, Sept. 5, 1772.
Female Gamester and The Siege of Tamor. You are no stranger to the abilities of the Author, and it will be an abundant recommendation of these pieces to your very serious attention to inform you that they were written by Mr George Howard, of Dublin. This gentleman, after having practised the law with success and eminence for several years, in the decline of his life, but in the full vigour of his genius, he has devoted himself to a more pleasing, but not quite so lucrative a pursuit.... He has authorized me to tell you, that he consents to give up his share of the profits to any charity you think proper.... I trust I shall have the satisfaction of seeing the British stage decorated from Ireland with two Pieces of such an uncommon spirit, in the approaching winter. It will be some gratification to me to see the successful exhibition of the performances of a person who honours me with his friendship."

Although Burke thus warmly recommended the play to him, Garrick made no use of it. The letter is, however, valuable as evidence that The Female Gamester had been written as early as 1772. In the previous year Howard had been brought into some notoriety by Jephson's lively satire on his style of writing, and his connection with eminent City men, like

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(1) Boaden has a note that the name should be Gorges Edmond Howard.
Alderman George Faulkner. Howard published an answer to his
critic's Epistle, also in 1771, where he defended his
"dramatic performances" by mentioning "letters from Mr Macklin,
Mr Sheridan, and even Mr Garrick" in praise of them, and by
stating that the freedom of the Guild of Merchants had been
conferred upon him.

Thus, it was just possible that Pigault-Lebrun, who had
been apprenticed to a City Merchant in 1769, and left London
in 1771, had heard of Howard. He would then be ready to take
an interest in The Female Gamester when it was published in
1778, for it was not likely that he came to know of the early
version mentioned by Burke. During Pigault-Lebrun's stay in
London, Moore's Gamester was played several times, and it was
easily obtainable in its printed form.

The young Frenchman should have been interested in English
domestic tragedy, for the closing incidents of his connection
with the City of London would make a good fifth act for a play
of this kind. He persuaded his master's daughter to elope
with him; they ran away to sea; the ship was wrecked, and the
girl was drowned. Pigault-Lebrun was afraid to return to

(1) An Epistle from G - E - H...rd Esq. to Alderman George
Faulkner, with explanatory notes and criticism by the
Alderman and other learned authors. Lond. 1772. (The
Dictionary of National Biography mentioned an edition of
1771.) It was by Robert Jephson. No allusion to The Female
Gamester was made.

(2) A Candid Appeal to the Public, on the subject of a Late
"Epistle" by G - E - H - (by Gorges Edmond Howard,
Dublin 1771.)
England, so he went home to Calais, where his own father had him imprisoned.

When he came out of prison, he spent some time in Belgium. He came into contact with English society at Liège, translated Rousseau's *Pygmalion* and produced it for them. This was another occasion when he might have heard of Moore's *Gamester* or Howard's play; for he did not return to France before 1782, and he was connected with the stage in one way or another, as well as with his English friends, during the whole of his stay in Belgium.

His own play *La Joueuse* was first printed at Maestricht in 1786. No more was heard of it until 1789, when it was reprinted and played at the "Variétés Amusantes" in Paris. This play bears a likeness to *The Gamester* in many of its situations and some of its characters. There is a curious resemblance, too, between *La Joueuse* and Gorges Edmond Howard's *Female Gamester*.

There is no definite proof that Pigault-Lebrun knew anything of these two English plays, but the circumstances of his life in London, and his continued interest in drama and in English affairs during his stay in Belgium, with the popularity of Saurin's imitation of *The Gamester* make it reasonable to suppose that he imitated Moore and Howard in *La Joueuse*.

(1) See the article on Pigault-Lebrun in Vol.XXXIII, *Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*. 
We shall first examine the part taken by The Female Gamester in shaping Pigault-Lebrun's plot. Howard¹ told the tale of a worthy merchant, Andrews, ruined by his second wife's passion for play. She also drove his cashier to suicide, by making him steal money for her, and nearly prevented her step-daughter's marriage. Bellmour, (a kind of Stukeley), encouraged her, and tried to win all her money so as to become her lover, in return for the restitution of her husband's wealth. Andrews discovered Bellmour in his wife's bedroom, killed them both, and then realised that his wife was only guilty of having dissipated his fortune. The daughter offered her dowry to him in compensation, but that too had been spent by Mrs Andrews. Her lover, the righteous Lord Weston, saved the situation by marrying her, without the dowry, and by promising to save Andrews from poverty.

La Joueuse was also the second wife of a fond and elderly husband. Her love of play led her into debt, and she compromised herself by accepting help from the Marquis, whose intention was to force her to become his mistress. She realised the danger in time, and appealed to her step-daughter's lover for help. His generous efforts, and the girl's resolution to put off her wedding so as to give the dowry to cancel Madame de Limeuil's debts, touched the Marquis, who confessed his villainy, and brought about a general reconciliation.

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The most striking coincidences between *La Joueuse* and *The Female Gamester*, are the family relationships, the insistence on the worthy husband's grief over his second wife's fault, and a certain stress laid on the fact that the agent of evil in both plays was a member of the aristocracy. These circumstances were not included in Moore's original development of the plot and the characters, nor in Saurin's *Beverley*. Although Pigault-Lebrun might by accident have hit upon the idea of making his gamester the second wife of a worthy but rather foolish man, and of emphasising play as an aristocratic vice, yet these details argue some acquaintance with Howard's work.

It is much easier to establish proof of Moore's influence on *La Joueuse*. It is impossible to state definitely that Pigault-Lebrun knew the play in its English form, but he almost certainly read or saw Saurin's adaptation. We shall therefore compare *Beverley* and *La Joueuse*.

*La Joueuse* begins with a scene which corresponds to the opening of *The Gamester* or *Beverley*; the husband, still waiting at dawn, for his wife to come home. The Marquis' plot to ruin and seduce Madame de Limeuil is very like Stukeley's, while the incident of the diamonds reflects Saurin's use of a similar device\(^1\). Angélique and Valville come to the rescue, just like Charlotte and Lewson. Howard's *Bellmourn* was also a copy of

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Stukeley, while the daughter and her lover in his play were modelled on Moore's virtuous pair: so that whether Pigault-Lebrun imitated Saurin or Howard, he was still following the same original. The sale of the diamonds, and the characters of Valville and Marton are, however, sufficient indication of the fact that Pigault drew upon Saurin for inspiration.

The general conception of the persons represented in La Joueuse was similar to that of the characters in Beverley: they were formed on the same noble, moral, and sentimental lines, without the exaggerated passions suggested in Howard's play.

The dialogue was lighter, and there was more gaiety in La Joueuse than in Beverley. The Marquis, however, was conscious of his wickedness, just like Stukeley, and plotted his victim's ruin because he, too, was disappointed in love. Pigault-Lebrun made the Marquis reform, while Stukeley did not, but that was a concession to the dislike of "gloom" and the optimistic sentiment which prevailed in 1789. Madame de Limeuil was weak and tender-hearted like Beverley; but she repented and was saved from the tragic consequences of her folly. Monsieur de Limeuil was prouder and less abjectly obedient than Mrs Beverley; otherwise he reproduced the traits of her character exactly. Even Marton, a servant who followed the tradition of Molière's wise and humorous waiting women, had more than a touch of the faithful Jarvis' generosity, and offered her savings to help her mistress.
Pigault-Lebrun repeated the moral truths expressed by Moore and Saurin; but he added something to his lesson, that was more in accordance with the enthusiastic belief in human perfectibility so generally accepted in 1789. Gaming was wicked, and led to ruin; so far, he followed Moore, Saurin, and even Howard: but he went on to prove how happy and delightful it was to give up such a vice; and here he showed less appreciation of reality than his predecessors.

*La Joueuse* met with no great good fortune, and attracted little attention. In 1790, however, the very similar plot of De Jaure's *L'Époux Généreux* and the production of a comic opera on the same subject in 1804 show that this version of *The Gamester* theme appealed to popular taste.

In the preface to the Paris edition of *La Joueuse* in 1789, Pigault-Lebrun referred to a review of a novel which he had read, as the narrative of a story like that of his play. *Le Mercure de France* for June 20th 1789 gave an account of a certain *Histoire de la Baronne d'Alvigny ou les dangers de la Passion du Jeu*, which resembled the plot of *La Joueuse* except for its tragic conclusion: this novel may have been the work to which Pigault referred. This hint of yet another source for Pigault-

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Lebrun's play does not alter the significance of The Gamester and of The Female Gamester in helping the French writer to work out the pattern of La Joueuse.

The fortune of Moore's play in France is much simpler to relate than that of Lillo's Merchant. The Gamester was easy to rearrange in conformity with the rule of the "three unities"; while it contained very little that was unsuitable for presentation on the French stage. The language was dignified enough to be turned into French verse without radical changes of thought, and the catastrophe at the end was not brutal in its terrifying effect, as the last scenes of Lillo's play were. A few touches here and there made the characters noble enough to suit French taste. The gentle and long-suffering Mrs Beverley was not a new type in French drama, since Pamela and Clarissa had created similar heroines in France.

It was the pathetic conclusion of Saurin's Joueur which most struck the critics and the audience when it appeared. Diderot had been the first to point out the strength of emotional appeal in this sad tale of domestic affliction, and his instinct had rightly appreciated its success in touching the spectators. Saurin had even intensified the pathos of Moore's Gamester by adding the episode of Beverley's attempt to take Tomi's life. Whether or no this incident was borrowed from another English play, it added to the reputation of Le Joueur and helped Saurin to become famous as the first successful writer
in the "genre sombre".

The confessed imitation of English domestic tragedy in *Le Joueur* led to the association of the later plays of terror in France with the English style of tragic writing. Thus, the success of *Le Joueur* and the influence of Moore on Saurin were in part responsible for the rise of the "genre sombre", which grew into melodrama, after the Revolution.

It was the rise of a more moderate tendency in public opinion which governed the later development of the *Gamester* theme in France. Many people, like d'Alembert, disapproved of the "terror" in the closing scenes of *Le Joueur*. They preferred a calm and tender conclusion: and, to please them, Saurin wrote his "rose-coloured" version of the fifth act.

Pigault-Lebrun's play was probably written for this section of the public; hence the author allowed the characters and incidents he borrowed from Saurin and Moore to move towards a happy ending, and drew from his play a moral more consoling, if less impressive, than that of his predecessors.

The two series of plays based on *The London Merchant* and *The Gamester* developed the English themes in a curiously parallel manner, because the same conditions determined the choice and the modification of these stories.

(1) p.58, Vol.I, *Oeuvres Posthumes de d'Alembert, Le Joueur dans sa Prison.* (ed. Paris an. VII). The prevalence of this taste is shown by the fact that Schroeder, the great German actor, always played "Der Spieler" with the happy ending after 1785.
Prévost called attention to the 'beauties' of *The London Merchant*, and Diderot to those of the *Gamester*. They followed this up with translations. Curiosity was thus stimulated, and other versions appeared. Growing interest in the work of Lillo and Moore encouraged efforts to prepare their plays for the French stage. This meant modification of the plot, and rearrangement of the order of events to suit the conventions of time, place and action, while the language of the English play had to be changed into the diction characteristic of "drame bourgeois", or comedy, or tragedy, in France. Next, a certain ennobling force remodelled the characters. The bourgeois types were generally retained, but the English dramatists' excursions into lower life were cut out. Thus Barnwell the apprentice became Jenneval the law-student in Mercier's play; Millwood the prostitute appeared as a widow in La Harpe's *Barneveldt*; Stukeley, in the French version no longer consorted with such villains as Bates and Dawson, and it was impossible to represent Barnwell as a murderer, or Stukeley as a coward, without great offence to public delicacy.

Finally, the French version showed up a different aspect of the moral lesson behind these plays. Lillo's apprentice sinned against the Christian code of morality; Mercier and La Harpe described his transgressions against the laws of humanity. Diderot and Saurin added touches of philosophic doctrine to their dramatic denunciations of gaming, which contrasted with Moore's thoroughly Christian point of view.
The secret of success in adapting these themes lay in the combination of a message of reform which touched on some point of vital interest, with the appropriate appeal to feeling, obedience to the general laws of French drama, and some novelty in plot, character-drawing, or thought.

Lillo's Merchant suggested some impressive and original ideas to French dramatists. The most important was his treatment of a social evil which no one in France had dared to touch, until his example gave them confidence. The story of The Gamester held no new lesson for French spectators, but there was nothing like Moore's serious treatment of gaming in previous plays; so that the pitiful story of Beverley and his terrible fate most effectively demonstrated the sufferings caused in family life by this vice. The powerful appeal of Le Joueur contributed to the success of Mercier's imitation of Lillo in Jenneval, for both revealed the darker side of middle class life, and Saurin was the first to bring such themes into popular favour.

The London Merchant and the Gamester both encouraged the development of Diderot's theory of conditions. Lillo's play was the more influential in this direction. The portrait of Vanderk in Le Philosophe sans le Savoir, of the "Deux Amis" in Beaumarchais' play, of Dominique in La Brouette du Vinaigrier.

(1) see Act II, sc.iii, La Brouette du Vinaigrier. (Vol.III. Théâtre de Mercier, ed. Amst. 1778 etc.)
all show by precept and example, what the 'Eminent Merchant' should be. The character of Jarvis in The Gamester encouraged a new series of faithful family servants drawn with care, and shown in a realistic setting, like André in Le Fils Naturel, Antoine in Sedaine's play, or Gervais in Desforges Femme Jalousie. This sympathetic representation of servants was a feature characteristic of English drama, which Steele had emphasised in his comedies, and it agreed very well with Diderot's objection to the valets of traditional comedy in France.

Lastly, the merits of The Merchant and The Gamester as models of the lesser tragedy were so obvious that they seemed to promise a like quality in the plays adapted from them.

Since the work of Lillo and Moore affected French drama more profoundly than that of their own country, it was natural that these writers should influence domestic tragedy through the medium of Beverley or Jenneval, rather than directly.

The history of the German theatre, even when very superfluously considered, bears this out. Lessing praised The Merchant of London, and consciously modelled his own Miss Sara Sampson on the English play: but in the Hamburgische Dramaturgie, it was Diderot's theory of "drame bourgeois", and Diderot's

(1) Perhaps the character of Mr John Sealand in The Conscious Lovers (see Act IV, sc.ii) which was translated by Quétant in 1778, also helped in this movement.
plays, that he dwelt on\(^1\). Lillo's tragedy was translated by Bassewitz\(^2\), and it was one of the stock pieces played by the Schoenemann company\(^3\); but the great actor Schroeder, in later years played and published a re-handling of Jenneval\(^4\). The Gamester appeared in German in 1765\(^5\); but the renderings of Saurin's play by Schroeder\(^6\), Iffland\(^7\), and Hucke\(^8\), indicate German preferences.

In Italy, Madame Caminer translated Mercier with enthusiasm\(^9\); Fenouillot de Falbaire's Fabricant de Londres was applauded in Austria\(^10\), and Beverley ran through two editions at least in Spanish\(^11\).

(1) Lessing, Hamburgische Dramaturgie; den 6 Mai 1767, Miss Sara Sampson; (pp.57 ff.) den 27 Juli 1767, Diderot's Hausvater (pp.235 ff.) (ed. Buschmann 1921.)
(4) Schroeder, Die Gefahren der Verführung, (after Mercier): one edition appeared in 1781, and it was included in Band 27 of the Deutsche Schaubühne, in 1788.
(5) J.H. Steffens, Beverlei oder der Spieler, nach dem Englischen des Herrn Moore (1765; Band VII, Neue Sammlung von Schauspielen, (Wien, 1764 etc.)
(6) Schroeder, Beverley oder der Spieler, nach Moore und Saurin. (Schwerin u. Wismar 1791.)
(8) Hucke, Der Spieler. München, 1782, 1787.
(10) see J.A. de Wielandt's letter to Falbaire, p.501, Vol.I, ibid. (the letter is dated 1772.)
(11) Tragedia urbana Beverley... traducida del Frances, corregida... en esta segunda impresion. (Barcelona 1790.)
Chapter VII.

THE USE OF THEMES FROM THE "SPECTATOR" IN FRENCH PLAYS.

The history of the themes which were carried over from the novel and the domestic tragedy of England into French drama shows that they stimulated thought and introduced new ideas which intimately affected both the plot and the characterisation of "comédie sérieuse" and of "drame bourgeois".

The popularity of English literature caused French dramatists to seek fresh characters and new situations in the Spectator, which was first of all esteemed as a collection of moral and social essays: it was not until after the mid-century that this periodical came to be regarded as a storehouse of dramatic themes.

Chamfort was the first to appreciate the uses of the Spectator in this capacity, when he borrowed the plot of La Jeune Indienne from it in 1764.

This play was the first of a series of "comédies sérieuses", founded on the story of "Inkle and Yarico", as Steele told it in the eleventh paper of the Spectator. Chamfort was followed by David, Dumaniant, and the two authors of La Nigresse, Radet and Barré. A change from the presentment of the "noble
savage" as an example to civilized man, to a more realistic interpretation of the relations between Europeans and subject-races in the colonies, becomes apparent in these comedies.

With this series may be grouped two other plays: Baculard d'Arnaud's Euphémie, which had some connection with Addison's tale of Theodosius and Constantia¹, and Madame de Montesson's L'Heureux Échange, in which she dramatized the history of Eudoxius and Leontine².

All these works are linked together by the fact that they afford evidence of a change in the form of sentimental drama, which took place in France between 1764 and 1789. This is revealed very plainly by those plays which made use of Inkle and Yarico.

The first writer who adapted Steele's tale did so for reasons which will emerge more clearly when some account of this affecting narration has been given.

Steele wrote it as a "counterpart to the Ephesian Matron", to defend women against the reproach of infidelity³. He referred to a seventeenth-century book of travels as the origin of his story, which concerned the love of an Indian girl, Yarico, for a mercenary and ungrateful Englishman, Mr Thomas Inkle. He had undertaken a voyage to the West Indies to make his fortune by trading; but the vessel put ashore on the coast

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(1) The Spectator, no.164, (ed. Aitken, London 1898.)
(2) No.123, ibid.
(3) Paper No.11, ibid.
of America for fresh water and provisions, and the crew were attacked by Indians. Inkle alone escaped death, by running away into the forest. The Indian girl found him wandering about, and fell in love with him at once, for he had a very handsome person. Although she belonged to the tribe which had killed his shipmates, she risked the enmity of her people, hid him in a cave, and brought him food. She found great pleasure in learning to speak English, and tried to make his life as agreeable as possible, by showing him the beauties of the waterfalls, and birds, and flowers that delighted her. Inkle, however, did all he could to persuade her to help him to get away if a ship should come to that coast again. He described the joys of life in a great city, and promised her wonderful happiness if she would accompany him. In time, a ship put in for water near the cave where Inkle lived. Yarico, for love of him, persuaded the captain to take them on board, and they made the voyage to Barbadoes, before the ship returned to England. Inkle now began to reflect that he had profited nothing by his trading venture to the West Indies; so when he saw the slave market held by the Barbadian merchants at the port, he conceived the idea of selling Yarico. The poor girl tried to move him to pity by confessing that she was with child by him, but he only made use of the fact to ask a higher price for her.

The most obvious reason for the choice of this story as a subject for French drama is its pathetic appeal; and its very
sound moral, which could be applied to the conduct of daily life. This does not explain why Chamfort, who used it in his *Jeune Indienne* in 1764, selected this particular story from the *Spectator*. He was guided by the well-known reputation of that periodical as a work abounding in polite reflections and well-written instances of moral or immoral behaviour.

Further, there was a current of thought in France, continually fed with fresh ideas from England, moving towards the broad principle that all the virtues are more natural and more clearly to be seen in a savage than in a civilized man, who has lost them through the corrupting effects of life in society.

This stream of ideas may be traced back as far as Montaigne, who said¹: "Il me semble que ce que nous voyons par expérience en ces nations là, surpasse non seulement toutes les peintures de quoy la poésie a embelly l'âge doré et toutes ses inventions à feindre une heureuse condition d'hommes, mais encore la conception et le désir même de la philosophie."

Early in the eighteenth-century, Marivaux expressed a similar belief. A curious novel of his, *Les Avantures de*** ou les effets surprenans de la sympathic*², reflected, in 1715, the very real interest that France and England felt in their New World colonies, as well as their belief in the "natural"

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¹ (1) p. 270, *Essais, Des Cannibales*, (ed. Strowski, Bordeaux, 1926.)
² (2) *Les Avantures de*** ou les effets surprenans de la sympathie*, par P.de O. de Marivaux. [Amst. 1715] see pp.46 ff., tome V.
aptitude of savages to lead the good life. In Marivaux's story, a mysterious Englishman, known as "L'Inconnu" was marooned on an island. He found there a tribe of savages, and won their affection by healing their bodily ailments. Next he turned to the improvement of their moral life. They set up a kind of family government with himself as the head, and lived in peace and innocence for fourteen years. Then a ship called at the island, and his duty forced "L'Inconnu" to continue the search for his French wife and his son, who believed him dead.

There was a difference between Marivaux's picture of the savages before the Englishman came to their island, and Montaigne's account of his happy and noble "cannibals". Marivaux brought out the theory, however, that the savage tribe was better able to live a good and peaceable life, when they had been taught the right principles, than the civilized people in the rest of his narrative.

In 1720-21 Robinson Crusoe, translated by Sainte-Hyacinthe and Van Effen, added a new element to the ideas that centred round the "noble savage". The romance of an exotic setting, and the possibility of conveying a moral lesson suitable to the day, were seen in this work.

When Prévost described in Le Pour et Contre the visit of the Indian chiefs to London, and reported the comparisons drawn

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1 shown by the titles of works like du Tertre's Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français 1667, or the book quoted by Steele, Lignon's Account of Barbados.
between life in their own Georgia and life in a civilized com-
munity, a further development of the theory took place, and the
superiority of 'natural' life began to be established as a
conclusion from eighteenth-century experience¹.

Voltaire, in his Alzire, showed his countrymen that
American savages could be made powerful figures in drama, in
1736. This was followed up by another new story from England,
which showed the noble savage suffering injustice at the hands
of Europeans, and reacting in heroic fashion. It was told in
the translation of Oronooko, by Laplace, in 1745. Ficquet du
Bocage turned the play by Southerne on the same subject into
French in 1751.

Meanwhile Rousseau gave the doctrine its peculiar senti-
mental value, when he published the Discourses, more especially
the first, in 1746, which treated of the debasing influence
exercised by society on the nobler impulses of man. Thus in
1764, Chamfort would have been predisposed to select the story
of Inkle and Yarico from the choice offered by the Spectator
because it was an apt illustration of the "noble savage" theme,
which had already been successful on the stage and in the novels
of France and England, and because it could very easily be made
the vehicle for an indirect criticism of the evils of society,
as Montaigne had hinted, long before.

(1) Le Pour et Contre, no. LVI, pp. 254-261, t. IV, 1734.
There were more immediate reasons, too, for Chamfort's choice of this particular story. The *Journal Étranger* for December 1761\(^1\), gave an account of Gellert's rendering of *Inkle and Yarico* into German verse, and a full description of Gellert's 'happy ending' composed to improve the story according to the taste of the day. Gellert "sang the repentance of Inkle, and Yarico's liberation from slavery". It is quite possible that Chamfort read this article, or heard of Gellert's version, for German literature was a subject that interested the literary circles of Paris just then: this may be guessed from the frequent articles in the *Journal Étranger*, describing German plays and poems, and from the number of translations published from the German, about this time\(^2\).

There was further proof that the story of Inkle and Yarico was attractive to writers just about 1764: Dorat wrote one of his heroic epistles around it\(^3\). The sentiment in *Inkle and Yarico* caught Dorat's fancy, and the "gentle melancholy" of the Indian girl's complaints, with the "pleasures of pain" upon which he could enlarge when he described her mourning for her

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\(1\) p.87 *Le Journal Étranger*, déc. 1761.

\(2\) Diderot described Miss Sara Sampson, by Lessing, in the *Journal Étranger* for December 1761; Gessner's works were translated and re-edited many times before 1764; and Cailhava mentions a translation of this *Inkle und Yarico* by M.de Riveri, on p.425, Vol.IV, of his *Art de la Comédie*. (Paris 1772.)

\(3\) C.J.Dorat, *Lettre de Zéila*, jeune Sauvage, esclave à Constantinople, à Valcour, officier français, précédée d'une *Lettre à Madame de C...*. Paris 1764.
lost lover. Naturally, in order to infuse just the right amount of pathos into his epistle, he refused to tell the story in its original form. The lover in his version was a charming French officer, inconstant by nature, who had left Zeila [he chose this name because it was more harmonious than Yarico] from mere caprice, and not ungenerously. After his departure, she had fallen into the hands of slave merchants, and wrote to Valcour from Constantinople, begging him to come and set her free, so that she could return to the scenes of their happiness, and bring up their son in liberty. Dorat quoted the whole of Steele's story, in its French translation, in his preface, and appealed to French "delicacy and timidity" to justify his alterations.

When Chamfort's *Jeune Indienne* was published, shortly afterwards, it obeyed the same laws of taste in its arrangement of the material. Chamfort could not have imitated Dorat, because his play was presented in the April of 1764, and he evidently went direct to the *Spectator* for inspiration. There is one more circumstance that may have a bearing on Chamfort's treatment of *Inkle and Yarico*. Like Steele, he stressed the young man's preoccupation with money matters. The poverty of his own early years, together with the fact that his mother had been deserted by her lover, perhaps inclined his choice to this aspect of the situation.

Chamfort's aim, in *La Jeune Indienne* was to make his audience weep over his heroine's sorrows, and to show the
baseness of greed and ingratitude contrasted with faithful love, which, inevitably, was well rewarded. He took up Steele's story and made a new ending for it. First he altered the names: "Inkle" and "Yarico" did not proclaim their English origin, so, in concession to the prevailing "anglo-mania", he changed them to "Belton" and "Betti". He brought in the Quaker, Mowbray, to resolve the discord between Belton's love of money, complicated by his fear of returning in poverty to his father's house at Boston, his love of Betti, and the gratitude he felt for her care of him, which was also in conflict with his previous promise to marry the Quaker's daughter Arabella. Chamfort also gave Belton a confidant, Mylford, who provided an excuse for the exposition in the first scene, and who gave Belton worldly counsel, that threw Mowbray's virtuous advice into relief.

The circumstances of the young people's life in the forest are related in the opening scenes of La Jeune Indienne. There is little change in detail, except that Betti's father lived with them, and had blessed their union, and to avoid indelicacy, he made no reference to the child.

When the action of La Jeune Indienne begins, Belton has just landed near his home in Boston, accompanied by Betti. He has to decide whether to go to his father poor and faithful to

(1) La Jeune Indienne, comédie, en un acte et en prose, de M. Chamfort. (Paris 1764.)
the Indian girl, or to fulfil his previous engagement to Arabella, Mowbray's daughter, and so obtain the riches which his father would approve. Chamfort evidently took a hint from the Spectator for the father's character. The difficulty was solved, and the conclusion of the play reached when Mowbray, who at first pressed Belton to marry Arabella, realised what wrong would be done to Betti, and satisfied his sense of justice by approving Belton's decision not to desert Betti in a very practical way: he presented them with a large sum of money, which he owed to Belton's father, and called it the reward of virtue.

The first important change in Chamfort's treatment of the theme was the dilemma in which Belton found himself. This was made possible because he began the action where the Spectator left off; and the conflict of the play depended on this situation: on one side the fear of poverty, and the attraction of a rich heiress, on the other, generosity, gratitude and self-satisfaction.

The second change was Belton's decision to marry the Indian girl. This reflects the prevalent belief in the 'natural virtue' of savages, and in the power of sentiment to convert self-seeking into grateful affection.

Chamfort showed a sound grasp of the qualities that would make his chief characters popular. Betti's artless surprise at a social order which despised poverty and hard work, and prized
wealth, was enjoyed as a satire; while her unforced expressions of grief when she thought Belton was about to desert her, and her noble generosity, flattered the self-esteem of the spectators. Belton was considered heroic, because he acted with virtue and self-sacrifice when he was faced with a difficult choice: Chamfort's play would have failed, had he copied the traits of Steele's Inkle exactly.

The inclusion of the Quaker was probably suggested by the popularity of Voltaire's Lettres Anglaises. Although the Spectator contained portraits of good men of this persuasion, Chamfort neglected them for the brilliant and dramatic description of Quaker life and character in Voltaire's work. Mowbray's simple virtue, the details of his speech, his dress, and his refusal to swear an oath are all to be found in the account of Voltaire's visit to the Quakers. Chamfort was quick to recognize their value in setting off a new type which he wished to introduce into the French theatre.

(1) see La Jeune Indienne, scenes iv, v, viii, ix. op.cit.
(2) This was great enough to induce Madame du Boccage to insist upon visiting a Quaker meeting, in 1752. see p.45, Vol.I, Letters concerning England, Holland, and Italy. (ed. London 1770.)
(3) e.g. Ephraim in paper no.132.
(4) see Letters I and IV, Lettres Anglaises, (ed. Lanson Paris 1924.)
(5) The success of this innovation was proved by the fact that a year later, in 1765, Poinssinet brought a good Quaker, Dowling, into his Tom Jones, to set the affairs of Tom and Sophia to rights, and to bring the other characters to a proper sense of their duty, rather in Mowbray's fashion.
Bachaumont\(^1\), Grimm\(^2\) and La Harpe\(^3\) recognized the originality of Mowbray's character: Grimm also thought he made a very dramatic contrast to Betti, while Bachaumont, in the carping fashion of the time, said that Mowbray was merely a reproduction of Freeport in \textit{L'Écossaise}, with a new title.

Where Steele simply aimed at celebrating the fidelity of women, Chamfort attempted to show up the corrupting influences of society\(^4\), to echo Rousseau's plea for the privileges of natural love\(^5\); and to contrast the simple unaffected sincerity of the native girl and the Quaker with the worldly cares and the ingratitude of Belton, or Mylford.

Both Grimm\(^6\) and Collé\(^7\) judged Chamfort's work with their usual insight. "Cette histoire dans l'anglais" wrote Grimm, "est d'une morale profonde, quoique triste et affligeant pour l'espèce humaine; et dans les imitations françaises\(^8\), ce n'est plus rien." "Il l'a seulement gâté en l'altérant", was Collé's verdict.

\(^1\) le 30 avril 1764, tome II, Bachaumont, \textit{Mémoires Secrets}.
\(^2\) pp.491 ff., mai 1764, t.V, Grimm, \textit{Correspondance Littéraire}.
\(^3\) p.359 t.X, \textit{Lycée}, La Harpe. (ed. Paris 1816.)
\(^4\) e.g. \textit{La Jeune Indienne}, scene ii; (the change in Belton's feelings for Betti.)
\(^5\) Chamfort writes in sc.viii.\textit{ibid}:
\textbf{Mowbray:}
\begin{quote}
O spectacle touchant, tendresse aimable et pure,
L'amour porte à mon sein le cri de la Nature.
Livrez-vous sans réserve à des transports si doux,
Je les sens, et mon cœur les partage avec vous.
\end{quote}
\(^6\) p.492, loc.cit, note 2.
\(^7\) p.364, t.II, (mai 1764), \textit{Journal et Mémoires de Collé}.
(\textit{ed. Paris 1868. op.cit.})
\(^8\) he refers to Dorat's \textit{Zeïla} as well as to Chamfort's comedy.
Considering its limited scope *La Jeune Indienne* was very influential. The virtues of a savage, set against an English background, and related in a sentimental manner formed an appropriate symbol of a popular idea. The innovation of presenting a Quaker in a play gave it a pleasant flavour of English life, and met with special approbation in 1764, a year when anglomania was strong in France. The very favourable reception accorded to Chamfort's comedy, and the persistent belief in the native goodness of uncivilized man account for later variations on the same theme.

Dorat's two epistles\(^1\), in which he concluded the story of Zélla were the earliest of these. He narrated Valcour's return to Constantinople, his rescue of the faithful Zélla from the very seraglio of the Grand Turk, which was accomplished by the simple process of relating the touching history of their love.

Perhaps Dorat's work suggested the hero's name in one of the later plays based on *Inkle and Yarico*\(^2\), and encouraged David to include an Eastern slave-merchant in the cast of his *Fanny*. No one used the idea of Constantinople and the Grand Turk, possibly because Grimm\(^3\) had commented with such scorn on this part of Dorat's tale.

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(1) *Réponse de Valcour;* (Paris 1766) *Lettre de Valcour à Son Père* (Paris 1767.)

(2) *Le Français en Huronie*, by Dumaniant, see below.

(3) p.324, t.VII, mai 1767, *Correspondance Littéraire.* (op.cit.)
The next play to turn on the loves of a savage and an Englishman was David's *Fanny*. It was played in 1783, nearly twenty years after *La Jeune Indienne*. This explains certain differences in the manipulation of the theme, and some new characteristics in the form of "comédie sérieuse", which make their appearance in David's play.

David quoted the *Spectator* to show that he had gone straight back to that source for his material; but *Fanny* has reminiscences of *La Jeune Indienne* and of Dorat's epistles. Like his predecessors, David had been struck by the pathos of Yarico's sad fate; and unlike them, he had resolved to treat the original with respect, and to give the story as Steele wrote it.

This did not prevent him from changing the names of his characters. Inkle was called Jackson, and Yarico, Fanny - on the same principle as Chamfort had re-named his hero and heroine.

Then David introduced Millfort, the captain of the ship which took Jackson and Fanny to England: (this name may be a reminiscence of Chamfort's Mylford) while there were two passengers on the ship who played a part in David's story; Williams, an English merchant, and Rusten, a slave-dealer. The *Spectator* mentions "Barbadian merchants" who bought slaves, but Rusten seems of nearer kin to the slave merchants of Dorat's epistles, for he came from the East. David also improved upon Steele by

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including Tomi, the son of Jackson and Fanny.

The two chief characters are built up on hints from the *Spectator*. Jackson, like Inkle, is tired of Fanny's affection, and of life in a cave: he describes England and the joys of wealth to her, so that she will help him to escape if a ship comes to that coast. When Rusten slyly hints at the sale of Fanny, Jackson takes his meaning at once, and strikes a bargain. He is hypocritical in his protestations of love for Fanny, and quite unrepentant when Milfort tries to bring his wickedness home to him in the final scenes. David is careful to emphasise Jackson's greed and duplicity; but he avoids the crowning injury of asking a higher price for the girl, because she was with child by him. Instead of this, David invented 'Tomi' to show up Jackson as an "unnatural father" and to heighten the pathos of Fanny's grief. Fanny has the devotion and obedience of Yarico; David adds, on his own account, generosity and a certain quickness of insight, for Fanny suspects Jackson's hypocrisy. He gives her the traditional nobility of the savage, and a speech like the following shows her idea of true happiness, which cared nothing for riches:

Fanny: "Tu te plaisais à me faire un tableau magnifique des plaisirs, des richesses ... qui règnent dans ton pays. Ah! mon ami, en vain tu les embellissais. Mon coeur ne pouvait y croire, et je restais toujours persuadée que cet éclat séduisant et trompeur ne vaut pas un seul de ces moments"
délicieux qui faisaient autrefois ton bonheur et le mien."

The other characters, Milfort and Williams owe nothing to the Spectator. Milfort is an honest sea-captain whose part is to condemn Jackson severely for his treachery. Williams is another Mowbray, without the special traits of a Quaker, who is kind, blunt in speech, and determined to help the noble and pitiable Fanny in her distress. Rusten has nothing to distinguish him: his presence is necessary, to bring out Jackson's villainy, and he is rather unfairly dismissed by the good men of the play without being allowed to claim the return of the money he had paid for Fanny.

The story begins in the same way as Steele's. Fanny and Jackson met and lived together under the same circumstances, and Fanny persuaded the kindly Williams to take them on board because Jackson wanted to return to England. The bargaining between Rusten and Jackson arose out of a hint in Inkle and Yarico: David's contribution was the new ending. Williams forced Captain Milfort to listen to the conversation between Jackson and Rusten, for Milfort would not believe an Englishman capable of such a vile action. When Fanny understood that she had been sold to Rusten, she began to lament: Williams and Milfort sprang out of their hiding-place, and seized Jackson; Milfort sent him to the hold of the ship, to be punished for his ingratitude in England, and sentenced Rusten to go ashore

(1) sc.v. Fanny. David. op.cit.
at the next port: then he offered Fanny a home in England with his wife, to make up for her suffering at the hands of an ungrateful Englishman, and William adopted the child.

This ending was the usual concession to French prejudice in the matter of a suitable reward of virtue; the character of Fanny with her "noble soul, formed by nature alone", was also familiar to those who knew Betti, or Zeila: and most characteristic of the time was the self satisfaction apparent in the closing speeches of William and Milfort:

William: Eh bien, capitaine, tu ne voulais pas me croire....

avoue que ton coeur goûte une bien douce satisfaction.

Milfort: Je ne puis le dissimuler. J'ai prévenu un crime,

j'ai essuyé les larmes d'une infortunée, et j'ose me flatter de faire oublier qu'un jour un Anglais a fait une faute."

David had retained the moral of Steele's tale, with very little difference. This gave his work the distinguishing quality of realism; especially in the concluding scenes, where Jackson was shown unashamed and defiant.

At first, the public disliked the character of the hero, and David had to tone down his villainy by showing him torn between greed and remorse, and by hinting that he might reform. These emendations, (according to David's Preface), brought success to the play.

(1) sc. xx, Fanny, David, op.cit.
The fact that an audience in 1784 did not refuse to accept Jackson unconverted, marks a significant change in the attitude of playgoers towards English "atrocities"; and no less importance may be attached to David's unusual respect for his original.

The first of these new tendencies was due to the recognition that "comédie larmoyante" and "comédie sèrieuse" had not presented a true picture of life. About 1784, it was generally acknowledged that virtue was not invariably rewarded, and villains did not always see the error of their ways.

Long before, Grimm\(^1\) had been aware of Chamfort's neglect of reality; and D'Alembert had shown a like distaste for the "perfect" characters so popular in novel and comedy, when he said, in his portrait of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse\(^2\), "Le parfait Grandisson m'a toujours paru un odieux personnage".

Opinion was preparing to agree with Joubert\(^3\): "Tu seras toujours contente de toi; voilà la récompense que les arts d'imitation doivent montrer à la vertu. Ce serait lui faire une promesse imprudente et menteuse que de lui dire 'Toujours tu seras contente du sort'."

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(1) cf. also Monsieur Ficquet du Boccage's praise of English verity from another standpoint, p.13, tome I, Lettre sur le théâtre Anglois; avec une Traduction de l'Avaré ... de M.Shadwell, et de La Femme de Campagne de M. Wicherley. (ed. Paris 1751.)

(2) p.351, Lettres de Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, (ed. Asse, Paris 1913.)

(3) p.325, pensée CXXXIV; Pensées de Joubert. (ed. Raynal,Paris 1911.)
The second tendency was a consequence of this more sensitive attitude to truth. Because English literature presented a more faithful picture of life, unsoftened by false optimism and exaggerated delicacy, French writers felt, like David, that a close imitation of English models would bring life and sincerity into French drama. The new temper of French taste was manifested just before the Revolution in Madame de Vasse's collection of English comedies, published in twelve volumes, in 1784, in Le Tourneur's exact and faithful translation of *Clarissa* a year later, and in the 1787 versions of Sterne and Fielding, which likewise followed the English text closely.

Hence a new development took place in "comédie sérieuse". Its nature is disclosed by the high regard for English sentimental comedy, which was a symptom of "anglomania" about 1780. Just then, Steele's *Conscious Lovers* was re-translated and praised; and Addison's *Drummer* had for some time been a stock piece at the Théâtre Français. The latest "comédies sérieuses" presented gay and pathetic scenes side by side, in a realistic picture of daily life, or with a touch of humour, which smacked more of Steele's art than of Nivelle de la Chaussée's rather artificial juxtaposition of the grave and comic episodes in his plays.

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(1) by Quétant, in 1779, by Madame de Vasse, in her collection, 1784.

(2) The change of opinion is particularly obvious if Destouches' rather patronising preface to his translation of *The Drummer* is contrasted with the enthusiastic reception of that play in 1762 at the Théâtre Français.
Not unnaturally, there were several adaptations of some English theme amongst sentimental comedies of the new type which appeared between 1780 and 1789. This is the chief interest possessed by Dumaniant's *Français en Huronie*, and by *La Négresse*, ou le Pouvoir de la Reconnaissance.

Neither of these was a "comédie sérieuse" in the strict sense of the term, for *Le Français en Huronie* contained scenes that were purely comic, and *La Négresse*, by Radet and Barré included songs and farcical episodes. They were not to be classed with comedies written in the style of Molière either; and this breaking down of the limits between the different varieties of drama was characteristic of the new movement in comedy, with its veneration for English liberty, and its reaction from the sombre atmosphere of "drame bourgeois".

Dumaniant's play was produced in 1787. The author's chief innovations were the combination of pathetic and laughable incidents; and the attempt to provide a realistic background by introducing references to the War of American Independence. The story was a palpable imitation of *Inkle and Yarico*. Valcour, a young French officer, serving with his uncle's regiment in

(1) scenes ii and iii, for example, *Le Français en Huronie*, comédie en un acte, représentée pour la première fois sur le Théâtre du Palais-Royal, le 30 avril, 1787. (Paris 1787.)
(2) *La Négresse* ou le Pouvoir de la Reconnaissance, de MM. Radet et Barré, comédie en 1 acte, en prose et en vaudevilles. le 15 juin 1787, (Théâtre des Italiens) Paris 1787.
America, had been lost in the forest, and rescued by Zamire. When the play opens, Valcour has just made up his mind to join a regiment of French soldiers who had encamped near the cave where he lived. As he was setting out, a savage, who also loved Zamire, challenged him to do battle for the lady. Zamire appeared, and sent them both to fight against the English. When Valcour returned, he announced that he had met his uncle, and had arranged to take Zamire home with the victorious French force. His savage rival, overwhelmed with admiration for Valcour's courage as a soldier, renounced his claim to Zamire's affection, and the play ended happily.

Dumaniant's portrait of Valcour as a happy warrior, the tender affection displayed by Zamire, and the reward of virtue at the end of the play, won its meed of applause.

The other comedy, Radet and Berré's La Négresse is a curious mixture of slap-stick comedy and serious reflections on the iniquity of the slave-trade. Grimm evidently appreciated the moral value of the play, for he took the trouble to indicate a possible source of inspiration for the scenes of negro life, in L'Histoire philosophique et politique des Européens dans les deux Indes.

The plot of La Négresse varies the treatment of Steele's theme a little. Dorval was cast ashore on an island owned by a

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(1) see the Preface of Le Français en Huronie, op. cit.
(2) scenes i, vi, viii, ix, xiii, La Négresse, op. cit.
negro tribe. Because the first European visitors to their shores had used them treacherously, the negroes had decided to kill all white men who landed there. Dorval was fortunate enough to fall in with a young negress, Zilia, who hid him. They soon discovered their love for one another, and Dorval saved the life of the negro king, so that the tribe became friendly. At last, his father, a sea-captain, came to the island in search of him, and took Zilia home as Dorval's wife. Radet and Barré had invented a new setting for their plot, and added the incident of the negro king's rescue (to demonstrate the fine qualities in Dorval's character), as well as the ludicrous love-passages between Dorval's valet and Zilia's sister. The moral of the play followed the lead of previous French writers on the subject. Zilia, like Betti, Fanny, and Zamire was "a model of kindness and humanity". Dorval, like Valcour, in Dumaniant's play, was "an example of faithful gratitude".

La Négresse reveals the strength of the impulse to present a true picture of life in comedy, not so much in the characterisation, which upheld the tradition of virtue and fine feeling, but in its comments on the problem of slavery, and in its attempt to reproduce the "pidgin" French spoken by negroes:

(1) If the evidence of the Correspondance Littéraire (see pp.102-104 tome XV, juillet 1787) is trustworthy, slavery was a topic very generally discussed. Two or three books were published on the subject, just about that time, and a literary competition proposed it as a suitable theme.
these traits contributed a great deal towards its favourable reception.

**Inkle and Yarico** had a long life on the French stage. Favoured by its appearance during a period when English themes were much admired, it provided an excellent vehicle for the idea that a savage is morally superior to a civilized man. Steele’s tale was easily turned into a satiric picture of society, after the manner of Voltaire. Chamfort, David, and Dumaniant contrasted the generosity, and high-mindedness of their savage characters with the selfish and unprincipled character of certain Europeans. The social satire was very pointed in La Jeune Indienne, not so obvious in Fanny and Le Français en Huronie, while it reappeared forcibly in La Négresse. As usual, the French writers found a moral application for the story which differed somewhat from Steele’s intention of defending women from the old reproach of inconstancy in love.

The numerous French variations of Inkle and Yarico point to the long-continued interest in The Spectator, but no really profound modification of the form or the philosophy of "comédie sérieuse" resulted. It would be absurd to look for such effects from a slight tale, however striking.

These plays also reflect changes in the political relationship between France and England. When Chamfort composed his comedy in 1764, the close of the Seven Years’ War permitted the

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(1) see Grimm’s criticism, loc.cit. tome XV, Corr. Litt. op.cit.
representation of England as the home of thought, sincerity, and original force of character; therefore the hero of *La Jeune Indienne* was an Englishman, and a virtuous Quaker took part in the action, which evolved in an Anglicised setting. By 1783, when David produced his *Fanny*, the War of American Independence encouraged the notion that Englishmen were sometimes scoundrels, in spite of the great respect still paid to their social code and their political constitution.

Again, in 1787 Dumaniant showed no sympathy with England, while Radet and Barré took up a similar attitude. This may be attributed with equal justice to the desire for a new background, or to hostility towards England; since the antipathy aroused by the war in America was counterbalanced by "anglo-mania" in France.

Further, English influences which acted upon Chamfort's adaptation of *Inkle and Yarico* helped to develop two new types on the French stage. Boissy's caricature of the sincere, but blunt and uncouth Englishman in the "Rosbif" of *Le Français à Londres*, with the more sympathetic delineations of the same type in the "Freeport" of *L'Écossaise*, the "Sudmer" of Favart's *L'Anglais à Bordeaux*, and the "Bomston" of *La Nouvelle Héloïse".

(1) The strength of such opinions is demonstrated by Marsollier's experience in the theatre: in 1776, he had to change the names in his adaptation of an English play, from English to Austrian, because of political feeling: see p. 73, *Ma Carrière Dramatique*, tome I, Oeuvres Choisies de Marsollier, (Paris 1825.)
dictated a certain conception of the English character to Chamfort. Thus his Mowbray was direct in speech and action, charitable without polite effusions, and free from prejudice against "natural love", in spite of the general disapproval shown to such passion. We find some of these traits reproduced in later plays which depicted Englishmen; notably by David in his "Villiams", by Aude in Lord D'Angister of L'Héloise Anglaise, and by Moline in Belton, of L'Amour Anglais. Voltaire's descriptions of Quaker life most powerfully seconded this development. Moreover it brought "le bon Quakre", with his individual mannerisms into French drama, and established his reputation as a beneficent personage; for Vigny still maintained that tradition, when he wrote Chatterton¹.

We may then infer that Steele's tale supplied a fresh plot for French dramatists, and, in conjunction with other influences, suggested two original characters, besides providing a most apt illustration for the general belief² that civilization tended to corrupt the nobler impulses of human nature.

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¹ An account of the plays in which a Quaker appears, covering the 18th and 19th centuries, has been published by E.Philips, in an article entitled Le Personnage du Quaker sur la scène française, (pp.432 ff. Revue de Littérature Comparée, année IX, 1929.) She does not comment on the similarity between Mowbray, Rosbif, Freeport, and the other characters mentioned above.

² Mercier proves the evergreen vigour of this belief, by setting out the argument in great detail, with new material, when he published the second version of L'Homme Sauvage in 1784.
Just as the first story from the Spectator had to be modified until it conformed to the laws of good taste in France, so the second had to suffer a similar change. Baculard d'Arnaud incorporated only the main outlines of the history written by Addison in the 164th paper of the Spectator, concerning the love of Theodosius for Constantia, in his play, Euphémie.

This, said Addison, was related to him by a priest whom he met on his travels in France. Fréron confirms the possibility of such a source, for he described the tale as a well-known incident, which took place in Brittany, and he named a certain Mademoiselle G*** as the original of Constantia. He further noted Baculard's imitation of Addison.

Addison had in mind the purpose of proving that true piety could find consolation for a great disappointment in love. So he told how Theodosius and Constantia loved one another. Greed in one family, and pride in the other, separated them. Theodosius disappeared. Constantia believed that he was dead, and in her grief at having driven him to it, she refused the match which her family had arranged for her, and decided to enter a convent. It was the custom to choose a confessor before taking the veil, and to explain to him the reasons for such an important decision. Constantia was advised to take as her confessor a certain Father Francis, who was renowned for his saintly qualities. He was Theodosius; and when he realised that Constantia was entering

(1) pp.145 ff. lettre vii, tome VIII, Année Littéraire 1769. (Amst.)
the convent because she believed him to be dead, he was overcome with conflicting emotions. His self-command returned, and he told her to be comforted, for her crime was not as serious as she imagined, and to live dutifully in her new surroundings, where she would find peace. When she had taken the vows, he sent a message to her, through the Abbess, telling her that Father Francis was really Theodosius. This made her very joyful, and she continued throughout the rest of her life in peace and holiness, with the help of exhortations and spiritual directions from Father Francis. They both died of a malignant fever that swept the country, and Constantia begged that they should be buried together. Her request was granted, and this epitaph was chosen for them "Here lie the bodies of Father Francis and Sister Constance. They were lovely in their lives and in their deaths they were not divided".

Fréron had heard a rather different version of the story when he was a boy at Quimper. He said that it had been published for the first time in 1765 in the first volume of the Variétés Sérieuses et Amusantes. The lovers this time were each persuaded that the other had died. The girl was induced to enter a convent: the young man became a Capucin monk of his own accord. Ten years later, he was made confessor to the convent where the girl was now a nun. It was not long before they realised that they had been deceived. The young man tried to tempt the nun to break her vows, and to escape with him to Holland. She steadfastly refused, and in the end he left the
brotherhood, and fled to Holland alone. She died of grief soon afterwards.

Baculard d'Arnaud's Euphémie shows traces of both these versions. He sets out to portray the conflict between religious feeling and love in ordinary people, as Addison had done; but he lays weight on the conflict, and not on the peace that follows.

Baculard's heroine Euphémie is less steadfast that the Mademoiselle G*** of Fréron's story, or the Constantia of Addison's. She consents to break her vows, although she soon repents this weakness. Her lover Théotime, before he realises who she is, talks in a strain very like Theodosius in the Spectator; but his actions after that discovery are more like those of the Capucin brother in the Breton tale. Baculard uses the circumstances related by Fréron to explain his heroine's presence in the convent: it is the mother, and not the father of the girl who arranged the deception.

It seems that despite Fréron's belief in Baculard's borrowing from Addison, the influence of the English essayist is complicated by that of the Breton legend. It goes no deeper than the suggestion that both lovers eventually triumph over their passion, and the inclusion of certain arguments in Théotime's speeches to Euphémie at the beginning of Act II; for although Baculard follows the conflict between love and religion in detail, and shows that religion has power to prevail over
earthly affection, the motives which bring about this conclusion in his drama in no way resemble those given by Addison.

Baculard's Théotime remained faithful to his vows for a reason which illuminates the difference in spirit between his work and Addison's. This, too, explains the superficial influence of the Spectator on Euphémie. Théotime puts it thus:

"Il l'emporte, ce Dieu, sa grâce est dans ta bouche,
Je cède à son pouvoir, c'est par toi qu'il me touche,
Tu me rends aux autels, à mes devoirs, à moi."

In Theodosius and Constantia, the young man was represented as the stronger character, and it was he who insisted on the sacred nature of their vows, and persuaded Constantia that her happiness lay in obedience to that irrevocable promise.

Baculard d'Arnaud invented a half-miraculous incident, to force on Théotime's surrender to duty. The young monk had tried to carry Euphémie away from the convent by violence. As he seized her, she stumbled into an open grave; (for they used to meet in the crypt of the convent) and this they both read as an expression of God's will. The graves, and skulls, and coffins in Euphémie were due to Baculard's peculiar conception of "le sombre", which he had gathered from the Night Thoughts of Young, in the first place. This work was so popular in France, that it fixed Baculard's choice upon that particular story from the

(1) p.94, Act III, sc.iii Euphémie, B. d'Arnaud. Yverdon 1768.
Spectator, since it allowed of development along appropriate lines. The incident of the open grave fitted in with the surroundings of a convent, and the unhappy situation of the lovers, and it may well have been suggested by the famous engraving of Young burying his daughter with his own hands, at midnight.

Thus the influence of Addison, which was confined to the story of Baculard's play, and did not affect the characterization profoundly, was less important than that of Young. The author of Les Nuits had suggested a new way of awakening pity and terror to Baculard d'Arnaud; and this he considered an important contribution to the theory of "drame bourgeois".

The very last of the plays drawn from the Spectator was Madame de Montesson's L'Heureux Échange, published in a collection of the author's works, entitled Œuvres Anonymes in 1782.

It was founded on the tale of Eudoxius and Leontine, told in the 123rd paper of the English periodical. Madame de Montesson wrote it in the form of a prose comedy in three acts, of the sentimental type, with a few "gay" scenes. Madame de

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(1) Frontispiece by Marillier, in the 1769 and 1770 editions of Les Nuits d'Young by Le Tourneur, (op.cit.). It is entitled "Young enterrant sa fille".

(2) Grimm comments on this, p.44, t.VIII, mars 1768, Correspondance Littéraire, op.cit.

(3) pp.125 ff, tome II, Œuvres Anonymes; L'Heureux Échange, comédie en trois actes et en prose. (ed. Paris 1782.)
Montesson acknowledged her debt to the English writer, by inserting "sujet tiré du Spectateur" under the title of her play.

The story in the Spectator was intended to teach a lesson to the fathers of "young heirs and elder brothers" who thought that their succession to a great estate rendered all other accomplishments unnecessary. They were to learn that

"Yet the best blood by learning is refined
And virtue arms the solid mind,
Whilst vice will stain the noblest race
And the paternal stamp efface."

There were once two friends, Eudoxius and Leontine: the first was very rich, and had amassed his fortune during his life at court, while the second, of equal birth, was studious, and had made himself a great scholar, without losing the qualities of a polite gentleman, so that his knowledge of men and books made him one of the most accomplished men of his age. He was, however, poor.

Eudoxius and Leontine settled down to country life about the same time. They both married, and a son was born to Eudoxius, while Leontine became the father of a daughter: but he lost his young wife very soon afterwards. They lived in the same part of the country, and one day, as they were talking together, Leontine told Eudoxius that he feared he could never give his daughter a proper education in his own house; and Eudoxius was afraid that his son would grow up useless and unworthy like so many other heirs to a great estate. They both
agreed that it would be an excellent plan to exchange their children. Eudoxius' wife was brought to consent to the arrangement, so Leontine took Florio, the heir to his friend's wealth, into his home, and Eudoxius adopted Leonilla as his own daughter.

The two friends came to love each other's children as their own: Florio grew up with great natural powers, and as soon as he understood his supposed father's circumstances, he worked hard at his exercises in the university. When he had finished there, he entered the Inns of Court, and, unlike a young man of wealth, he studied without intermission until he had gained a very good insight into the laws and constitution of his country.

Florio had always been a welcome guest in his real father's house, and as Leonilla was a most beautiful and modest girl, he had, not unnaturally, come to love her. He did not confess this feeling, because his honour and virtue forbade the thought of attempting to win the heiress of so great a fortune. Leonilla had, however, fallen in love with Florio, but she conducted herself with so much prudence, that she never gave the least intimation of it.

When Eudoxius heard that his son was such a credit to him, and such a worthy product of his friend's upbringing, he decided to reveal the secret of his birth to the young man. This was done: and Eudoxius added: "I have no other way left of acknowledging my gratitude to Leontine than by marrying you to his
daughter. He shall not lose the pleasure of being your father by the discovery I have made to you. Leonilla too shall be my daughter. Her filial piety, though misplaced, has been so exemplary that it deserves the highest reward I can confer upon it."

Thus the two young people were married. Their happiness, and their affectionate behaviour to their parents were the just recompense as well as the natural effects of the care which Eudoxius and Leontine had bestowed upon their children's education.

When Madame de Montesson made this story the theme of her play, she made few important changes. She emphasised the educational value of training a young man of wealth to act as though he were poor and added a few reflections of her own on the subject of bringing up girls¹. Her thesis was that they should be educated at home rather than in a convent, and she showed the wilfulness of women in general, where love affairs were concerned².

As the dramatist had to fill out the sketch given in the Spectator to make a three-act comedy, she introduced two new characters, Padille, the young man's valet, and Dame Sephora, the governess who took charge of the girl. These two figures seem to be influenced by the Barbier de Séville, which probably suggested the placing of the action in Spain as well. Padille

(1) Act I, sc.iii, sc.v, Act II, sc.ii, L'Heureux Échange, op.cit.
(2) Act I, sc.vi, Act III, sc. dernière.
has a very faint tinge of Figaro's humour and impudence: Dame Sephora presents the traits of a duenna.

The chief characters were Léontin, an accurate reflection of the English Leontine, and his friend Eudoxius who was represented by Clémentia, the widow of "Eudoxe": this change created a better balance between the men and women in the play. Clémentia had a son, Florio, who, like his English counterpart, was an accomplished scholar and gentleman. To keep up the Spanish atmosphere, he was introduced as a student at the university of Salamanca, but his studies and successes were not minutely described, as in the Spectator. Léontin's daughter took the name given in the English story, Léonilla. There is a fuller account of her accomplishments, her obedience, and her love for her supposed mother and her true father. She is also shown as more decided and outspoken about her love for Florio. All these alterations made by the French author served the purpose of creating more material for the larger canvas needed by the form of expression she chose.

The plot of L'Heureux Échange is concerned with the love-affair between the young people. The story of the exchange, and the death of "Eudoxe" and "Léontin's" young wife is briefly told in the exposition; the motives for this action are described at the same time, but interest in them is subordinated to the theme of Florio's love for Leonilla, and they are brought in to make the happy conclusion of the play possible.
The action begins at the time when Florio has been recalled from his studies at Salamanca to Léontin's house. The young man has just discovered that he is in love with Léonilla. The parents find this out. Clémentia decides to test her adopted daughter's feelings, and sees that she returns Florio's love. The two young people are left alone by chance, and Florio, although encouraged by Léonilla, will not reveal his fondness for her, because his honour forbids him to speak of marriage to a rich heiress, since he is under the impression that he is a poverty-stricken student. Dame Sephora's tactless words when she discovers Florio and Leonilla together force the young man to confess his love. Then Florio begs Léontin to let him go back to Salamanca, so as to extricate him from this difficult situation. Clémentia steps in here, and declares that it is high time to disclose their true parentage to the young lovers. This is done, and their marriage arranged, while at the same time, the scene of recognition between Leonilla and her father is set before the audience.

Most of the conversations in the play are touching and didactic, but there is a vein of humour apparent whenever Padille or Dame Sephora take part; and this humour has more of Steele's good nature and unforced gaiety than of La Chaussée's rather artificial wit. The story of Eudoxius and Leontine, however, contained no element of gaiety: Madame de Montesson introduced it into her play under pressure of other
circumstances, which include the success of Figaro and the vogue for English literature.

The language in L'Heureux Échange betrays no wholesale borrowing from the Spectator, but certain scenes were obviously built up from hints given by the English writer.

There is nothing very original about Madame de Montesson's work. She retained the main outline of the story given in the Spectator, and the principal characters, except for her transference of Eudoxius' part to Clémentia. She added some observations of her own on the education of girls - a point of topical interest in 1782 - to the moral lesson expounded in the English periodical. The Spanish setting of the play was very likely due to Beaumarchais' influence, and the liveliness of Padille, and Dame Sephora's character may be attributed to the same cause. Her alterations were intended to make the comedy conform to the exigencies of French stagecraft, and her mingling of gravity and gaiety in the unfolding of the plot reflected the latest tendency in sentimental comedy.

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(1) compare Acte I, sc.v. L'Heureux Échange, with the conversation between Leontine and Eudoxius, after the death of Leontine's wife, as reported in the Spectator; also Acte III, scène dernière, with the description of the parents' feelings in the English story.

(2) Rousseau's theory of education had by then caught popular fancy: Barthé's La Jolie Femme, la Femme du Jour went through a new edition in 1778, while the question was brought up again in 1790, in Bedeno De Jaure's L'Époux généreux ou le Pouvoir des Procédés; (see scene xiii, (ed. Paris 1790).
The general influence of the *Spectator* on French playwrights between 1764 and 1789 may be characterised by saying that this collection of essays contained themes which were selected as suitable illustrations of some popular moral or social theory, and presented characters attractive in their novelty and easily fitted into the framework of "comédie sérieuse" or "drame".

The first story taken from the *Spectator* exemplified the natural virtues possessed by "savages"; *La Jeune Indienne*, *Fanny*, and *La Négresse* all contrasted the nobility of their uncivilized heroines with the greed and ingratitude of Europeans. The later plays in this series also pointed out certain abuses which had been brought to light by a more intimate acquaintance with life in the French colonies. Steele had touched upon the evils of the slave-trade: Chamfort had neglected this, because it was not germane to the argument of his play, but David, and the authors of *La Négresse* embraced the opportunity of drawing attention to this iniquity, because they knew it would be condemned by public opinion, and because they had come to realise the value of truth in the comic representation of life. Their attitude was in some degree a result of the more sympathetic reading of English writers like Fielding, or Steele himself.

The two remaining plays, *Euphémie* and *L'Heureux Échange* took up the ideas on family relationships propounded by Addison and Steele. Baculard d'Arnaud showed the tragic consequences of parental tyranny, and urged the folly of forcing
young men and women to take the irrevocable vows of a religious life, from motives of jealousy or ambition. In *Euphémie*, there are traces of Young's influence, but the moral advice to parents was copied from the *Spectator*. Madame de Montesson was more faithful to her model than Baculard, and her demonstration of the happiness that results from wise and considerate action on the parents' side in a love affair follows the same lines as the *Spectator*.

The new characters which figured in comedy as a direct result of the *Spectator*’s influence were the pathetic devoted savage girl (the most successful innovation), the wise scholar, and the serious-minded, sensitive woman, who could be a good friend and an excellent mother, portrayed in the Léontin and Clémentia of *L'Heureux Échange*, and lastly, the impenitent Jackson in *Fanny*. All these retained the traits given to them by Steele or Addison, and they were perfectly adapted to the atmosphere of "comédie sérieuse".

Two new qualities appeared in the later plays considered in this chapter. There was a tendency to represent faithfully the picture of life as the English writers saw it, or to insert some touches of French local colour that would produce the same effect. At the same time, the more solemn scenes were relieved with interludes of gaiety in a way reminiscent of English sentimental comedy. The first quality is clearly shown by a comparison of *La Jeune Indienne* with *Fanny* or *La Négresse*, the
second, by the contrast between Chamfort's comedy and Dumaniant's or Madame de Montesson's. Due allowance must, however, be made for Beaumarchais' influence in fostering this second change.

The Spectator papers aimed so directly at the correction of some abuse, that French dramatists easily recognized them as convenient instruments for the propagation of their own doctrines. The clear, short and moving narratives of Steele or Addison disposed their French imitators to choose sentimental comedy as the most appropriate form of expression for them. Baculard d'Arnaud, it is true, wrote a tragedy on the theme he borrowed, but he was impelled to do so by other, more powerful influences.

Plays formed on stories from the Spectator were late in making their appearance in France, because circumstances did not reveal these papers as an accumulation of "sad true tales" which could be told afresh in drama, until 1764.
Chapter VIII.

THE USE OF THEMES FROM OTHER ENGLISH SOURCES.

English comedies, and English character and customs provided French dramatists with new themes for moral, sentimental plays. There were three collections of English comedies upon which they could draw: one by Patu, published in 1756, another by Madame Riccoboni in 1769, and the third, by Madame de Vasse, in 1784. In addition, English law and custom with regard to marriage supplied material for dramatic treatment in France, while the legendary figure of the splenetic, morbid Englishman, always ready to end his own life, created a new character on the French stage, suggested another theme for drama, and even set a fashion in young men's behaviour in society, just before the Revolution.

This chapter thus falls into four parts. The first will deal with the French plays that made use of Patu's translations of English comedies; the second with those that borrowed from Madame Riccoboni's Nouveau Théâtre Anglais. As one of the plays she translated, Kelly's False Delicacy, brings up the subject of the difference between the French and English view of clandestine marriage, a discussion of the plays which bear
on that point will be included in the second section. The third will consider the French translations and imitations of *The School for Scandal*, while the last will describe the history of suicide and spleen in French sentimental plays.
I. Le Roi et le Meunier de Mansfield, translated by Patu, and its French imitations.

Patu published the first of the collections of English comedies just mentioned\(^1\). His *Choix de petites pièces du théâtre anglois* contained a short play by Robert Dodsley, named *The King and the Miller of Mansfield*. This inspired Collé's *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*, and Sedaine's musical play *Le Roi et le Fermier*, which has to be mentioned, although, strictly speaking, it was neither a "comédie larmoyante" nor a "drame bourgeois". The *King and the Miller of Mansfield*\(^2\) had an interesting plot and some original characters: both Collé and Sedaine saw that it might be modified so as to impart a suitable moral lesson. This was reason enough for their use of its story.

Dodsley told how an English King - (he does not name the monarch, but Collé said it was Henry VI) - lost his way in the forest near Mansfield, when he was out hunting. He fell in with a miller, John Cockle, who did not recognize the King, but talked to him as an equal, and invited him to his home.

The King accepted the honest Miller's offer of food and shelter. While he was at the mill, he was made to realize

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\(1\) Patu, *Choix de petites pièces du théâtre anglois*, Paris 1756.

\(2\) *The King and the Miller of Mansfield*. R.Dodsley. (played at Drury Lane, Feb. 11, 1737) (ed. Lond. 1786.)
the virtues of the common people and the vices of court life, from the conversation and behaviour of John Cockle and his son Richard.

The intrigue of the play consisted of the love-story of Richard and Peggy, a girl from the same village. They had fallen in love, but Lord Lurewell separated them, by abducting Peggy, and seducing her. He prevailed upon one of his former mistresses to swear a child to Richard, and in order to widen the breach between the young people, he tried to make Richard believe that Peggy no longer loved him. When the girl got to hear of all this, she escaped from the house where Lurewell kept her, and came home to explain matters to Richard. She arrived when the King was at the Miller's house; so he determined to do justice in this case. His courtiers had been looking for him in the forest, and at last they came to the mill. The wicked Lurewell was amongst them; so the King discovered his real identity to the Cockle family, and dealt with the situation on the spot. He condemned Lurewell to pay Richard for the injury he had done him, and reproved him sternly with the words which point the moral of the play "Do you think that greatness gives a sanction to wickedness, or that it is the prerogative of lords to be unjust and inhuman?" Finally, the King arranged Peggy's marriage to

(1) The last scene, in Dodsley's The King and the Miller of Mansfield, op.cit.
Richard.

Collé and Sedaine took up this story in different ways. The history of Collé's two versions of his Partie de Chasse is too well known to be repeated here, and for the purpose of studying his use of Dodsley's plot, there is no need to distinguish them. Since Collé began his play in 1760, and since his diary for that year had outlined the principles on which he worked up the material provided by Dodsley, his adaptation will be considered before Sedaine's, although La Partie de Chasse did not appear in public until long after Le Roi et le Fermier.

Thus in June 1760, Collé said that he had used only the better scenes of Dodsley's play, and the general lines of the story. Good taste had forced him to omit the seduction of Peggy, and her marriage to Richard afterwards, with the revolting stratagem by which Lurewell tried to separate them for ever. The intrigue was placed in a French setting, and he thought the end of Henri IV's reign the most suitable period for it. Collé then went on to say that his view of the purpose of the play was quite contrary to Dodsley's. The English writer attacked the vice and folly of the court; Collé would

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(1) The only important difference in the borrowing from Dodsley between Collé's first draft, Le Roi et le Meunier, and the second, La Partie de Chasse, is the name he gives to Lord Lurewell's counterpart: first it was Le comte d'Auvergne, and then Concini.

not permit himself the slightest allusion to this subject. His aim was to present the "domestic virtues" of Henri IV, or, to quote the well-known phrase "Je le peins en déshabillé".

When Collé borrowed scenes from Dodsley, he remained very close to the original text. The conversation between Henri IV and Michau, the "ghost" scene between Margot and Catan, certain speeches in the last two scenes of *La Partie de Chasse* are almost translations of the corresponding passages in *The King and the Miller*.

The most arresting innovations in Collé's play were the introduction of Henri IV, and the setting of the story in France, with the episode of the quarrel between Sully and Henri. There was a hint in the English play which may have put this idea into Collé's mind, for he says: "D'abord M. Dodsley a mis pour son Roy un Henry VI qui est en vénération chez les Anglais, ce qui jette un intérêt très grand." The French writer saw the advantages of such an interest, and the scenes he built up in consequence made the fortune of his play.

(1) compare *La Partie de Chasse*,
Act II, sc.xiii and Dodsley, the first scene between the King and the miller (sc.i)
Act III, sc.i, and the conversation between Margery and Kate (sc.iv.)
Act III, sc.x, xi, xii, xiii and the supper scenes in Dodsley.
Act III, sc.xvii & xviii, and the last scene in Dodsley.


In the main, Collé's version resembled Dodsley's. Henri IV went unrecognized to the miller's house, and heard the story of his son Richard's love for Agathe, who had been abducted, but not seduced, by Concini. The supper provided an occasion for the display of sentiment and virtue, as in Dodsley, and the King made Concini confess his crime, so that the Partie de Chasse ended with the wedding of Richard and Agathe.

There were modifications in detail which Collé introduced to soften the crudities of the English story: Agathe was not only innocent, but Collé made her abductor tell Richard that she really was innocent, and the incident of making the wicked nobleman pay for his sins in money was not included. To the English plot, Collé added the story of Catau and Lucas, and the episode of the quarrel between Sully and Henri IV, fomented by Concini.

The characters of Michau and Richard were very similar to those of John Cockle and his son, except that Collé left out all the allusions to Court life, and the satire on Court manners. He made his Agathe more charming and innocent than Peggy, and created his lively picture of Catau, the miller's daughter, from the slight sketch of Kate given in Dodsley's play.

The purpose of La Partie de Chasse was not quite as innocent of political implication as Collé made it seem in his
Although he had very carefully abstained from following the English author in his criticism of courtiers, and in his satire on the vices of the aristocracy, still the first draft of his play, Le Roi et le Meunier in 1762, admitted of too unflattering a comparison with the Court of Louis XV, and it was too familiar a picture of a French king to be presented on the public stage. Madame de Pompadour was the chief of those who objected to it; but even when she was dead, Louis XV would not give permission for its performance in Paris.

The ideal of a kind "Father of the People", the presentation of Henri IV as a heroic warrior, the picture of the honest peasant under Henri IV, the touch of satire in the scene between the peasants and the courtiers, with the vices of the great personified in Concini were all keenly appreciated in 1774, when La Partie de Chasse was played at the Théâtre Français. The public was always ready to read political significance into a new play: and the idea that an era of wise and benevolent justice\(^1\) was to open with Louis XVI's succession to the throne made several writers compare him and his minister Turgot, to Henri IV and Sully, as Collé had portrayed them\(^2\).

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(1) See p.349, tome III, Oeuvres Complètes de Gresset, ed. Paris 1824: "Un autre terme dû au langage du coeur et à l'expression de la félicité publique, c'est le terme attendant de bienfaisance. Si ce mot n'existait point déjà dans l'usage de notre langue, il faudrait le créer aujourd'hui pour pouvoir bien exprimer le règne auguste et fortuné qui commence, et pour peindre d'un trait la sensibilité sur le trône, et les grâces couronnées." Réponse de Gresset... au discours de Réception de M. Suard.

(2) See p.241, Casimir Stryenski, La France au xviiie siècle, (Paris 1926.)
The reception of *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*, both after its publication in 1766, and its performance in 1774, was so enthusiastic that it created a new fashion in hairdressing\(^1\), besides reviving the prestige of Henri IV as a national hero (to which *La Henriade* had contributed so much, earlier in the century). Further, it inspired a whole series of plays written around the personality of Henri IV\(^2\). None of them owed anything to Dodsley's work.

Before considering the part played by *The King and the Miller of Mansfield* in the growth of French drama, Sedaine's musical comedy must be mentioned. He described it as "Le Roi et le Fermier, une comédie mêlée de morceaux de musique". It was a much lighter work than the other comedies of the time, which were written either according to the principles of Diderot, or in imitation of Molière. Sedaine's work is interesting because it was approved as a close imitation of Dodsley's work.

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\(^1\) p.511, t.IX, nov. 1774, (see also pp.496 ff, t.VI, mars 1776). Corr. Litt. op.cit.

\(^2\) e.g. "Le laboureur devenu gentilhomme, comédie, en un acte et en prose, mêlée d'ariettes, de M. Boutillier, avec quelques notes historiques." It was published at Amsterdam and Paris in 1771. It is the dramatisation of an anecdote about Henri IV. There is a supper scene, at which the King is present, unrecognized by the company, which is plainly a copy of Collé's.

or "Henri IV, ou la Bataille d'Ivry", drame lyrique en trois actes et en prose par M. du Rozoy. It was played on Nov.14, 1774, at the Théâtre des Italiens, and published at Paris in 1774.
The satirical speeches were omitted, and the account of the heroine's seduction, for Sedaine had to obey the same laws of propriety in drama as Collé. He also left out the supper scene, and the short episode of the ghost-stories told by Kate and Margery; he did so because they seemed to him interruptions in the action. The only other change in the story was the placing of the reconciliation between the Miller's son and his sweetheart early in the play, instead of at the very end. The characters in *Le Roi et le Meunier* were copied from those in Dodsley's play, with the exception of Jenny, the heroine, who was innocent and virtuous, unlike Peggy.

Collé pointed out the weaknesses in Sedaine's work so cleverly and maliciously, that Grimm, in his defence of *Le Roi et le Meunier* found no more pertinent answer than a flat denial of Collé's charges. In spite of adverse criticism, *Le Roi et le Fermier* was extremely popular, first because the theme of Dodsley's play was sentimental, and suited the form of the new comedy with music which Sedaine had chosen, and then because it was set out with the same sincerity and natural charm that had made *Le Philosophe sans le Savoir* a success; and lastly, because the actress who took the part of Betsi, the miller's daughter, gave an exceptionally fine rendering of it.

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(1) Act I, sc.viii, *Le Roi et le Fermier*, de Sedaine, musique de Monsigny; played on Nov.22, 1762. (ed. Paris 1770.)
(2) pp.345 ff. (1762) *Journal Historique inédit de Collé*.
Sedaine’s play illustrates the process of refinement which inevitably accompanied the preparation of an English play for the French stage. The scenes he chose to reproduce show that his sense of dramatic effect was less keen than Collé’s, but as he employed a different medium of expression, it is not fair to compare them.

The English play suggested the plot of Le Roi et le Fermier to Sedaine, and a more subdued mockery of Court life and ways; the modification of the story in this play was undertaken in the same spirit as Collé’s. Both writers disliked the idea that the heroine had really been seduced, and both condemned as indecent the payment of money in reparation for the wrong done to her. Sedaine was rather more outspoken in his imitation of Dodsley’s exposure of corruption in high places; but it was less dangerous to place such criticism in a musical play than in a serious comedy. Collé retained more of the peasant characters’ bluntness and humorous philosophy than Sedaine, because he could afford to lay more weight on characterisation, in the form of expression he had selected. Several situations struck them both as fresh and impressive; again, the difference in their use and placing of these scenes sprang from the varying exigencies of "comédie" and "comédie à ariettes". Collé’s most telling innovation, the introduction of Henri IV, arose from the germ of an idea in Dodsley, which Sedaine ignored; and Collé rose superior to the English play,
and to Sedaine's imitation, in the gaiety and wit of his supper scenes, the grace and simplicity of Agathe and Catan, and the patriotic sentiment of La Partie de Chasse.

Evidently the English influences along this channel merely supplied the canvas, and the bold outline of the pattern which French dramatists worked with. The peasant characters in the French theatre were enriched with some new types, and a striking opportunity for criticism of Louis XV's government was offered. Both Collé and Sedaine took very cautious advantage of it. The peculiar blend of humour and sentiment in Collé's play had more than a suspicion of the English writer's style; and this was a preliminary manifestation of the reaction against purely serious plays of sentiment, which took place in the last decades of the century.

The prevailing force of English influence is disclosed by the fact that Collé and Sedaine, who were men of original thought and independent character, followed fashion in this respect.
II. French plays founded on English Comedies translated by Madame Riccoboni, and on the difference between the French and English view of clandestine marriage.

The second collection of English comedies which interests us is that published by Madame Riccoboni in 1769. The title she chose indicates her purpose of complementing La Place's translations of English tragedies. To ensure a pleasing selection, she consulted Garrick, and acting upon his advice, she included five plays in Le Nouveau Théâtre Anglois.2

The Preface states that she wished to broaden the outlook of young French writers, rather than to provide them with models for imitation. The younger dramatists made use of her collection, but not quite in the way that Madame Riccoboni had advised. Le Nouveau Théâtre Anglois enjoyed a wide circulation, and was well-known to the Encyclopaedists3

For various reasons, English influence vitally affected

(1) Le Nouveau Théâtre Anglois, tome V (containing the Preface) and tome VI, Oeuvres Complètes de Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni. (ed. Paris 1818.)
(2) Moore's Foundling; Murphy's The Way to Keep Him; Kelly's False Delicacy and two plays by Colman, The Deuce is in Him and The Jealous Wife.
(4) The Foundling, probably because of Faddel's character, was not imitated in France. The Deuce is in Him inspired some very light comedies with music; described by Gaiffe on p.60 in Le Drame au dix-huitième siècle (Paris 1910), which cannot be classed as experiments in drama. The Jealous Wife did not give Desforges the theme of La Femme Jalous, in spite of Grimm's asseverations to the contrary, (pp.120 ff, Vol.XIV, mars 1785, Corr.Litt. op.cit.), so that, too, lies outside our subject.
French drama only through the two comedies written by Murphy and Kelly. The Way to Keep Him, Murphy's play, was of the sentimental type with characters which sometimes recalled Restoration comedies, and an intrigue partly borrowed from Moissy's Nouvelle École des Femmes, and partly from La Chaussée's Préjugé à la mode. It is easy to guess that this would appeal to French writers. Towards the end of the century, La Chabeaussière borrowed a good deal from Murphy for his Confiance Dangereuse, and Marsollier des Viètères used almost the same material for his Confiance Trahie.

Madame Riccoboni's introduction pointed out the similarity between Murphy's comedy and those of La Chaussée and Moissy. Murphy himself acknowledged his debt to the Nouvelle École des Femmes in the preface to the three-act version of the play, published in 1760. By 1761, he had re-written it in five acts, and it was this version which Madame Riccoboni translated, and which served as a basis for later French plays.

There were two intrigues in Murphy's The Way to Keep Him, linked together by the person of Mr Lovemore. The first came from Moissy's play: Murphy, however, substituted a different conclusion, to fit in with the rest of his plot. We shall not

(2) Murphy was well acquainted with French comedy: educated in France, and translated several French plays. Robert Lloyd in 1762 translated the Nouvelle École des Femmes in the St James's Magazine, so as to point out Murphy's borrowings.
go into the details of Murphy's use of the French play, as the few necessary references may more fittingly be made when La Chabeauissière's and Marsollier's comedies are discussed.

The Way to Keep Him might serve as the title of the first intrigue in Murphy's play. Mr Lovemore, of a pleasure-loving and fickle character, neglected his virtuous and rather dull wife. Mrs Lovemore suspected that he was paying court to a beautiful widow, Mrs Bellmour. So the injured wife went to visit the widow, who gave her a lesson in the art of charming a husband. During their conversation Mrs Lovemore found out that her husband had started an intrigue with the widow, and had pretended to be an unmarried gentleman of quality. So in revenge, Mrs Lovemore and Mrs Bellmour planned a trick to humiliate him, and put an end to his deceptive behaviour. At the same time, Mrs Lovemore's friend, Sir Brilliant Fashion, encouraged Lovemore's neglect of his wife, in the hope of profiting by this circumstance to make love to her.

The second intrigue begins to complicate the action at this point. Mr Lovemore had another friend, Sir Bashful Constant, who is in love with his own wife, but dares not show it, for fear of the merciless wit of Lovemore and Sir Brilliant. So he covers his affection with a show of meanness and boorishness towards Lady Constant. Mr Lovemore encourages this attitude, for he wishes to begin a love-intrigue with Lady Constant. There are several comic scenes based on this
encouragement and interested friendship between Lovemore and Sir Bashful, and all of them tend to make Lovemore believe that Sir Bashful is almost anxious that his friend should make love to his wife: first he sends him to her with a gift of money, to be presented in Lovemore's name, for fear of ridicule if he gave it himself; then, when Lady Constant has decided to leave him because of his quarrelsome nature, he writes a letter to tell her of his love, but asks Lovemore to address it and take it to Lady Constant. Naturally, Lovemore uses the opportunity to write a letter of his own to Lady Constant. She is extremely angry when she reads it, and speaks very severely to Lovemore and her husband. Sir Bashful cannot understand this: the false situation is kept up until the last scene of the play, when Mrs Lovemore and Mrs Bellmouir expose Sir Brilliant's attempt to seduce Lovemore's wife, and Lovemore's intrigue with the widow, while the real authorship and contents of the letter to Lady Constant come to light. Mrs Lovemore suddenly displays a pretty wit and great eagerness to please her husband in this scene: so he is content to return to her: Lady Constant is reconciled to Sir Bashful, while Mrs Bellmouir accepts Sir Brilliant Fashion as her lover. Mr Lovemore speaks the moral: the 'way to keep him' is, for wives, to be charming and never to neglect the art of pleasing after marriage: while husbands must beware of inconstancy, and avoid a dangerous
confidence in the counsels of their friends who advise the neglect of a wife.

It was in 1784 that La Chabeaussière and Marsollier saw in this play amusing situations and a means of refurbishing the old theme of _Le Préjugé à la Mode_. They neglected that part of Murphy's intrigue which was borrowed from Moissy almost entirely, and concentrated the action of their plays on the incident of the letter which Sir Bashful sent to Lady Constant with such amusing, and highly moral, consequences.

La Chabeaussière's preface to his comedy[^1], _La Confiance Dangereuse_ said that he had taken the idea of his play from the third act of Madame Riccoboni's translation. He had given it a new exposition and conclusion, and he hoped this would save his play from the reproach of being too dull a repetition, not of Murphy, but of La Chaussée. The connection between his work and Marsollier's is made clear in this preface. La Chabeaussière was hurrying to publish the play, because his friend Marsollier had written one on the same theme, and had very generously suggested to him several ingenious ideas for details and situations, although the two plays were different in style and treatment.

La Chabeaussière made certain alterations in the story of

[^1]: Préface, _La Confiance Dangereuse_, comédie en deux actes et en vers, par M. de la Chabeaussière, jouée pour la première fois par les comédiens italiens ordinaires du roi, le 4 mai 1784. Paris 1784.
Murphy's play, in order to round off the episode he borrowed from it. The hero, Dorimon, like Sir Bashful, really loved his wife Cécile. His neglect of her was due to the influence of the rake Belmont, his friend. Cécile takes counsel of her sister-in-law Florise — who borrows some ideas of Murphy's Mrs Bellmour — and tells her how to recapture her husband's affection. They arrange a feigned declaration from Cécile that she is going to leave Dorimon. Then the French play follows Murphy closely in the affair of the letter, which Dorimon sent by Belmont. La Chabeauissière allowed his rake to get out of the difficulty much more simply than Murphy's Lovemore; — when the letter was read out, Belmont simply pretended that he had given the wrong one to Cécile. The inevitable reconciliation followed, Belmont's treachery was realised, and the helpful Florise was united to a worthy young lover, Valcour.

Nearly the whole of the plot is taken from the English, and there are scenes in La Chabeauissière which are simply Madame Riccoboni's translation done into verse\(^1\). It may be noticed that there is only one important scene taken from the

\(^{(1)}\) for example compare: [Mme Riccoboni's translation of Murphy is quoted. v. sup.]

Act II, sc.iii. Murphy Act IV, sc.vi.
Act II, scs i & ii. Murphy Act II, sc.vi.
Act II, scs ix,x. Murphy Act IV, scs ix and x.
first intrigue of Murphy's play; and this itself is a free rendering of a scene from Moissy\(^1\), where Laure tells the neglected wife how to please her husband.

There is one addition of some interest made by La Chabeaussière. He turned the widow of Murphy's play into the hero's sister-in-law, and made her a coquette, working to preserve the family honour against Belmont, the rakish man of fashion. In order to make this perfectly clear, La Chabeaussière set them to argue against one another on the stage\(^2\); the scene of the discussion does credit to the author's moral aim rather than to his artistic sense.

The characters in La Confiance Dangereuse were closely modelled on those in the English play. Dorimon was a sentimental and colourless copy of Sir Bashful Constant: he had the fear of ridicule without the amusing pretence of bad temper and meanness that Murphy gave to his creation. La Chabeaussière was evidently afraid of seeming unrefined. On the other hand, Cécile was more life-like than Lady Constant, and showed more sense and wit in her speeches\(^3\). Belmont was a compound of Lovemore and Sir Brilliant Fashion; La Chabeaussière intended him to be a real villain\(^4\), without any of the humorous

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(1) La Chabeaussière, Act I, sc. vii. cf. Murphy Act III, sc. i, and Moissy, Act II, sc. iii and iv.
(2) Act II, sc.x. La Confiance Dangereuse, op.cit.
(3) Act I, sc.vi. Act II, sc.ix, ibid.
(4) Act II, sc. x, xiii, xiv, ibid.
and even attractive qualities of the English "sad dogs", for Belmont was not converted, and was found out in a lie about the letter which caused the final entanglement of the plot. Florise acted far more virtuously and prudently than the Mrs Bellmour in Murphy's play, who was not above suspicion. Lastly, Rosette, the maid, tried to help her mistress, Cécile, in discouraging Belmont's advances, as soon as she had been emphatically rebuked for offering a timid version of Muslin's cynical advice to Mrs Lovemore\(^1\).

La Chabeaussière altered the moral purpose of Murphy's play. There is but slight reference to "the way to keep him"\(^2\). Instead, the author drew attention to the danger of listening to the counsel of frivolous friends in matters of conjugal affection, with a further warning that the middle classes are very foolish to imitate the manners of aristocratic society in this respect; as Cécile put it:

"Qu'un grand part embellir jusqu'à ses ridicules,
Mais qu'on rit, sans pitié, du gauche imitateur."\(^3\)

In spite of all La Chabeaussière's superior delicacy of language and sentiment, and his enlargements on the theme that no one need be ashamed of loving his wife, there remains a certain comic quality in the Confidance Dangereuse which makes it resemble the English rather than the French type of sentimental comedy.

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(1) Act I, sc.v. La Confiance Dangereuse, op.cit.
(2) Act I, sc. vii. ibid.
(3) Act I, sc. vi. ibid.
This new quality is apparent in the character of Dorimon: although he is represented as a man of dignity and sentiment, yet he is ridiculous in the scenes dealing with the letter to his wife, and his situation as a husband deceived by his friend is not treated in the moral vein throughout. A touch of Murphy's influence seems to have introduced a politer version of the words and deeds of husbands in English Restoration comedy into his actions and speeches; although at the end of the play La Chabeaussière does not forget to give him some noble sentiments. Then the last speech of the incorrigible Belmont "il est beau de braver le préjugé vulgaire", with its sarcasm, echoes Murphy's Sir Brilliant.

Very probably La Chabeaussière had no deeper purpose in allowing this tinge of gayer comedy to creep into his play than that of amusing his audience, but this quality in La Confi­rance Dangereuse is a symptom of the return to gaiety in a comedy, and of a fresh admiration for writers like Steele and Sheridan who showed its presence in English drama.

Grimm's comment on La Confi­dance Dangereuse supports the idea that it was written more in the hope of a lucrative success than as an experiment in drama. It was the fashion to look for original situations in English plays, and La Chabeaussière thought he had found a popular theme in this novel treatment

(1) Scenes ix, x, Act II, La Confi­ance Dangereuse.
of Le Préjugé à la Mode; but the run of the play must have disappointed him, and Grimm condemned its lesson as out of date: "Le fond... a déjà vieilli parce que les travers dont elle est la critique tient à un ridicule d'usage et d'opinion plus variable encore que celle de nos goûts et de nos moeurs. On n'aime pas mieux sa femme qu'autrefois, cela est bien entendu, mais au lieu d'attacher une espèce de honte à l'aveu public de ce sentiments, on est plutôt disposé à s'en parer aux yeux du monde, quelque éloigné qu'on soit en effet d'en éprouver la douceur."

Marsollier, like La Chabeaussière, took the substance of his play from The Way to Keep Him, without too much inward searching as to the aptness of its moral teaching for the audiences of 1784. La Confiance Trahie was less ambitious than La Confiance Dangereuse. It was written in prose, and was very short.

The interest centred upon the episode of the letter. Marsollier borrowed the opening scene between the two servants from Murphy's exposition; and he also fitted into his plot the scenes between Sir Bashful and Lady Constant, and the incident where Lovemore undertook to deliver a gift of

(2) Act I, sc. i, ii, Murphy (trans. Riccoboni) Marsollier, Act I, sc. i.
(3) Marsollier, sc. xi, Murphy op. cit, Act II, sc. iv.
money to Lady Constant. Marsollier and La Chabeaussière handled the substitution of a love-letter for Sir Bashful's note to his wife, and the ensuing quarrel, in exactly the same way.

Marsollier employed the characters of William and Muslin, the servants, to carry on his intrigue in La Confiance Trahie, but they played a different part in it - they did not help the husband and his friend in their plans, but worked against them, defended their mistress, and were inclined to blame their master for his blindness to the true purpose of his friend's actions. Marsollier simplified the ending of the play, to keep it within the limits of one act. In his version, the Comte d'Egmont slipped out before Monsieur Desmarets read the letter which made his wife so angry, and the final scene was one of pardon and reconciliation. Marsollier adds the direction "avec âme"; and the villain of the piece was conveniently forgotten.

A few touches of the eccentricity of the English characters reappear in La Confiance Trahie. Desmarets was rude to his wife in public, and his private fondness seemed humorous in contrast, as in Murphy's sketch of Sir Bashful

(1) Marsollier, sc.xii; Murphy, Act II, sc.vi.
(2) cf: Murphy (in Riccoboni's translation). Act IV, sc. vi, vii, viii, ix, x. La Chabeaussière, La Confiance Dangereuse, Act II, sc. ii, iii, ix, x. Marsollier, La Confiance Trahie, sc. xvi, xvii, xxii, xxiii.
(3) Marsollier, op.cit. sc. xxiv.
Constant. Marsollier tried to bring out Desmarets' real affection for his wife, and his fear of not being master in his own house, so as to minimize the ridicule attached to his situation in the play. Madame Desmarets had none of Mrs Lovemore's virtuous dulness. She was wiser and wittier, nobler and more loving than her husband, and Marsollier made her obey the law of "comédie sérieuse", by representing her as injured, and always estimable. The Comte d'Egmont was a less vivid Sir Brilliant; and he even showed occasional signs of remorse for his duplicity and warned Desmarets of the danger he incurred by entrusting the letter and the money to his care. Although these promptings of conscience were feeble, yet they were typical of French plays of sentiment in not making the villain entirely bad. Marsollier, like Murphy, did not "convert" this character. Charles and Henriette, the servants, were extremely virtuous and refined in comparison with Murphy's vigorous drawing of William and Muslin; but some strong contrast to the wickedness of the Comte d'Egmont was needed, and the French writer knew that these poor but honest servants would please the public of 1784.

La Confiance Trahie was much more sentimental than La Chabeaussière's play. Its moral lesson bore on the same point, but Marsollier improved upon his friend's work by praising the virtues of the common people, and by warning

(1) Marsollier, op.cit. sc. vii, sc.ix, sc.x, sc. xi.
(2) sc.v. ibid.
(3) sc. xii, xvi, xxii. ibid.
his audience against the corrupting influence of the aristocracy - for le Comte d'Egmont's title was a part of his wickedness. Even so, there is a hint of gaiety in the situations which were taken from *The Way to Keep Him*, and in the character of Desmarets.

This explains why both La Chabeausière and Marsollier neglected that part of Murphy's tale which he had appropriated from Moissy's *Nouvelle École des Femmes*, and preferred to use the more truly comic intrigue of his second plot. They refined it, and turned it into a repetition of one of La Chaussée's homilies, but the fundamental humour of Murphy's characters and situations insisted on showing through.

These two plays are connected with the new movement in "comédie sérieuse" at the end of the century, which brought the gaiety as well as the sentiment and the moral teaching of English comedy into France. Marsollier and La Chabeausière did not begin the movement, they only joined in the natural reaction consequent upon a long series of gloomy "drames", and *Figaro*'s revelation of the pleasure to be found in laughter.

Kelly's *False Delicacy*\(^1\) also provoked some interesting reactions in French drama. As the French play on the same theme, Moline's *L'Amour Anglais* discussed elopement and

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clandestine marriage, it seems pertinent to include here the
history of plays dealing with this aspect of English life,
rather than in the later section of this chapter more especially devoted to the influence of English customs on French drama.

Kelly's play was an excellent example of sentimental comedy; "another of the grave sentimental plays called a comedy" as Benjamin Victor said¹ "which ought to be the Province and Duty of the Tragic Muse. Surely the Comic Lady should ridicule the Foibles of Mankind, and make us laugh at their pleasant situation." The success of The False Delicacy in England was one reason for Madame Riccoboni's translation of it, and Victor's comment partly explains its hold on Moline's imagination. Further evidence of its attractive qualities is provided by Marsollier's rendering of it in 1776, which was put on the stage, without success². Bachaumont comments on a musical play, Théodore, by the same author, in a way which enables us to see that Moline was not original in his use of Kelly's play, and that an English setting seemed particularly appropriate to this story³: "Il s'agit d'une fille que son père veut marier malgré elle, en sorte qu'elle prend

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³ p.325, le 29 avril 1785, Vol.XXIX, Bachaumont, op.cit.
le parti violent de se laisser enlever par celui qu'elle aime; ... le père pour ramener sa fille, lui donne une somme considérable, afin qu'elle ne soit pas à la merci de son ravisseur; ... le gendre adopté par le père, voyant qu'il porte le trouble dans cette famille le dégage de sa parole et intercède lui-même en faveur de l'amant favorisé; [ce sont] les trois moyens de la pièce et ils en constituent l'intrigue. Le premier est adroit, le second trop romanesque si l'auteur n'eût point mis la scène en Angleterre, théâtre plus vraisemblable de ces grands mouvements; le troisième déjà employé et malheureusement trop prévu."

Moline presented _L'Amour Anglais_ in 1788, at the Théâtre du Palais-Royal which was then beginning to rival the two old-established theatres of Paris with serious plays and well-known actors. It met with a reception that flattered him. He acknowledged his debt to Madame Riccoboni in the Preface¹, and confessed his predilection for Kelly's play. He had copied one scene, he said, and worked certain situations into his own plot. As a matter of fact, he had neglected the complicated intrigue of the main plot, where Kelly attempted to pour scorn on the excess of fine feeling², but had taken over

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(2) This is also shown by the title of the play. See also, Genest, Some Account... of the English Stage, Vol.V, p.163, and the Prologue, where the play is considered "quite a sermon".
the greater part of Kelly's secondary action, with its more sentimental tone and less commonplace characters. Moline's characters all came from The False Delicacy, and he changed their names, to give an air of greater originality to his work. He also tried to make his version more acceptable in France, by turning most of them into people of quality, thus following the tradition of polite comedy.

The sub-plot in Kelly's play told the story of Sir Harry Newbury's offer to marry Theodora, which her father, Colonel Rivers, refused, because he had already arranged a match for her with Mr Sidney, and did not know that Theodora really loved Sir Harry. Her silence on this point was explained by her knowledge of the Colonel's obstinacy - once Sir Harry had been refused, nothing would make her father change his mind. The affair was complicated by the fact that Mr Sidney had fallen in love with Miss Marchmont, Theodora's friend. He was too noble to declare his feelings, as he thought she loved somebody else. Sir Harry then tried to solve the difficulty by enlisting his friend Cecil's help in planning to elope with Theodora. He persuaded her to come away with him, but Colonel Rivers overheard the conversation, so he met his daughter at the time fixed for the elopement, and spoke to her with such feeling and generosity that she refused to accompany Sir Harry. Meanwhile, Mr Sidney, discovering that Theodora loved Sir Harry, very properly
refused to marry her. Mrs Harley, who was a friend of Theodora and Miss Marchmont, united with Cecil, Sir Harry's friend, in persuading Mr Sidney to declare his love to Miss Marchmont: then they worked on Colonel Rivers' real affection for his daughter to make him consent to her marriage with Sir Harry: this concluded the action.

Moline's story is similar in outline. In detail, however, he altered it by suppressing certain particulars which seemed to him in bad taste, and by adding a few scenes that emphasised the delicacy and noble motives of his characters. Thus it is the maid Betsi, in L'Amour Anglais, and not Henriette, the daughter, who deceives the Colonel as to the true state of the girl's affections when Sidney is proposed as a husband for her. Then at the beginning of Moline's action, Sidney refuses to be engaged to Henriette, because he loves Cécile. The only obstacle between Sidney and Cécile is his timidity, and the fear of being refused, which allowed Moline to reproduce Kelly's semi-humorous tone in the love-scenes between them. Moline makes Henriette's lover, Lord Rivers, half-warn the Colonel that he would elope with her, and the Colonel replies that he will 'take precautions'; so the affair is more above-board in the French version. The Colonel hears about it from the servants, whom he has set to watch Henriette, and not by

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(1) Act I, sc.vii, L'Amour Anglais.
(2) Act I, sc. ix; Act II also sc.ix. ibid.
eavesdropping. Moline made his two young lovers fight a duel, because he felt this was more pleasing than the duel between Sir Harry and his friend Cecil; and lastly, he gave much more scope to Mrs Harley in her moral suasion of the Colonel: she argued the wickedness of forcing a daughter's inclinations in detail, before he could be persuaded to agree to the wedding of Henriette and Lord Rivers.

Then, in the handling of the characters, Moline toned down the quick temper and obstinacy of the Colonel; he made Lord Rivers and Sidney very conventional lovers and made no use of Kelly's indication that Sir Harry was a fop; Mrs Harley was less sprightly in the French version, and was only introduced to bring about a happy conclusion of the intrigue, and to speak the moral at the end. Henriette and Cécile were not to be distinguished from other young women of delicate feeling. Even the maid Betsi, was a politer copy of the Sally in The False Delicacy.

Moline made one constructive change in the character of Belton, the counterpart of Kelly's Cecil. The differences in this personage stand out clearly from a comparison of Kelly's Act III, scene ii, and Moline's Act II, scene x, where he confesses his love for his ward. The English play shows an eccentric, unfashionable, and yet sentimental man, who has a very strong contempt for social prejudice, whether it concerns wigs
or elopements. Belton seems to be a descendant of Freeport in \textit{L'Écossaise}, or Mowbray in \textit{La Jeune Indienne}; a very kind, blunt, sincere, and tactless man, with an extremely strong sense of justice, which appears in his view of the right to elope.

The French writer pointed a different moral with his tale. There was a passing reference to the 'false delicacy' shown in the wooing of Sidney and Cécile; but the lesson that Moline wanted to impress was the injustice of parental control over children's marriages, and the right of elopement.

This doctrine came directly from the English play, because he followed the very words of Kelly in the scenes where Lord Rivers made his offer of marriage\(^1\), where he asks Belton's help in arranging the elopement and smoothing things over afterwards\(^2\), and where the Colonel confronts his daughter on the point of eloping with her lover\(^3\).

The additional points which Moline made in his argument for the right to disobey parental control in marriage are extremely interesting because they quote English usage as a precedent, and as a justification. Moline here reflects the fashion for proclaiming the superiority of English law and

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custom, which was prevalent in France just before the Revolution.

He placed the praise of English marriage-laws into the mouth of Belton, who said: "Toute fille a chez nous le droit incontestable de se rendre malheureuse avec qui il lui plaît. Ce droit lui est acquis par les constitutions anglaises. Un enlèvement, qui est un crime en France, n'est ici qu'un événement ordinaire. Aussi beaucoup de fripons en profitent, en séduisant nos héritières, et en s'appropriant leurs dots. Mais la circonstance actuelle est différente. Tu es aimé de la fille, tu abandonnes la fortune du père, il n'y a pas le petit mot à dire."

The proclamation of freedom to marry in England without the parents' consent was founded on fact. The Gentleman's Magazine for 1765 printed a discussion on the revision of the law of 1754 against clandestine marriages. The new law ruled that "every such irregular marriage shall be good and valid to all intents and purposes, but that the minister performing such marriage shall be guilty of felony".

In 1768, the same periodical gave an account of a new act, whereby, under certain conditions, "if the consent of guardians or mother be unreasonably withheld, the parties may apply to the Lord Chancellor, but if the father withhold his consent,

there is no remedy, and no appeal.\textsuperscript{1} There was a third possibility of marrying in spite of the family authority in England, and that was a ceremony at Gretna Green. The validity of such marriages was confirmed by a case, tried at the Court of Arches, in 1767\textsuperscript{2}.

The very real dangers of elopement and the "clandestine Addresses of Fortune Hunters" were pointed out by Richardson in the \textit{Letters to and from Particular Friends}\textsuperscript{3}, which were meant to be a serious guide of conduct. The \textit{Gentleman's Magazine}, in August 1765, gives a case in point\textsuperscript{4}: "A young Lady of immense Fortune has lately eloped with her Father's French valet. They have taken the rout of Scotland, and, it is hoped, the lady is the same, who having discovered some indiscretions in her Seducer, very prudently resolved to put an end to their connection, and accordingly found means to secret herself till her friends came to her delivery."

This fact was probably best known to the French public through the pages of \textit{Clarissa}. Richardson would never have allowed "the divine lady" to elope, had there been no possibility of a marriage. It was still more vividly shown in \textit{Sir Charles Grandison}, where the English novelist described Sir Hargreave Pollexfen's preparations for a forced marriage

\begin{itemize}
\item[(1)] p.44, \textit{Gentleman's Magazine} for August 1768.
\item[(2)] p.93. \textit{Ibid.} Feb. 1767.
\item[(3)] see p.19, \textit{Richardson}, Austin Dobson, London, 1902.
\item[(4)] p.394, \textit{Gentleman's Magazine}, Aug. 1765.
\end{itemize}
with Miss Harriet Byron, and drew a terrifying portrait of one of the hedge-persons who conducted such ceremonies.

The laws in France were very severe in their punishment of secret marriages\(^1\). In spite of this, such unions were not unknown. Fontenelle's letters allude to the custom\(^2\); Diderot had to keep his marriage from his father's knowledge for a long time; there was a church in Paris, Saint Pierre aux Boeufs, where weddings of this kind were usually performed\(^3\). Later in the century, the story of Pigault-Lebrun's life showed what legal power a father had to interfere with his son's choice of a wife. Charles Pigault was twice imprisoned by "Lettres de cachet", for attempting to elope; and when he married an artisan's daughter, his father was so angry that he induced the Mayor of Calais to make out a certificate of Charles' death, in 1787, so as to cut him off from the hope of an inheritance. Charles went to law about this false statement of his death, in 1789, but he lost the case. He wrote his play, Charles et Caroline about these events in his

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(1) pp.108 ff, t.X, L'Encyclopédie: (1765) article Mariage, by Jaucourt and Diderot. This gives an account of the penalties imposed on the persons who contracted secret or clandestine marriages, or who tried to elope.

(2) p.517, Vol.I, Oeuvres de Fontenelle, (ed. Paris 1761). Lettre à Mademoiselle d'Her... "Sans mentir, ma chère Parente, je vous tiens trop heureuse dans votre petit mariage clandestin... où, avec toute votre vertu... vous ne laissez pas... de rassembler les avantages de la vertu et du libertinage. It appears from later letters that this marriage did not take place in secret.

life; and it brought him some compensation for the loss of his father's money, while the Revolution made it possible for the certificate of his death to be annulled.

The theme of clandestine marriage, however, was not a favourite with French dramatists. The censorship was strict, and it was not until just before the Revolution that they dared to speak out on the subject.

A secret union was mentioned in Favart's *L'Anglois à Bordeaux*, in 1763. The quotation given below sufficiently indicates the author's opinion of English liberty in this matter. In *L'Anglois à Bordeaux*, Mylord Brumton had planned to marry his daughter Clarice to his friend the rich merchant Sudmer. She loved Dorimon, the young French marquis in whose house they had been prisoners of war, and confessed her affection for him to her father; but she made up her mind to obey her father's wish, and explained her reasons for doing so as follows:

(1) see the Preface to *Charles et Caroline*, (played in 1790) by Pigault-Lebrun. (tome IX, Oeuvres Complètes de Pigault-Lebrun. Paris 1823).
(2) Garrick and Colman's play, *The Clandestine Marriage* was twice translated, once in 1768 (Amst.) by Madame Riccoboni, (successfully played), and by Le Monnier in 1778, but it was a purely comic treatment of the theme, and thus cannot be considered as a serious reflection of English custom and of English opinion in this matter.
(3) *L'Anglois à Bordeaux*, comédie en un acte et en vers libres, de C.S. Favart, (played at the Théâtre Italien, March 14, 1763) (ed. Paris 1763.)
(4) scene xviii, ibid.
Mylord: À mes desseins vous verrois-je contraire?

Clarice: Non, je veux me soumettre à votre volonté; En Angleterre, un coeur n'est point esclave; Le pouvoir paternel est chez nous limité, Mais ne soupconnez jamais que je le brave. Périsse cette liberté Qui des Parens détruit l'Autorité, Ah! je le sens, un Père est toujours Père.... En vain la Liberté veut élever sa voix, Et dans nos coeurs exciter le murmure, La Loi nous Émancipe, et jamais la Nature."

Two years later, Jaucourt and Diderot in their article on marriage in the *Encyclopédie* observed a similar discretion in their account of the English practice of tolerating clandestine marriages, although they were inclined to defend the custom, on economical grounds. In 1767 Beaumarchais' *Eugénie* turned on the story of a secret marriage; but the author's theme was the misery and danger that accompanied such unions. He repeated Richardson's warnings, and in no way excused Clarendon for deceiving Eugénie and her family.

By the end of the century, however, public opinion, as reflected in the plays of the time, had found an excuse, and even a strong defence on moral grounds, for going against parental authority. They asserted the contrary of Favart's argument. Nature commanded freedom of choice in marriage, but the law forbade such liberty: so the law should be disregarded,

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(1) pp.103 ff, t.X, *Encyclopédie*, (1765): their argument was that clandestine marriages tended to equalize incomes, and to break down the barriers between the different classes. It was very carefully worded, so as to avoid offending the Censor.
for morality consisted in obedience to the commands of Nature. It was Rousseau who had made these doctrines popular, and he inspired the work of French dramatists who dealt with the topics of clandestine marriage and elopement in the later years of the century.

One of the first of these writers was Aude, who wrote *L'Héloïse Anglaise*.¹ It was published in 1778, and it dramatized the story of Julie and Saint Preux. Aude introduced a secret marriage between the lovers, and won over the heroine's father to a belief in the right of "natural" passion to defy the law. The instrument of this conversion was an Englishman, Lord d'Angister, who was copied from Rousseau's Bomston. In this way Aude thought he would be better able to show the consequences of frustrating young people's wishes in the matter of their marriage. He enumerated the evils of parental control as follows²:

D'Angister: "Le père qui s'oppose au penchant vertueux
Suit une loi funeste, illégitime, et dure....
De là, dans les maisons, le scandale, la guerre,
Les empoisonnemens, les meurtres, les crimes."

Aude placed the whole play in an English setting, probably because he realized that the foreign atmosphere was more

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(1) J. Aude, *L'Héloïse Anglaise*, drame en 3 actes et en vers; it was played at Versailles, on March 24th, 1778; (ed. Paris 1783). It was re-written as *Saint-preux et Julie d'Étanges* in 1787, but not printed. It was acted at the Théâtre Italien in 1787 under its new name.

(2) Act II, sc.v, ibid.
suitable to his strong protest against the laws of marriage. The characters were, however, taken direct from Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, while the moral of the play was a repetition of Rousseau's defence of the unconventional love-affair between Julie and Saint-Preux. The marriage was brought into the play, because the dramatists of the time dared not mention the subject of love without marriage; so that the secret wedding cannot be ascribed to the influence of English ideas on the author: the only visible effect of such ideas is the placing of the story in England.

Therefore the interest in a rebellion against the established laws of marriage in France was enhanced by a background of English life, since the toleration of a free choice is England was well-known. It was, however, in the doctrines of Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists that the revolt began; English ideas were appropriated in order to justify it.

Mercier next undertook the defence of young people's right to obey their natural inclinations in love. He made it the theme of *Zoé*¹ and of *Les Tombeaux de Véronne*², which were both published in 1782. *Zoé* was the story of an elopement, and of a very angry father's eventual recognition that he ought to condone the offence against his authority. Mercier's

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(1) *Zoé*, drame en trois actes et en prose de M. Mercier, Neufchâtel 1782.
(2) *Les Tombeaux de Véronne*, drame en 5 actes et en prose, de M. Mercier (Neufchâtel 1782).
ideas were expressed in a style which earned him the epithet "le singe de Rousseau". He made the young lover, Franval, say¹: "Un crime? ... je ne saif ce que les loix ont écrit, mais les loix des hommes sont loin de nous; elles n'ont pu deviner ce qui s'est passé entre nos âmes, ce que notre bouche a répété, ce que nos coeurs ont senti. Que le monde entier, m'accuse, me proscrive, me condamne - il est là un sentiment plus fort qui m'empêche de me croire criminel."

In the next play, he borrowed from Shakespeare, whom he regarded as the poet of freedom and nature, and made use of Romeo and Juliet to prove the same point. To conform with his theory of drama, Mercier changed the ending of the play. The lovers were reconciled to their families, and the Montagues and Capulets, who had gathered to mourn over the supposed death of Juliet, were made to realize that love had rights superior to those of parental authority. In Les Tombeaux de Vérone Mercier gave the part of Father Laurence to a character of his own creation, Benvoglio, who acted as a mouthpiece for the author's theory of marriage². No doubt the cumulative effect of Richardson's attitude to secret marriages in Clarissa and Grandison, of Saint-Lambert's very popular tale of a successful union of this kind in

(1) Zoé, op.cit. Act I, sc. i. (V. also Act I, sc.iii.)
(2) Les Tombeaux de Vérone, op.cit. Act II, sc.vii:

Benvoglio: "Vous vous êtes trouvés par mes soins en présence des autorités; je ne craignais ni les reproches ni l'autorité de votre père. Roméo et Juliette s'aiment, il leur appartient d'être heureux."
Sara Th***1, and of his own peculiar conception of Shakespeare, guided Mercier’s mind towards transforming Romeo and Juliet into an argument for free choice in marriage. This work, then, supports the theory that French writers turned to England for material to give substance to their contentions.

If Moline’s Amour Anglais is considered in the light of this suggestion, it appears that the author developed more fully all the indications of revolt against a father’s authority which he found in Kelly’s play, because he respected England as the home of social and political liberty. This is to be seen by comparing the following speeches from the two plays2

(1) Sara Th *** was first published in the Gazette Littéraire for September 1762, and ran through many subsequent editions. The story was about a lady of quality who married one of her father’s servants, gave out that she was dead, and went to live in Scotland, on a farm, enjoying the beauties of nature and the pleasures of sentiment. Several plays were written on this theme, but none of them discussed the rights of choice in marriage. Grimm said that the story was founded on a well-known event in English life.

(2) cf. the similar arguments of Mrs Harley, Act III, sc.xv, in Moline, which are not anywhere in Kelly.
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<td>Act II, sc.i, p.23.</td>
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Cecil: Well, well, we must make the best of a bad market - her father has no right to force her inclinations - 'tis equally cruel and unjust: therefore you may depend upon my utmost endeavours not only to assist you in carrying her off, but in appeasing all family resentments.

Belton: Le père d'Henriette n'a pas le droit de contraindre son inclination, la donner à un homme qu'elle n'aime pas, c'est exercer un pouvoir despotique et une injuste tyrannie. Dans un Pays libre, c'est un devoir de s'opposer à un abus semblable. Si Henriette consent à te donner sa foi, si elle veut te suivre, je favoriserai sa fuite de tout mon pouvoir.

The influence of English custom on the theme of clandestine marriages in French drama depended upon the general attitude towards England when the various plays appeared. Thus *Eugénie* reproduced Richardson's warning against such unions, because his novels were in high favour at the time; Moline defended elopements, because in his day English freedom was much envied in France. None of the French plays tried to impose the English view upon the public; they only used it to reinforce and to defend their own opinions on the duties of parents and children in this matter.
III. French plays founded on "The School for Scandal", first translated by Madame de Vasse.

Before entering upon the discussion of the influence of suicide in England on French drama, there is still one collection of comedies translated from the English whose effect in introducing Sheridan to France must be examined. This was the twelve-volume Théâtre Anglais published by Madame de Vasse in 1784-5. The School for Scandal appeared in the eleventh volume of the series. Madame de Vasse's work was supplemented by other translations, and by Chéron de la Bruyère's Homme à Sentiments, before 1790.

The first sign of interest in Sheridan's play, after Madame de Vasse's publication, was a new version, by an unknown hand, which was put on the stage at Geneva, without success.

(1) Madame de Vasse, Théâtre Anglois, Paris 1784-85.
(2) L'Homme à Sentiments, comédie en 5 a. et en vers, par M. Chéron de la Bruyère, (played March 10, 1789, at the Théâtre Français) (Paris 1817). Bunel Delille in the Preface to L'École du Scandale (see below) mentions a play, which was produced by the "petits comédiens de M. le Comte de Beaujolais, in 1788, that made use of the auction and the screen scenes in Sheridan's play. It was a very light comedy entitled Les Neveux, and he did not name the author. (Preface, L'École du Scandale, Bunel Delille, ed. Lond. 1789.)
(3) L'École du Scandale, comédie en 5 a. p. traduite en français. Genève 1788. Bunel Delille mentions that this was unsuccessful when it was played at Geneva. (Preface, ibid.)
The author of this work, which was printed at Geneva in 1788, stated in the preface that the triumph of Sheridan's play in England had encouraged him to present it in French, and to put it on the stage unaltered, although he realised that it needed a good deal of modification before it could win popular favour in France.

Next came, in 1789, the first of Chéron de la Bruyère's adaptations of *The School for Scandal*, which he called *L'Homme à Sentiments*. He was a nephew of the Abbé Morellet and had shown the family interest in English letters, by publishing a translation of Addison's *Cato* as well as his imitation of Sheridan, in 1789.

The play was a failure in 1789; it was put on the stage again in 1800, in its original form, and later cut down to three acts, with a new title, *Valsain et Florville*. Finally, Chéron de la Bruyère brought it out in 1805 as *L'Homme à Sentiments ou le Tartuffe de Moeurs*. It was reprinted from this version in 1817.

According to M. Monglond, the difference between the play as it was first written, and the final form, lies mostly in the language used by Valsain, the counterpart of Joseph Surface. In 1789 the public was shocked to hear the diction of fashionable

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sentiment used by a villain in his attempt to seduce a friend's wife. Their enthusiasm for Rousseau could not bear the implication of hypocrisy attached to his doctrines in this play.

A comparison of Valsain and Florville, with the 1817 edition of L'Homme À Sentiments bears out this view, for there is no change in the main lines of Chéron de la Bruyère's adaptation of The School for Scandal, and the characters are treated exactly alike in both versions.

As the difference between the editions of 1789 and 1817 concerns the author's original contribution to his version of Sheridan, rather than his use of the material provided by the English writer, it is safe to proceed to further reasoning about the influence of The School for Scandal on the French play, from the 1817 edition.

Chéron de la Bruyère began by changing the names of all his characters, as usual in French adaptations of foreign plays. He followed carefully the sequence of events in The School for Scandal, only omitting the "scandal society" scenes, which interfered with the unity of action.

The other modifications were intended to justify his title L'Homme À Sentiments ou le Tartufe de Moeurs. Florville, the man of true sentiment, was much less dissipated than Charles Surface. He lived in a poor apartment, because he

(1) because the first edition has not been available.
would not accept the services of his valet without paying for them⁴. The gay drinking scenes were not in the right spirit for a hero of serious comedy, so Chéron de la Bruyère cut them out. When Florville sold the portraits, it was at his uncle’s suggestion; Charles Surface’s irreverent remarks were softened down, and the uncle shed tears over Florville’s refusal to part with "the little Nabob". There was an important change in the screen episode. Florville first saw Gercour his guardian’s wife behind the screen, and to save his brother from discovery, he pretended to Monsieur Gercour that the lady concealed was an old mistress of his³, and led him away out of the room. In this way, Chéron de la Bruyère was enabled to show the nobility of the scapegrace, and to preserve the dignity of the injured husband, in the style proper to French serious comedy. Similarly, Madame Gercour was innocent of any desire to listen to the hypocrite Valsain’s love-making, and was not shown quarrelling with her husband, because that might suggest the possibility of her guilt. The Joseph Surface of Sheridan became Valsain in L’Homme à Sentiments, and a new scene brought out an aspect of his double dealing not touched by Sheridan: he lent money to his brother at a high rate of interest, and, like Harpagon, hid himself behind an agent’s name⁴.

(1) Act III, sc.i, L’Homme à Sentiments, op.cit.
(2) Act III, sc.v, ibid.
(3) Act IV, sc. xi, ibid.
(4) Act V, sc.xiii, ibid.
The French audience was never given an occasion to smile at the weaknesses of an estimable character, and in spite of the example of both Molière and Sheridan, Chéron de la Bruyère dared not throw any suspicion on the wife, or put the husband into a foolish position, as Orgon was under the table, or Sir Peter when the screen fell. Grimm explains the reason very ably⁴: "Ce n'est pas sans doute que les moeurs de Paris soient plus purges que celles de Londres... mais des tableaux où l'on représenteroit nos moeurs telles qu'elles sont dans toute leur vérité, ne seraient pas admis sur notre scène....l'exemple d'une femme mariée, galante comme Lady Teazle, jalouse de son amant, prête à s'abandonner à lui dans un rendez-vous qu'elle a accepté dans sa maison, cet exemple serait un scandale révoltant au théâtre. À mesure que la société s'est corrompue, et surtout celle des femmes, qui en France influent beaucoup plus que partout ailleurs sur les moeurs publiques, on est devenu plus difficile, plus austère, sur tout ce qui tient à la décence théâtrale. Nos comédies ont été privées par là des effets les plus comiques, elles ont même été forcées de s'éloigner du but moral auquel elles doivent tendre... on peut douter si, de nos jours, on eût permis à Molière de présenter Tartuffe comme il l'a fait."²

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(1) pp.438 ff. t.XV (avril 1789) Correspondance Littéraire.
(2) Mercier and Restif de la Bretonne roundly called Molière immoral and indecent.
The handling of the characters in *Le Tartufe de Moeurs* likewise tends to turn gaiety into sentiment, and to blacken the villain by showing none of the other people's weaker points.

 Florville was gallant and generous, less reckless, and less impertinent than Charles Surface. Sudmer, the uncle from India had none of Sir Oliver's obstinate self-will, and made no sly gibes at marriage. Monsieur and Madame Gercour did not bicker, and Madame Gercour showed no trace of Lady Teazle's sparkling and malicious wit. Instead of realising the consequences of her visit to Valcour's room, Madame Gercour was surprised when he began to make love to her, reproved him with great dignity, and when he begged her to slip behind the screen, she answered with conscious innocence, "Pourquoi donc me cacher? - je ne suis point couvable"¹. Marton, who took the part of Rowley, had a touch of Dorine's shrewdness, suspected the hypocrite, and helped to unmask him, just as in the English play.

 Joseph Surface was transformed into a hypocrite of the type common in French society about 1789². Valsain repeated the expressions familiar to the enthusiastic followers of Rousseau, instead of Joseph's more cynical arguments in his

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(2) p.531, t.XIII, (mai 1784) *Correspondance Littéraire*. Grimm says, in his criticism of *La Confiance Dangereuse*, "Si le nombre d'hypocrites de religion a fort diminuée, celui des hypocrites de sensibilité et de vertu pourrait bien n'avoir jamais été plus considérable."
attempts to seduce Lady Teazle. When Valsain was persuading Madame Gercour to come to his room, he said 1:

"J'attends chez moi, ce soir, un vieillard respectable,
Bien malheureux, bien fait pour vous toucher, je croi,
D'une bonne action je voudrais avec moi
Vous faire partager...."

Instead of the reasoning which Lady Teazle summed up in her epigram "I must part with my virtue to preserve my reputation" 2, Valsain urged Madame Gercour to 'follow her nature' 3:

"Le ciel vous fit pour plaire, avec autant d'appas
Vous aurait-il fait don d'un coeur pour n'aimer pas?
Livrons à leurs remords ces femmes aveuglées
Qui toujours dans la foule et toujours isolées,
N'éprouvent que des goûts et jamais un sentiment,
Ont mille adorateurs, et n'ont pas un amant,
Pour nous, qu'un doux penchant l'entraîne l'un vers l'autre,
Que mon coeur soit toujours le confident du vôtre,
Que le plus tendre amour enchaine pour jamais
Deux coeurs que pour s'aimer la nature avait faits."

This French version of The School for Scandal was received with considerable favour after the Revolution, although Grimm remarked 4 that the audiences of 1789 seemed to prefer the scenes faithfully copied from Sheridan, to Chéron de la Bruyère's interpolations, and he thought that Le Tartuffe de Moeurs would have been far more amusing had it followed Sheridan more closely.

Grimm here links up this play with the new demand for gaiety on the stage, and with the natural desire for something

(1) Act II, sc.vi, L'Homme à Sentiments.
(2) Act II, sc.iii, The School for Scandal. (ed. Dublin 1781.)
(3) Act IV, sc.iv, L'Homme à Sentiments.
more healthy and more human than the sickly and insincere sentiment which had crept into the language and manners of society and the stage towards 1789.

Bunel Delille, the lawyer who translated Sheridan's play, and published it just after the production of *Le Tartuffe de Moeurs*, appreciated the worth of his material just as much as Grimm did.

Bunel Delille had spent some time in London, and there he had come into possession of the manuscript of the *School for Scandal*. Having obtained Sheridan's permission to translate it, he set to work at once. His rendering is accurate, and he made few changes in deference to the more timid taste of his readers, and he tried to find an equivalent for Sheridan's modish affectations of speech and allusions to particularly English customs by referring to similar French usages, or


(2) Bunel Delille refers in his Preface to the performance of *L'Homme à Sentiments* which had prevented the company of actors at the Théâtre Français from presenting his version of *The School for Scandal*; so he decided to publish it instead.

(3) see his rendering of the screen scenes; *L’École du Scandale*, op.cit, Act IV, sc.viii, sc. ix, sc. x, sc.xi. Almost his only omission is that of Lady Teazle's remark to Joseph "Your Prescription is, that I must part with my virtue to preserve my Reputation." (Act III, sc.iii, Sheridan, op.cit.)
by using some very fashionable catchword of the moment.

His preface exposes his very sincere desire to "transplant" the English work without injury. He declared that it was as witty and as charming as *Le Mariage de Figaro*, and that it ought to meet with as enthusiastic a reception on the stage, once the names had been changed into something more harmonious to French ears, and the scenes had been rearranged so as to knit up the action more closely.

He singled out for special praise features which prove his high opinion of its gaiety and its brilliant pictures of English life: - the scene where Charles and his friends toast their ladies, the sale of the portraits, and the "inimitable" discovery of Lady Teazle behind the screen. He expressed his opinion of these episodes, and of Charles Surface's character in terms which make it clear that the truth of Sheridan's presentation had forcibly struck him.

(1) e.g.

| Sheridan, Act V, sc. ii. and Bunel Delille, Act V, sc. xiii. op. cit. |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sir Oliver: ... here he comes walking as if nothing at all was the matter. |
| Sir Benjamin Backbite: Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery! |
| Sir Olivier: le voici qui vient vers nous comme si rien n'était. |
| Sir Benjamin: Hai, mon oncle, l'a-t-on magnétisé pour être guéri tout de suite? |

cf. also Act II, sc. i, in Sheridan, with Bunel, Act II, sc. i; Act II, sc. ii, Sheridan, and Bunel, Act II, scenes iii to vi.
Bunel Delille admired Sheridan's accurate representation of the folly and danger which accompany dissipation, hypocrisy, and scandalmongering, because he thought it particularly applicable to French society in 1789. The sub-title he gave to his translation; Les Moeurs du Jour, and the first title he chose for it, Le Tartufe Anglais, ou les Moeurs d'Aujourd'hui are most illuminating.

Sheridan's play had shown a close grasp of reality, a true comic spirit in certain scenes, and no lack of sentiment and moral reflections; all these points endowed it with an irresistible fascination for French critics and writers.

Steele, Kelly, and Murphy had contributed to the warmth of the welcome accorded to Sheridan's lively and touching scenes, by gradually introducing naive and amusing characters into sentimental comedy in France, although the greater part of this preparatory work was accomplished by Figaro and the 'atrocities' of "drame bourgeois".

In the few years that preceded the Revolution, French writers eagerly depicted English life in all its aspects, and imitated English writers because they were able to reflect this life in their work with a vivid precision. French writers would like to see a similar quality in their theatre; and this explains the toleration of a form of art which broke one of the fundamental laws of French comedy, the unity of tone.
This movement was only a passing phase, for the Revolution soon absorbed all the energy which might have initiated a really significant new experiment in French drama. Nevertheless, the signs of scattered attempts to write sentimental comedy in a new style, are sufficiently clear and numerous to warrant the foregoing description of them.
IV. French plays that dealt with suicide as a crime peculiar to the English nation.

The last group of plays to be examined here showed a transition from gravity to gaiety in their handling of the theme, which resembled the change in the treatment of sentimental tales on the stage.

The widespread belief that English people were commonly addicted to suicide, and that they were afflicted by a national malady known as "the spleen", which was one of the chief causes of this crime, found repeated expression in French plays. There seem to be two periods when interest in suicide ran high in French drama.

The first of these occurred about 1745. It coincided with the rising curiosity about English manners which Muralt, Prévost and Voltaire had stimulated by their references to the subject, some time before. Two plays were written, each dealing with the hero's intention to kill himself. The first to be published was Gresset's **Sidnei** in 1745\(^1\), and it was followed in 1751 by Destouches' **Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve**\(^2\).

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(1) **Sidnei. J.B. Gresset. Comédie en 3 a.v. (le 3 mai 1745, au Théâtre Français) ed. Oeuvres Complètes de Gresset, tome II, Paris 1824.**

(2) **Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve, comédie en 5 a.p. de M. Nericault Destouches. (Paris 1751.)** It was not played during the author's lifetime, but was produced in the provinces in 1775. J.Hankiss, (see p.211, P.N.Destouches l'Homme et l'Oeuvre, Debreczen 1918) fixes the date of its composition about 1745.
Neither of these can be called a "comédie larmoyante". They were written in the style of Molière, to correct folly by holding it up to ridicule. Gresset and Destouches had, however, chosen a very serious subject, and although they did not try to make the audience weep over the hero's projected suicide, they were forced to take a grave and philosophic view of his action. The comic element was relegated to the minor scenes, and brought out in the contrast between the gloomy humour of the hero and the sound common sense or the wit of the people who surrounded him. Further, as these plays were not tragedies, the crime was not allowed to take place, and the tale reached a fortunate conclusion. Yet it is remarkable that both Gresset and Destouches, like Addison in Cato, treated their theme in the Roman fashion, tempered with Christian horror of the deed; and their work did not foreshadow Rousseau's more "philosophic" idea of suicide as a sin against the social order.

Sidnei and Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve are to be briefly described here in order to define more exactly the difference between the attitude shown towards self-murder in French drama about 1745, and the later developments of the same theme about 1775.

Destouches and Gresset chose a topic which was already

familiar in 1745. Prévost's Cleveland had accustomed the public to the belief that the philosophic nature of Englishmen predisposed them to grow weary of life and entertain thoughts of suicide. In Le Pour et Contre for 1734 he examined the causes of this crime, which he again described as very prevalent in England, and mentioned English works on the subject, with examples of remarkable suicides in that country, and in 1744 Moreau de Brasey explained this as the result of the Englishman's excessive self-love.

Further, the famous monologue in Cato, and the discussion of suicide in Pamela were well-known to French readers by 1745. La Chaussée's comedy, founded on Richardson's novel, had demonstrated the possibility of introducing the topic into the less serious forms of drama. Gresset and Destouches were obeying a tendency well-marked in French thought, when they set forth their view of suicide in comedy. Gresset represented melancholy as a common ailment in England, and the long philosophic argument between Sidnei

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(1) e.g. pp.420 ff. Le Philosophe Anglois, ou histoire de Cleveland. (first published Amst. 1732) ed. Amst. et Paris 1783.
(2) No.LXVIII, Vol.IV, Le Pour et Contre, 1734. (op.cit.)
(3) p.iv, Avertissement, Moreau de Brasey, Le Guide de l'Angleterre, (Amst. 1744.)
(4) Acte IV, sc.iv, Paméla, Nivelle de la Chaussée (1743). op.cit.
(5) Sidnei, Act I, sc.viii, Act II, sc.i, Act III, sc.v. (last speech) op.cit.
and his friend Hamilton about suicide shows them both in the national character of "thinking men". The actual wording of their dispute is more like a scholastic exercise than an exposition of English views on self-murder. In Destouches' play, the shame and regret which overwhelmed Léandre when he thought he had ruined his father and lost Isabelle's love, drove him to contemplate suicide. There was no suggestion of the famous English distaste for life, but the author's introduction of such a project was undoubtedly inspired by his acquaintance with English manners.

Both plays treated suicide as the subject of serious moral reflections, and condemned it. Desfontaines blamed Gesset for bringing such an odious subject into comedy. Grimm was much less censorious in his criticism of Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve: "Il y a du moins dans cette pièce un fond, un sujet, un but, de très bonnes moeurs, et de beaux sentiments".

The second period of interest in this theme occurred about 1775. During the years that intervened between 1745 and 1775,

(1) Sidney, Act II, sc. ii and sc. vi.
(2) Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve (op.cit.) Act II, sc.ii, iii, iv: Act III, sc.i, iii.
(3) In 1748, Montesquieu once more repeated the theory that Englishmen were more likely to commit suicide for no particular reason than any other people. v. cap. xiii, livre XVI, Esprit des Lois, Montesquieu. (ed. Paris 1816.)
   Paris 1787.
suicide came to be considered less as a prerogative of the English nation, and more as a crime that was increasingly practised in France, while the influence of Rousseau, Diderot, and the Encyclopædists modified the opinions expressed on this subject in drama.

As early as 1757, the *Année Littéraire* warned its readers that this English habit was gaining ground in France\(^1\). The *Encyclopédie*, in the article on suicide by Diderot, published in 1765\(^2\), gave a long account of the legal history of the crime, with a cautiously veiled defence of it. To excuse the practice he quoted at length the arguments of Donne; and noted the fact that the English writer was preferred to the Deanship of St Paul's, after the publication of *Biothanatos*. The case against self-murder was supported by a reference to the doctrine of the Platonists and by a list of the punishments decreed by law for those who committed it. By 1770, it had become fashionable to love melancholy, to enjoy thoughts of death, and the contemplation of suicide. Rousseau had described a contemplative "matinée à l'angloise" with admiration in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The works of Ossian, Gray, and Young, were translated into French about this time, and fostered this

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\(^1\) p.68, tome VII, 1767, *L'Année Littéraire*: in an article describing Montbron's *Préservatif contre l'Anglomanie*.

habit of philosophic meditation on death. The evidences of
this new cast of thought in France about 1770, and its effect
on literature have been so thoroughly examined by recent
critics that there is no need to enlarge on this point

It was a sign of this meditative, even gloomy, temper
that the company of the Théâtre Français revived Sidney in
1770. Bachaumont feared that it might encourage suicide in
France. "Les comédiens français ont remis sur leur théâtre
le lundi 22 la pièce de "Sidney", comédie de Gresset, où
l'on sait que le suicide est soutenu par tout ce que la raison
et la philosophie peuvent produire de plus fort en sa faveur...
on a été surpris de voir repaîître sur la scène cette pièce
dans un temps où la manie de se défaire n'est que trop à la
mode."

Bachaumont's evidence as to the prevalence of suicide
about 1770 explains the fact of his reading an apology for the
crime into Gresset's play, as well as the general interest
shown in other works dealing with the subject. For the same
reason, Destouches' Le Jeune Homme à l'Épreuve, which had not
been acted during the author's lifetime, was taken on tour in

(1) see Bibliography, under, Joseph Texte, F. Baldensperger,
P. Van Tieghem, L. Reynaud.
(2) p.270, t.XIX. (1e 27 oct. 1770). Mémoires secrets. (op.
cit.) and further, p.235, Vol.IX, Correspondance Littéraire,
op.cit. (janvier 1771.)
the provinces by the company of the Théâtre des Italiens. The Nouveau Spectateur described its favourable reception at Tours in 1775. The same periodical gave a detailed account of Colman's comedy The Spleen, or Islington Spa, which was performed for the first time in London during that year. It was probably singled out as the subject of an article because it touched on a subject of general concern. Colman's farcical treatment of "the spleen" was not imitated in France.

Just about this time, a series of comedies that took up the question of suicide and spleen began to appear. They all verged on the sentimental, and some of them included an element of gay comedy.

The first of these was written by Gernevalde, in 1778. It appeared in Holland, and was called L'Homme Noir ou le Spleen. As it remained almost unknown until Maillé de Marencour revised it and produced it at Paris in 1783, it is more convenient to study it with the other plays which were brought out about that time.

In 1779 Aude turned the famous letter on suicide in La Nouvelle Héloïse, into a scene in his Héloïse Anglaise. Aude merely repeated Rousseau's words, and his play is only

(1) p.157, no.3, t.I, Le Nouveau Spectateur, 1776
(2) pp.363 ff, no.6, t.I, ibid.
(3) see pp.289 ff, Vol.I. Londres, Grosley. (ed. Lond. 1770.)
(4) L'Homme Noir ou le Spleen, comédie en 2 actes et en prose, de M. Gernevalde. (La Haye 1778.)
(5) Héloïse Anglaise, Act III, sc.ii, op.cit.
interesting as a sign of the real concern which the prevalence of suicide aroused. Mercier¹ and Bachaumont² both bore witness to the fact that more people died by their own hand in Paris every year. Mercier estimated that the number of suicides in that city was greater than in London, while Bachaumont said that the authorities, for prudence' sake, kept the true figures a secret.

The next play was Marsollier des Vivetieres' sentimental comedy, Le Vaporeux³. It aimed at showing the folly of a fashionable new malady, which was a French variant of the English spleen, as the following description shows⁴:

Gros René: "Va...vapeurs. Ah! qu'est ce-que c'est que ça, s'il vous plaît?"

Blainville: "C'est un mot qu'on est convenu d'employer sans être encore convenu de l'entendre. On a des vapeurs, on donne des vapeurs, on gagne des vapeurs: alors on ne se soucie de rien, on aime la solitude, on devient triste,

(1) Mercier, Le Tableau de Paris, (ed. Lond. 1781) p.27, Part I, p.44, Part II. Mercier wrote: Le nombre de suicides peut monter, année commune à cent cinquante personnes. La ville de Londres n'en fournit pas autant, quoique beaucoup plus peuplée... Cette comparaison nous dispense de toute autre réflexion.

(2) Bachaumont, Mémoires Secrets, Vol.XXII, le 27 avril 1783. "Les suicides continuent fréquemment. Les médecins et chirurgiens du Châtelet chargés de l'emploi de visiter les cédavres assurent qu'il n'y a pas de jour peut-être dans l'année où il n'arrive de ces sortes de malheurs, mais on n'en parle point par prudence."


(4) Act I, sc.i, ibid.
on est insupportable aux autres, et ce qu'il y a de pis, on l'est à soi-même."

Gros René: "Éh, mon Dieu, mon Dieu. Et comment donc que ça vient?"

Blainville: "De mille causes; le désœuvrement, l'opulence, les plaisirs trop tot goûtes, une légère contradiction, le plus souvent, des misères qu'on rougirait d'avouer. Voilà ce qui cause ce mal cruel, autrefois ignoré, nouvellement découvert, qui travaille toute l'Europe, occupe tous nos docteurs, et ne guérit le plus souvent que lorsqu'on est fatigué d'être malade."

Gros René: "Mais c'est donc comme une folie, ce que vous me dites là."

Marsollier's play turned on a situation very like that in Gresset's Sidnei. A young man, who had no real cause of unhappiness, contemplated suicide; and the friends who surrounded him tried in various ways to prevent him. Both plays ended with the young man's return to a more balanced view of life. A comparison of the characters and the action in Sidnei and Le Vaporeux brings out the difference in the attitude towards self-murder in 1745 and in 1782. "Saint-Phar" in Le Vaporeux, was young, rich, and married to a wife who loved him. His weariness of life was not justified by an unhappy love-affair, like Sidnei's; but it was described as a disease, which had
been aggravated by reading Young's Night Thoughts. Thus, "spleen" had become "les vapeurs", and was naturalised in France: although its English origin was not forgotten. The Gros René in Le Vaporeux, like Henri in Gresset's play, gave the "common sense" view of the problem; but Gros René's part in Le Vaporeux was sympathetic, rather than critical; in Henri's the critical faculty was preponderant: but in 1782 it was necessary to emphasise the virtues and the good feeling of such a character.

The differences between Blainville in Le Vaporeux and Hamilton in Sidney most clearly define the later view of suicide. Hamilton had argued against it, with the help of Christian precepts and the doctrines of ancient philosophers; and this reflected the influence of English works like Cato or Pamela on Gresset. Marsollier used the weapons furnished by Rousseau, in his attack on self-murder: and pointed out the social duty of remaining alive to look after a family or an estate, with the reward of self-satisfaction that came to all who fulfilled it. In the later play, the argument is no longer a rather academic discussion of a moral offence particularly connected with English life, but an attempt to cure the latest folly of French society.

The only direct reference to English influence in Le Vaporeux is that description of the effect of Les Nuits

(1) see Act I, sc.vii, Le Vaporeux (op.cit.)
d'Young in encouraging thoughts of suicide, in the first act. The same idea occurs in the revision of *L'Homme Noir, ou le Spleen*¹: but this was less sentimental than *Le Vaporeux*. Maillé de Marencoeur, an actor, had made some very slight alterations to Gernevalde's play of 1778, and produced it, as his own work, at the "Ambigu comique" in 1783. Although these changes were few, yet they indicated the great popularity of the optimistic belief in human goodness, and the passing of the vogue for "drame noirs". In order to estimate the value of Maillé de Marencoeur's work, we must first outline the story of *L'Homme Noir*.

An Englishman named Johnson had a fit of the spleen at a wayside inn in France, and decided to commit suicide. His melancholy had caused him to leave his wife and child, and travel in the hope of a cure: but as he could see no improvement, he summoned the landlord, gave directions for paying his debts, and having his copy of the *Night Thoughts* preserved in a golden casket, ordered supper, and pistols, and dismissed the astonished innkeeper. The legal consequences of allowing suicide to be committed in his house began to weigh upon the landlord, so he took counsel of a poor poet, who haunted the inn². They discovered that a lady who had just arrived was

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¹ *L'Homme Noir ou le Spleen*, de Maillé de Marencoeur; comédie en 2 a.p. représentée pour la première fois sur le théâtre de l'Ambigu Comique à Paris le 2 juin 1783. (ed.Paris 1783.)

Johnson's wife. The poet undertook to make Johnson give up the idea of suicide. This was to be accomplished by a narration of the Englishman's travels, and of his wife's arrival; disguised as the plot of the poet's latest play. The landlord persuaded Johnson to invite the poet to share his supper; and during the meal, the poet's descriptions of the forlorn plight of a deserted wife and child, and the truth of his reflections on the sin of suicide so struck Johnson that he consented to abandon his project. At this point, his wife was brought into the room, and the play ended with Johnson's determination to lead a happy, useful life.

Maillé de Marencour was inclined to treat the Englishman as a ridiculous character; the final scene of reconciliation to life was a concession to sentiment, and here the 1783 version differed from that of 1778, where Johnson let fall a hint that he might kill himself at some more convenient season. Maillé de Marencourt was afraid to suggest that an appeal to his hero's good feeling had no better effect. He also suppressed Gernevalde's satiric references to "drame bourgeois", for by 1783, such plays had ceased to agitate the critics.

Marsollier, Gernevalde and Maillé de Marencour tried to meet the demand for touching plays, and since 'gay' comedy was returning into fashion, they did their best to infuse some merriment even into the contemplation of self-murder.

(1) Act II, sc.vi. L'Homme Noir, op.cit.
The first point of interest in a general consideration of French plays dealing with gloom and suicide is the fact that they were all comedies. Playwrights had to face two difficulties. If a tragedy depended on the preparation for this crime, and its accomplishment, it would be condemned as "atrocious": and further, as immoral, for the author would find himself in conflict with religious authority. Again, it would be extremely difficult to represent the inner conflict which must form the real action of such a tragedy, for it necessarily concerns one person only. On the other hand, comedy made it possible to show the power of argument or feeling to avert suicide: an opportunity which was never neglected, in the plays we have examined.

It is also remarkable that English example was held responsible for the prevalence of that melancholy which leads to this crime. At first, it was taken as a distemper peculiar to the English. When it became obvious that French people showed similar signs of disease in the mind, this was ascribed to the influence of Young's Night Thoughts: for these poems

(1) Correspondance Littéraire, p.233, t.IX, op.cit. pp.496 ff. Le Nouveau Spectateur, t.I, 1776, op.cit; condemning Fenouillot de Falbeire for allowing Vilson and Lord Falkland to meet on Westminster Bridge with the intention of throwing themselves into the Thames, in Le Fabricant de Londres. The suicide in Beverley also aroused adverse comment; but no one objected to the conventional suicides in "imperial" tragedy.
stood as a symbol of all that was gloomy and pensive in the English character.

Further, a strange figure appeared in French drama; acquiring fresh characteristics as time went on. "Sidnei", "Léandre", and "Johnson" might have sat to Diderot for his portrait of a man suffering from spleen. Then Aude made the hero of L'Héloïse Anglaise an exact copy of Saint-Preux, reflecting Rousseau's influence on the type. Lastly, Marsollier gave a sketch of a young Frenchman who had fallen a victim to the affectation of morbid desires; a character drawn from real life. Although this innovation did not profoundly affect "comédie sérieuse", the appearance of "Sidnei" and "Saint-Phar" heralded the introduction of René and Adolphe into French writing; and so they gain importance; and establish a connection between the legend of suicide in England and the great dramatic experiment of the next century.

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(1) p.276, Lettre XLIX, (du 28 octobre 1760), Vol.I, Lettres de Diderot à Sophie Volland. (Paris 1930.) Diderot retailed "le père Hoop's" description of his state of mind: "Je sens depuis vingt ans un malaise général, plus ou moins fâcheux, je n'ai jamais la tête libre. Elle est quelquefois si lourde, que c'est comme un poids qui vous tire en devant, et qui vous entraînerait d'une fenêtre dans la rue, ou au fond d'une rivière, si l'on était sur le bord. J'ai des idées noires, de la tristesse et de l'ennui, je me trouve mal partout, je ne veux rien, je ne saurais vouloir.... la vie m'est en dégoût."
Conclusion.

The plays founded on English comedies, and those which revealed French opinion on the English liberty of choice in marriage, or on the propensity of Englishmen to commit suicide reveal the many-sided nature of English influence and its widespread diffusion.

The assimilation of English ideas into the French theatre was marked by independent thought. Collé diverted the aim of The King and the Miller of Mansfield to his own ends, by making it serve as a discreet satire on Louis XV's government.

Marsollier and La Chabeaussière came to a personal conclusion on the problem debated in The Way to Keep Him; their rakes and erring husbands were French characters who evolved in a setting furnished by the English comedy. Moline cited English legal authority for his plea that parents should consider the young people's feelings, in arranging a marriage, but the argument was his own. Kelly's play only lent him the illustration which drove it home to the spectators' hearts.

Favart, Aude and Diderot relied on English precedent to strengthen their statement of the case, while Mercier borrowed the story of Romeo and Juliet to expound Rousseau's doctrine that "natural" passion had the right to overrule legal and parental authority. Sheridan's play became an instrument for
the correction of a vice fashionable in French society; and
the comedies dealing with the problem of suicide aimed at
checking the spread of such a crime in France.

English ideas were thus shaped to fit the special purposes
of French dramatists; and this again was almost always guided
by contemporary opinion, which might be expressed in novels,
periodicals, or books that set out to describe English life. ^1
With the exception of Collé and Sedaine, these men were not
gifted writers, so it is not surprising to discover that their
borrowing from English sources was unintelligent.

They accepted the material offered in well-known trans-
lations of English works, because, for the most part, they were
unable to make use of it at first hand. They sought in their
models some forceful quality which would immediately command
public attention. This might be affirmed of Voltaire or of
Saurin, but men like La Chabeaussière or Bunel Delille showed
no sign of the deeper purpose which animated plays like Nanine
and Le Joueur. The imitators of Kelly, Murphy, and Sheridan
had none of that power of creative adaptation possessed by
Voltaire, Collé, Sedaine, or even Mercier.

There is further proof, in La Confiance Dangereuse, Le
Vaporeux, and in L'Homme Noir, of that tendency to combine
seriousness and mirth which we have observed as a reaction from

(1) e.g. Cleveland, Le Pour et Contre, La Nouvelle Héloise,
Grosley, Londres.
the over-emphatic appeal to sympathy in "drame bourgeois" and in "comédie sérieuse".

Finally, the morbid melancholy of the hero in those plays touching suicide or clandestine marriage, linked them with Romantic drama. This characteristic was attributed to extreme sensibility, and therefore to a virtuous nature, or to the stress of rebellion against law and order. In the eighteenth-century plays, like Zoé or Le Vaporeux, the conflict came to an end either with the hero's return to normal behaviour, or with a compromise between the rebel and the authority which he defied. This marked the optimism which filled pre-Revolution writing, and contrasted sharply with the Romantic spirit.
PART III.
Part III.

Chapter IX.

The Influence of English Ideas on the Technique of French Drama.

Several innovations were introduced into the conventions of form in French drama during the eighteenth century. The first change was made by the writers who imitated Racine in tragedy. Conscious of the fact that their work was inferior to his in artistic value, they hoped that a new freedom from restraint in the writing of their plays would bring them nearer his eminent perfection of form, and so find favour with the public.

The technique of "comédie larmoyante" was not affected to any appreciable degree by English ideas. The authors of imperial tragedy and of domestic plays paid more attention to questions of form. Keen discussions took place over the use of the unities, the comparative difficulty of writing tragedy, and "drame bourgeois", whether prose dialogue was compatible with the dignity of tragedy or not, and the propriety of monologues and asides on the stage.

Critics and playwrights alike tended to relax or to ignore the rules which had been accepted by the great writers of the
previous century. As a more precise knowledge of English dramatic art spread in France, its freedom from arbitrary rules of composition suggested a method of renewing the popularity of heroic tragedy, and marked out a path which was not infrequently followed.

Throughout the century there was an obstinate belief that English plays were coarse and ill-arranged in comparison with the French. Consequently, English example only affected the observance of the three unities, and the argument over the use of prose in serious dramatic writing.

Further, Garrick's connection with French letters concurred with a general interest in the art of acting to produce a series of pamphlets which outlined the principles governing the representation of a play on the stage. Writers like Rémond de Sainte-Albine, actors like d'Hannetaire and Sticotti, amateurs of the theatre like the Prince de Ligne, and critics like Grimm and Diderot shared in the dispute, which heralded a revolution in French acting.

Three questions thus arise for examination: the degree of English influence on the unities in French drama, its effect on critical opinion regarding the use of prose, and its contribution to the new ideal in the arts of speech and movement on the stage.

We shall consider the unities first. Traditional practice had a very strong hold on this point. Although
Saint Évremond had suggested, as early as 1705, that a good play might be written, in defiance of the unities, yet, at the end of the century, a strong body of opinion still held the observance of this rule to be a fundamental principle of drama. Saint Évremond's praise of English comedy fore-shadowed the new "busy" action which French dramatists introduced in imitation of the English style.

Twenty-five years later, La Motte proposed that the custom of relating tragic events should be abandoned in favour of their actual representation on the stage. He quoted English practice to support this argument. He also advocated the use of a double plot, for which he claimed the "unity of interest", but without reference to English tragedy. He then attacked the rules that the action of a play should be completed within twenty-four hours, and in one place, because the restrictions they imposed hampered the movement of an elaborate plot.

Despite his own timidity, La Motte definitely initiated a new method in the composition of tragedy, as his words to

(3) pp. 118-119, Discours à l'occasion de la tragédie de Regulus, Vol.I, Oeuvres de Théâtre de M. de la Motte. (Paris 1730.)
(4) p.38 ibid. Discours à l'occasion des Macchabées.
(5) p.39 ibid.
Voltaire showed: "Je n'ai fait que quatre tragédies, et j'ose me vanter, puisqu'il le faut, d'y avoir été au moins aussi fidèle aux unités que nos plus grands maîtres... Ce n'est donc pas pour moi que je prétends élargir la carrière, c'est pour nos successeurs, c'est pour vous-même, Monsieur, si vous avez le courage."

These early comparisons of the freedom of English comedy or tragedy with the limitation of time, space, and action in French plays of the same kind marked the first step towards invoking English authority for a less stringent regulation on these points.

Soon after the publication of La Motte's Discours, Voltaire pronounced judgment upon the English practice of permitting a complicated plot in tragedy. Whilst maintaining his position as the interpreter of English ideas in France, he would only admit of this novelty in so far as it involved no infringement of the unités.

Gradually, it was realised that the standards of French criticism could not be applied to English drama. In 1736 Prévost wrote of Steele's Conscious Lovers - "L'unité de lieu paroit blessée dans la plupart des scènes, mais le raisonnement des Anglais en faveur de cet usage de leur Théâtre est-il destitué de force et de vraisemblance? Ils conviennent

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(3) p.322, no. CXVIII, Vol. 8, Le Pour et Contre 1736. op.cit.
que c'est une chose monstrueuse de faire passer en un moment l'œil du spectateur d'une partie du Monde à l'autre, .... mais comme l'unique fondement de cette Règle est en l'égard raisonnable qu'on doit toujours à la vraisemblance, ils prétendent qu'elle n'est pas moins blessée par les bornes trop étroites auxquelles nos Auteurs se réduisent, car la raison ne permet pas de supposer que neuf ou dix personnages qui sont en action pendant l'espace de vingt-quatre heures... se rencontrent.... toujours au même endroit." La Place likewise pointed out, in 1746, that the English were dramatizing episodes from history, and aimed at a more exact representation of life than the rules "of Aristotle" allowed1.

A year later, Hénault published François II. He endeavoured to create a form of drama akin to the English tragedies which La Place had described and translated, and he expressly declared that he was imitating Shakespeare. He wished to paint a true picture of historical events, so he could not use the single meeting place of tragic convention, and this involved a breach of the unity of time as well. Hénault was the first to abandon subservience to these rules, and to defend his action by quoting English authority2.

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1) p.xxvij, Vol.I, Discours sur le Théâtre Anglois. Théâtre Anglois de M. de la Place. (Londres 1746.)
2) Préface, François II, roi de France, Nouveau Théâtre Français, C.J.F. Hénault. (Paris 1747.) (The title indicates the author's debt to La Place.)
About the same time, Desfontaines delivered a startling judgment upon this point. "Si les Anglois", he said\(^1\), "se contenteroient de violer l'unité de lieu et celle du temps avec quelque modération, je ne crois pas qu'on eût beaucoup de droit de les en blâmer. J'aime assez leur méthode de changer de décoration entre les actes; mais de le faire au milieu des actes c'est un peu trop."

Although these efforts had been made to change the strict application of the rules of the unities into a more lenient interpretation of their principles, Diderot, like Voltaire, regarded them as an essential point of dramatic composition, under existing conditions in the French playhouses, as these were small, and spectators were still permitted to sit on the stage in 1758, when he wrote the *Fils Naturel*. Diderot expressed his opinion on the unities very definitely: "Les lois des trois unités sont difficiles à observer, mais elles sont sensées... Je serais fâché d'avoir pris quelque licence contraire à ces principes généraux de l'unité de temps, et de l'unité d'action, et je pense qu'on ne peut être trop sévère sur l'unité de lieu."\(^2\) Thus Diderot did not act as a link between English freedom and French rebellion against the unities in "drame", although again, like Voltaire, he introduced some of the bustling action and the multiplicity

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of incidents which characterised English plays into his own work. His innovations were subject, however, to the artistic restraint imposed by the laws that governed the composition of French drama.

The later writers of "drame" and the critics who discussed it did not all follow Diderot in accepting the unities. Some of them preferred to take up the theory of La Motte, and find examples to copy in English drama, as La Place and Hénault had done. The Encyclopédie differed from Diderot on this question; and Marmontel, in 1754\(^1\), thought that the unity of place hampered the dramatist needlessly. Those French writers who adapted English plays, and the more daring critics, such as Mercier, were ready to break with custom and authority over the unities, as we shall see later.

The 1762 version of Collé's *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV* had a double plot: the first being the quarrel between Henri IV and Sully, and the second - which begins only in Act II - being the story of Richard, Cateau, Michau, and the King. Both were intended to enhance the interest in the central figure, by showing him in very different surroundings. The unity of place is also broken in this play; but Collé had stated that this was permissible as early as 1758\(^2\), so

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\(^1\) pp.680 ff. article Déclamation, t.IV, Encyclopédie, Paris 1754, and the same argument is repeated in t.IV. (Supplément,) article Unités (1777) by Marmontel.

that he was ready to copy Dodsley's changes of scene.

Thomas, who had far more respect for Diderot than Collé, also approved of the daring infringement of the same unity of place in Saurin's *Blanche et Guiscard*, which followed the original tragedy by Thompson very closely in this point.

"Il y a dans cette pièce", wrote Thomas in 1763\(^1\) "deux choses nouvelles, et qui étendent la liberté de notre théâtre.

D'abord, un changement de scène: plus hardi que nous ne l'avons encore osé tenter: les deux premiers actes sont à Palerme, et les trois derniers à une maison de campagne du chancelier qui est à quelque distance de la cour."

Saurin's other play, *Beverley*, in 1768, like *The Gamester*, took liberties with the rule of place, although the scene changed only during the intervals between the acts. When Fréron reviewed Saurin's work in the *Année Littéraire*, he deplored the growing tendency to ignore this convention.

In reality, however, there were few "drames" published before 1770 which did so. The chief instances were the plays by Saurin already quoted, Mercier's *Jenneval*, and Falbaire's *Fabricant de Londres*; all of them imitations of the English style. They were very cautious when they moved the action from one place to another: it always happened between the acts, and the author was careful to prove that the distance

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might actually have been covered during that interval.

The greater part of Diderot's followers agreed with his defence of the unities. The lesser writers did so mechanically; Beaumarchais, because he preferred the rapid and concentrated action of a play which observed them, and Sedaine, because his chief interest lay in the analysis of character.

The unity of time was universally respected. Collé was the only man who attempted to introduce a double plot into "drame bourgeois", although English influence had favoured the complication of intrigues in general.

Then about 1770 the great "Shakespeare" quarrel gave a new impetus to the revision of the technique of French drama. This change was promoted by a certain laxity in applying the unities, which became apparent by 1772, for even the timid Cailhavé d'Estendoux permitted disregard of the 'rule of place'.

These reasons, supplemented by his temperament, and his friendship for Le Tourneur inclined Mercier to argue against subservience to the unities. His admiration for English drama, and for Shakespeare in particular made him support his argument with instances from the great English poet, when he developed it in the **Nouvel Essai** of 1773, and repeated it more

provocatively in the *De la Littérature et des Littérateurs* of 1778.

An interesting question is raised by Mercier's comments on Shakespeare and the unities. They plainly owe something to La Motte\(^1\); but it is equally plain that he knew and understood Shakespeare far better than his predecessors. His friendship with Le Tourneur may account for this: Mercier would be acquainted with his friend's translation of Shakespeare, and presumably with the French version of Johnson's Preface published by Suard\(^2\). There is a similarity in the points made by Mercier and the arguments marshalled by Johnson against the unities. It would seem that Johnson, rather than La Motte, determined Mercier's attitude towards the unities, when we consider how very likely it was that he read the translation of the Preface.

The strongest argument for the theory that Mercier owed the vigour of his attack on the unities to Johnson's Preface, as well as to his knowledge of Shakespeare's work in a general way, is the curious resemblance apparent in certain striking phrases used by both Johnson and Mercier in the passages quoted below. Mercier's words suggest that he

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\(^1\) p.147. *Nouvel Essai*, op.cit, and La Motte, p.31, Vol.I. *Théâtre de M. de La Motte*. Paris 1730, op.cit. on the "unity of interest".

\(^2\) This version appeared in the *Gazette Littéraire* for 1765, and was reprinted in Suard's *Variétés Littéraires*, Vol.IV, Paris 1769.
borrowed Johnson's arguments from his recollections of the Preface, rather than from direct reference to the text.

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<th>John, Preface to Shakespeare (1765.)</th>
<th>Mercier, De la Littérature et des Littérateurs (1778.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitations; if the spectator can be once persuaded that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Caesar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the banks of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason or of truth..... there is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field ... Time is of all modes of existence most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours.... It is therefore evident that the action is not supposed</td>
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<td>Dans la Règle actuelle, en une Minute on aura donné une Bataille, et le Poète ne sera point en faute: et à l'aide d'un repos, il pourra dire aux Spectateurs, tant de temps s'est écoulé pour l'action théâtrale; mais lorsque je lis un Roman ou un Poème épique, est-ce que ma Pensée ne comble rapidement et facilement tous ces intervalles? .... Dès que l'action commence, je ne me règle plus sur l'horloge, je me remets entièrement entre les mains du Poète, il est maître de faire couler les heures à son gré il me fera de même franchir les distances, car je n'aurai plus de peine à combler l'intervalle du temps, car il faut que ma pensée voyage, ou qu'elle se figure que les personnages arrivent là. Il est</td>
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(2) p.105. De la Littérature et des Littérateurs, etc. L.S. Mercier. Yverdon 1778. There is a very similar argument in the Nouvel Essai of 1773, on p.145, where Mercier says "avec de l'adresse et de l'intérêt, soixante heures peuvent s'écouler comme vingt-quatre. Le Spectateur a-t-il la montre en main lorsqu'il est ému?"
Johnson (contd.)

to be real, and it follows that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in one hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Mercier (contd.)

plus naturel à ma pensée de faire le chemin: il suffit qu'elle soit avertie, elle part, bondit, et s'élance, et la vraisemblance n'en est point altérée.

This line of reasoning seems to have impressed Mercier, for he repeated it in other passages of the same work, with a reference to Shakespeare's example¹, and it is also to be found in the earlier Nouvel Essai².

Further on in the De la Littérature, Mercier summed up his opinions on the part to be played by the unities in drama, in a way that recalls Johnson's concluding remarks on this point: both writers commented on the hampering effect of this convention, and referred to Shakespeare's liberating influence, contrasted with Voltaire's conservative ruling on this point³, as may be seen from a comparison of the following passages: -

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(1) De la Littérature, op.cit. pp.122-123. See also pp.103-9, ibid.
(3) the epithet "barbare" used by Mercier in the passage quoted below, points to the fact that he was thinking of Voltaire.
As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented that they were not known by [Shakespeare], or not observed. Nor if such another poet should arise, should I very vehemently reproach him that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire...... Perhaps what I have not dogmatically but deliberatively written may recall the principles of drama to a new examination.

Here again Mercier seemed to use what he could remember of Johnson's arguments to furnish out his own plea for a new

(1) pp.29-30 Johnson, Preface to Shakespeare, op.cit. The passage is translated pp.87-89 of the Variétés Littéraires, referred to above.
(2) pp.141 ff. Mercier, De la Littérature ou des Littérateurs, op.cit.
freedom from the unities. Since the De la Littérature was written while the great "quarrel" over Shakespeare was still raging, it is obvious that Mercier intended to support Le Tourneur, and to do so, he would naturally praise Shakespeare, and borrow arguments for his defence of the English poet from the various translations: this view is borne out by the fact that the use of Johnson's Preface is more obvious in the 1778 treatise than in Mercier's Nouvel Essai, although, as it has been shown, the same ideas are brought forward in the earlier work.

Shakespeare thus had a strong influence on Mercier's theory of "drame", which was reflected in his practice; and doubtless helped to encourage a greater independence in the interpretation of the unity of place; for the work of Shakespeare had been brought into universal notice by the great quarrel of 1775, as the following references to plays and critical writings after that date will show.

Mercier's Habitant de la Guadeloupe changed the scene between each act: although all the events took place in Paris: there was a similar change in L'Indigent, and in Les Tombeaux de Véronè; although Zoé observed all three unities. Mercier did not break the rules of "time" or "action", although he had protested vigorously enough against them in the Nouvel Essai and the De la Littérature.

(1) see Note 2 on p.421.
After the publication of the *Nouvel Essai* various dramatists held that the place of action might be changed between the acts in a serious play, following the example of English drama. Marmontel said so in the *Encyclopédie*¹, and *Le Nouveau Spectateur* pointed out the beauty of Shakespeare's freedom in this respect in 1776², although it prudently gave the other side of the argument a year later³; while in 1777, Rutledge brought a discussion of the unities into his *Quinzaine Angloise*, and made his wise Frenchman, Bouillec, take up the defence of Shakespeare's disregard of time and place in drama⁴.

Even La Harpe, who took Voltaire's side in the quarrel over Shakespeare, imitated English freedom in his *Barneveldt*, by changing the scene of action. This only happened between each act: and the play was not intended for the stage. In *Mélanie*, La Harpe was careful to obey the rule of the unities.

Baculard d'Arnaud, in 1774, quoted La Motte as his authority for disregarding the unity of place in *Mérinval*⁵. He was very timid about it, and pointed out that the change of scene might really have taken place in the time that had

(2) p.70, no.2. *Le Nouveau Spectateur* 1776, t.I.
(3) p.62, no.IX, *ibid*, 1777. t.II.
elapsed between the acts, since the distance covered was short; and he further showed his respect for tradition by expressing the hope that the liberty he had taken with the rules of drama would not lead to the decadence of the theatre.

After 1780, a few plays, dealing with subjects connected in some way with English life or letters, ignored the unity of place, although they were careful to preserve the others. The better-known examples are Desforges' Tom Jones, and La Femme Jalousie, Mercier's Habitant de la Guadeloupe, Moline's Amour Anglais, Chéron de la Bruyère's Homme à Sentiments, and Faur's "drame" with the background of English life in Cromwell's day, Monrose et Amélie¹.

It is perhaps significant that none of the plays just mentioned appeared at the Théâtre Français. In 1776, the actors who controlled the affairs of this theatre were very bitterly attacked by Beaumarchais; and there was a tendency to offer new plays to the "Italiens", or to one of the new little theatres which had sprung up in Paris, since the privileges extended to the Théâtre Français had been slightly diminished. In this way, it had become possible to act serious plays on the other public stages of Paris, and young authors preferred to try their fortune at the Italiens or

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¹ Monrose et Amélie, drame en 4 actes et en prose, de Faur. It was first played at the Théâtre des Italiens, 19th September 1783. ed. Paris 1783.
the Palais Royal, rather than face the conditions which made it tedious and humiliating to present their work to the Comédie Française.

Such antagonism to the actors of that theatre, and their unofficial loss of the monopoly of serious plays had another consequence. Independence of the unities could develop unrestrained in the more congenial atmosphere of the lesser playhouses, for actors and audience alike were less conservative. In practice, however, most of the plays which were produced in these theatres observed all three unities.

It is, then, by no means possible to affirm that the writers of "drame" revolted against these famous conventions. The unity of time was observed in all the plays which were adapted from English originals, at the cost of crowding too many incidents into the time allowed. Mercier alone raised his voice in protest; and this is the only sign of English influence in that direction.

There was more hesitation about the unity of place. Critics who clung to the traditions of Boileau, such as La Motte, Desfontaines, and Cailhava, approved changes of scene between the acts, while Diderot strongly condemned the practice. Thus the force of English example was conveyed to "drame bourgeois" through an unexpected channel. It had no great effect: the action was never moved to a different spot during the acts, and it was only towards the end of the century that
an increase was visible in the number of plays which disregarded the unity of place.

The unity of action was always scrupulously observed. English influence, although it did not establish double plots, did succeed in complicating the action. La Motte and Voltaire began the movement, by crowding their tragedies with incidents, so as to 'animate' them. In "comédie larmoyante" Richardson showed La Chaussée the merits of a similar expedient, and in "drame bourgeois" a swift procession of sensational events counterbalanced the loss of the interest aroused by the poetry and glamour of great names. Diderot could see that many episodes were needed to illustrate the conflicting sentiments, and the moral purpose in his plays, as well as to show up the effect of "conditions" on his characters. Lillo, Moore and Richardson were responsible for this conviction. It was very difficult to arrange an adequate number of striking events within the limits set by the unities; and most writers chose to conform to these rules. Plays like Le Père de Famille, Monrose et Amélie or Le Séducteur show the unnatural effect of this obedience, while interest has to be sustained by means of situations which arise, not from the clash of personalities, but from extraneous causes connected with the author's moral purpose, or his desire to win applause with tears. The essential weakness of this innovation in drama has been aptly summed up in the word "romanédie"; which was
coined to describe these 'novels of the stage'. French
drama in the eighteenth century possessed no creative genius
who could shake off the trammels of the unities.

The next point of technique to come under the influence
of English example was the use of prose in serious plays.
The briefest possible indication of the quarrel over this
matter in tragedy will be enough to show that it prepared
the way for Diderot's suggestion of prose as the best
medium for "drame bourgeois".

Fénélon had deplored the fine-drawn subtlety of verse
in tragic writing; La Motte had boldly, and most unhappily
attempted prose tragedy. In the long controversy which
ensued, Landois' Silvie, written to show that he sided with
La Motte, furnishes ample precedent for Diderot's recom-
mendation to abandon verse.

The Entretiens sur le Fils Naturel, nevertheless favoured
English models of prose drama: "Les Anglois ont "Le Marchand
de Londres", et "Le Joueur", tragédies en prose. Les

(1) p.66, Lettre sur les Occupations de l'Académie Française
(1714) édition critique, Despois. no date.
(2) pp.202 ff. Discours sur la Tragédie à l'Ocasion d'Oedipe.
pp.251 ff. Oedipe, tragédie en prose.
pp.210 ff. Comparison de la première scène de Mithridate
avec la même scène réduite en prose. Théâtre de M. de la
Motte. Vol.1. (Paris 1730.)
(3) Sc.ii. Prologue de Silvie. P. Landois. (Paris 1742.)
(4) p.120, t.VII, Oeuvres de Diderot. op.cit.
tragédies de Shakespeare sont moitié vers, moitié prose. Le premier poète qui nous fit rire avec de la prose introduisit la prose dans la comédie. Le premier poète qui nous fera pleurer avec de la prose introduira la prose dans la tragédie."

Lillo, Moore, and Shakespeare, then, put the idea of prose tragedy into Diderot's mind. A year later, he declared that bourgeois characters would naturally speak in prose, and that certain events in the tragedy of middle life would seem unreal, if they were related in verse, while poetry could be written equally well in either mode. In 1762, Diderot retracted his praise of English originality in this matter, and gave Landois the credit of having written the first prose tragedy; but his very contradiction proves the strength of his first belief, and the popularity it had assumed: although his example and his teaching on this point made no indelible impression upon his followers.

Beaumarchais, Fenouillot de Falbaire, and Mercier all bear the mark of La Motte's influence. The first of these acknowledged the power of La Motte's example, although he proposed that the earlier writer's arguments for the use of prose should be applied to "tragédie bourgeoise", a form which

(1) pp.5-6, Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux, en tête d'Eugénie. (Oeuvres de Beaumarchais, ed Fournier, Paris 1876.)
was much nearer reality, and which needed the speech of everyday life to create the proper atmosphere. This reasoning was a quotation from Diderot, and Beaumarchais did not conceal the fact.

Grimm, thinking that Beaumarchais had not done justice to the question, reopened the debate in his comments on the *Essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux*. He proved to his own satisfaction that French verse was totally unsuited to dramatic dialogue; and he went to the length of writing that ‘true tragedy and real comedy had not yet been discovered in France’: an opinion which he repeated, even more dogmatically, in 1770. Grimm’s words are a valuable reminder of the fact that the storm-centre of this difference of opinion lay in the criticism of tragedy.

Fréron unexpectedly supported Diderot by saying that Beverley, in verse, lacked the energy and concentrated power of Moore’s play.

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(1) p.416, tome VII (septembre 1767) *Correspondance Littéraire*, op.cit.
(2) pp.458 ff, tome VIII (février 1770) ibid: (à propos of La Harpe’s Mélanie.) “Après avoir entendu cette lecture, je me suis plus que jamais confirmé dans l’opinion que la vrai tragédie, celle qui n’existe point en France, celle qui est encore à créer, ne pourra être écrite qu’en prose, et qu’elle ne s’accommodera jamais du langage pompeux, arrondi, et phrasier du vers alexandrin.”
Fenouillot de Falbaire argued after the fashion of La Motte, when he explained his reasons for allowing Le Fabricant de Londres to be published in prose: "J'imaginois n'avoir tracé qu'un plan, n'avoir écrit qu'un canevas, que je me proposois de mettre en vers, mais les différentes personnes à qui je le communiquai crurent que les vers ôteroient la vérité et le naturel qu'elles trouvoient dans ce drame, et les pleurs que sa lecture faisoit verser à tous ceux qui l'entendaient me déterminaient sans peine à le laisser tel qu'on l'a montré au théâtre."

Mercier in the Nouvel Essai wrote a whole chapter on the use of prose in the different genres, but he made few original observations. He repeated La Motte's reasons for the choice of prose rather than verse, and applied them to "drame", and then brought out Diderot's arguments on the same point. He contributed, as his own idea, the theory that an audience would understand the moral of a play much better if it were written in prose, without the superfluous ornaments of verse; and he ended with the assertion that prose could be more poetic than verse: while he made no reference at all to the practice of English dramatists.

In 1776 Cubières Palmezeaux gave the most cogent reason why verse was so often preferred to prose as a medium of

(1) p.ix. Preface. Le Fabricant de Londres, (Paris 1771. op.cit.)
(2) Chapter XXVI, Nouvel Essai. Amst. 1773. op.cit.
expression in "drame". Prose, he said, might be more natural, and easier to understand, yet the artistic value of verse, and the difficulty that the author has to overcome in order to write a good play in verse, makes such a play more admirable, while the charm of verse can renew the appeal of an old story or a worn-out situation in drama.

Then a satiric allusion, in Gernevalde's *L'Homme Noir, ou le Spleen*, to the fact that prose was the recognized medium for the tragedy of middle life, shows that it had not been accepted without a struggle: in this play, Chevillard, the broken-down poet, announces the title of his "drame" with a reservation; - "L'homme noir, drame en cinq actes et en prose, - Je l'aurais bien mis en vers mais ce n'est pas à la mode."

When the actual performance of the various writers is considered, it appears that a great number of the writers who adapted English plays or novels wrote in verse. Saurin, Baculard d'Arnaud, Falbaire, La Harpe, Desforges, Cubières Palmezeaux, La Chabeauissière, Pigault-Lebrun, and Chamfort, all did so, while Sedaine, Beaumarchais and Mercier were the only dramatists who made it a rule to write "tragédie bourgeoise" in prose.

(2) p.38, Act II, sc.vi, L'Homme Noir ou le Spleen, Gernevalde, La Haye, 1779.
(3) The Fabricant de Londres was the only "drame" he wrote in prose.
Beaumarchais and Mercier testify that the part of English influence in bringing about this change in the form of expression in serious plays was to reinforce the initial impulse in that direction which had been given by La Motte. The work of Lillo, Moore, and Shakespeare evidently furnished Diderot with a reason for recommending prose in domestic tragedy; because they demonstrated its apt concord with the tone of this kind of play.

On the other hand, many writers chose verse for their imitations of English prose plays: partly because they wanted to refute the accusation of 'easy writing' that was directed at prose plays, and partly because they felt that the conventional language of French dramatic poetry would tone down the crudities of their models: so that this checked the spread of Diderot's influence in the matter. It is therefore hazardous to formulate any dogmatic statement about the exact value of English influence in dictating the choice of French dramatists between verse and prose.

The third matter where the influence of English ideas can be traced is the new development in the art of acting in France. It was a natural consequence of the widespread interest in stagecraft, which was by no means confined to actors and to men of letters; for there were numerous private

(1) less than a third of the number of plays quoted in Gaife's index are written in prose.
theatres in Paris, the provinces, and in the great houses abroad, like Ferney or Beloeil, while the public theatres, in spite of the virtual monopoly granted to the Théâtre François, were numerous throughout the century, and even began to flourish and multiply between 1780 and 1789.

We must thus draw attention to the fact that Diderot was only expressing in literary criticism a taste that was already popular when, in 1758, he set down the essential rules of a style of acting which harmonized with his conception of drama.

There is evidence that Garrick's visits to Paris in 1751 and in 1765, were not without effect on the circle of the Encyclopaedists, and therefore, on Diderot, who was thereby assisted in the enunciation of two important principles; first, that acting should not be an exact imitation of the speech and gesture of real life, and second, that the actor need not actually feel the emotion he had to express in any given situation on the stage.

Original thought on the subject of natural acting is usually traced back to Fénélon's famous eulogy of the groans and broken exclamations in Sophocles, at the expense of the elegant discourses of the heroes of French tragedy in moments of stress.

In 1758 Luigi Riccoboni remarked on the natural quality of English acting, when he compared the different theatres of European nations. "Les acteurs anglois" he said "sont

toujours vrais, et ils le sont de façon à ne point languir sur le théâtre.... [ils] ont l'art d'enfler, pour ainsi dire, la vérité précisément comme il faut pour la faire paroître dans le lointain, de manière à me faire juger que c'est la pure vérité qu'ils m'exposent."

This idea was one which Diderot took up in his later view of the actor's art: at first, he inclined to agree with Fénélon, and he held that the simple imitation of nature, with broken cries, and spontaneous movements, was the secret of excellent acting.

Diderot had known of Garrick's visit to Paris in 1751, and of the actor's display of his powers in French society at that time. He brought this in as an example of 'natural' acting when he wrote the letter to Madame Riccoboni, in answer to her criticism of his ideas "on pantomime" in the observations which he published with "Le Père de Famille". In this letter, Diderot gave an account of Garrick's striking representation of a father who let his child fall through an open window, and maintained that the great actor had no thought of choosing gestures which would seem right and pleasing to the audience on that occasion, but simply reproduced what any man would naturally feel and do. Then Diderot exclaimed against the theory that every movement of the actor should be the result of conscious reflection.

(1) p.404, Réponse à la lettre de Madame Riccoboni. (Vol. VII, éd. Assézat, op.cit.)
sortirai de la nature pour me fourrer où? Dans vos réduits où tout est peigné, ajusté, arrangé calamistré - que je me déplairais là."

Diderot thus began as the spokesman of a reaction against the old declamatory style of acting, while Garrick was well-known, in England and France, as the exponent of the new natural style, which became popular because of his amazing versatility in both tragic and comic parts.

As Dr Hedgecock points out, the effect of Garrick's first visit to France in 1751 was to impress all those who knew him with this quality of simple and natural acting. Diderot was quick to see in him the ideal actor for the new "drame bourgeois" which aimed at a true and unheroic representation of life, and so called for a similar style of presentation on the stage. Garrick therefore served as a

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proof for Diderot that his ideas on "pantomime" could be successfully put into practice.

It would be waste of time to enumerate all the authorities who preceded or followed Diderot in the revolt against the old style of declamation in the theatre. Dorat's lines sum up very well the qualities that they most disliked:

"Telle est, dans son ivresse, une actrice arrogante, Qui sans cesse interroge une glace indulgente, Concerte ses regards, aligne tous ses pas, Applaudit à son jeu, sourit à ses appas; Cette froide méthode est pleine d'imposture Et ce n'est pas ainsi que parle la nature."

When Garrick visited Paris again in 1765, he and the Encyclopædists spent some time in discussing various styles in miming, and their relation to natural speech and movement. A passage in the Correspondance Littéraire is worth quoting because it shows how friendly Garrick was with Grimm, Diderot, and their circle.

"Garrick prétend" wrote Grimm in July 1765, "que ce Racine si beau, si enchanteur à lire, ne peut être joué parcequ'il dit toujours tout, et ne laisse rien faire à l'acteur: que d'ailleurs l'harmonie des vers de Racine oblige à un chant très éloigné de la véritable déclamation. Nous avons été bientôt d'accord avec Roscius - Garrick sur tous

(1) p. 44, La Déclamation Théâtrale, C.J. Dorat, Paris 1766. (v. also p. 21 and p. 55 ibid.)
(2) p. 321, t. VI, Correspondance Littéraire (éd. Tourneux, op. cit.)
les points, nous qui sommes ici un petit troupeau de vrais croyants, reconnaissant Homère, Eschyle, et Sophocle pour la loi et les prophètes, nous enivrant des dons du génie partout où il se trouve sans acception de langue ni de nation; le Roscius anglais a été de la religion de l'église du petit troupeau."

This shows that criticism of the previous style of acting had become constructive, and that a compromise was offered, which considered that the new "natural" acting was best suited to "drame bourgeois"; and it also suggests that Garrick proposed this idea to Grimm and his friends: it may not have been new to them, but the fact remains that the English actor's thoughts agreed very well with Diderot's theory.

When Diderot began to change his opinion that a straightforward imitation of nature, without any "arrangement" of tone or gesture was the true means to great acting, he once more brought in the example of Garrick to explain his new attitude.

He did this in a conversation that he introduced into the "Salon" of 1767¹:

"Le célèbre Garrick disait au Chevalier de Chastellux,

¹v. also, p.58, Dupray's edition of the Paradoxe, Paris, 1902.

p.16, Salon de 1767, t.XI. Oeuvres, Diderot, éd. Assézat. Dr Hedgecock refers to this passage, but he makes use of it to prove that Garrick's exaggerated gestures produced a similar exaggeration in the movements of French actors who tried to imitate him.
'Quelque sensible que la nature ait pu vous former, si vous ne jouez que d'après vous même ou la nature subsistante la plus parfaite que vous connaissez, vous ne serez que médiocre.

- Médiocre, et pourquoi cela?
- C'est qu'il y a pour vous, pour moi, pour le Spectateur, tel homme idéal, possible, qui, dans la position donnée, serait bien autrement affecté que vous. Voilà l'être imaginaire que vous devriez prendre pour modèle. Plus fortement vous l'avez conçu, plus vous serez grand, rare, merveilleux, et sublime.
- Vous n'êtes donc jamais vous?
- Je m'en garde bien. Ni moi, Monsieur le chevalier, ni rien que je connaisse précisément autour de moi. Lorsque je m'arrache les entrailles, lorsque je pousse des cris in-humains, ce ne sont pas mes entrailles, ce ne sont pas mes cris, ce sont les entrailles, ce sont les criées, que j'ai conçus et qui n'existent pas."

Thus Diderot had come to appreciate in Garrick's style a quality which Luigi Riccoboni had praised in English acting long before - that "enflure" as he called it, which gave the illusion of truth.

This notion was repeated in the Paradoxe sur le Comédien, which Grimm published, in its first form, in the Correspondance Littéraire for 1770. As this version was the only one

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that Diderot's contemporaries knew, it is quoted below, rather than the revised form which appeared early in the nineteenth century.

The book which had suggested the Paradoxe to Diderot's mind also stated something very like Diderot's later opinion on 'natural' acting. This work, by Sticotti, was generally known as Garrick ou les acteurs anglais, and it was a translation of Dr John Hill's The Actor or the Art of Playing¹; Sticotti added reflections of his own, with examples and anecdotes taken from his experience on the French stage². Some of his remarks about Garrick were not in the original; but Sticotti did not alter the main points in the English writer's arguments: which were founded on a French work, Le Comédien, by Rémond de Sainte-Albine, published in 1747. Hill had treated this book very much as Sticotti had used his: he borrowed the arrangement of the subject-matter, the main ideas, and inserted examples of his own, with a few explanations or reflections on interesting points.

Sticotti thus summed up certain observations on the player's art which represented the opinions of both French and English writers³. In the matter of imitating nature,

(1) The Actor, or the Art of Playing, Dr John Hill, London, 1750.
(2) cf. Sticotti, Garrick ou les Acteurs Anglais, Paris 1771, pages 63-65, 71, 80, 96, and Hill's Actor (op.cit.) pages 52-54, 70, 80, 92.
(3) Garrick ou les Acteurs Anglais etc. A.F. Sticotti, Paris et Copenhague, 1771. The first edition appeared in 1769, and this edition was the third, so it was fairly popular.
these opinions came very near to Diderot's. Sticotti wrote: "L'imitation théâtrale rabaisse au talent du singe et du perroquet, voilà le célèbre Garrick au niveau d'un simple ouvrier... un buveur sujet à s'enivrer n'en joue pas mieux le rôle d'ivrogne, et le rendroit encore plus mal s'il avait bu; l'humeur particulière, ou le tempérament est une disposition continuelle, une espèce d'ivresse, qui paroit néanmoins insuffisante sur la scène; c'est peut être la preuve la plus forte de la nécessité de l'art qu'il faut joindre à la nature."²

Diderot wrote in the Paradoxe "Les images des passions au théâtre ne sont donc point les vrais images; ce sont donc des portraits outrés, assujettis à des règles de convention... celui qui connait le mieux, et qui rend le plus parfaitement ces signes d'après le modèle idéal le mieux conçu est le plus grand comédien."³

D'Hannetaire⁴, who knew Garrick, and corresponded with him, repeated the idea which Diderot had put into the English actor's mouth in his account of the conversation with the Chevalier de Chastellux. As d'Hannetaire was an enlightened and enterprising actor-manager, his opinion carries conviction, for it bears witness to the similar trend of ideas in

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(1) Garrick ou les Acteurs Anglais, op.cit. p.29.
(2) p.52 ibid.
both France and England: since this argument was exposed at length in Rémont de Sainte-Albine's book, written in 1747, before Garrick came into contact with writers and actors in France.

In 1774, when the Observations sur l'Art du Comédien came out, the Prince de Ligne, who was very friendly with d'Hannetaire, published the Lettres à Eugénie, containing advice to the amateur actors of polite society, and recording his own opinions on the art of playing. He agreed with the writers previously mentioned in maintaining that a natural effect in acting was not obtained by the mirror-like reproduction of gestures and expressions seen in ordinary life.

There was, then, an obvious similarity between the judgment of French writers and actors and Garrick's definition of natural expression on the stage. This coincidence helped Garrick to become popular in France, and the added weight of his example gained support for the new style of acting.

The paradox which gave its name to Diderot's reflections on the subject of playacting owed very much the same debt to Garrick as did the theory of imitation which has just been considered.

Diderot's challenging statement was that the truly great actor should not experience the emotion proper to his part.

in any play: and that, to touch the audience, he must present
the illusion of a man swayed by passion while retaining ab-
solute command of his feelings.

The general view on this question was expressed by Rémond
de Sainte-Albine in 1747. He concluded that the actor must
feel whatever sentiment happened to be exacted by his role,
and that his sensibility might be compared to soft wax, which
received the appropriate impression for each part, and thus
was able to reproduce it exactly as in nature.

Sticotti - who rewrote Hill's version of Rémond de Sainte-
Albine - put this theory bluntly: "Il doit sentir fortement
les passions qu'il nous inspire: voilà la sensibilité." Be-
sides this faculty, the great actor should possess the power
of changing quickly from one feeling to another: if such
succeeding emotions are not sincerely felt, the actor's ex-
pression of them will not touch the audience; this is neces-
sary, before the actor's intelligence can come into play, and
show him how to present these feelings to the audience in a
natural and forceful way. Sticotti then brought in Garrick
as the supreme example of this combination of true feeling and
intelligence.

1747.) see also pp. 40, 44, 49, in d'Hannetaire's
(2) p.62, p.75, p.96, p.113, Garrick ou les Acteurs
Anglais, A.F. Sticotti (Paris etc. 1769, éd. Paris
1771.)
Diderot used the same example as Sticotti to prove the contrary assertion. "J'ai d'autres idées" he wrote in the observations which Grimm printed in the Correspondance Littéraire, "que l'auteur sur les qualités premières d'un grand acteur. Je lui veux beaucoup de jugement, je le veux spectateur froid et tranquille de la nature humaine; qu'il ait par conséquent beaucoup de finesse, mais nulle sensibilité, ou, ce qui est la même chose, l'art de tout imiter, et une égale aptitude à toutes sortes de rôles." Further: "Garrick montre sa tête entre les deux battants d'une porte, et je vois en deux secondes son visage passer rapidement de la joie extrême à l'étonnement, de l'étonnement à la tristesse, de la tristesse à l'abattement, de l'abattement au désespoir, et descendre avec la même rapidité du point où il est, au point d'où il est parti. Est-ce que son âme a pu éprouver successivement toutes ces passions, et exécuter de concert avec son visage, cette espèce de gamme? Je n'en crois rien!"

The fact that Diderot himself had used Garrick's exemple to give weight to his early contention, which agreed with Sticotti's argument, and now, in 1774, again brought in the same evidence to prove his 'paradox' makes the estimation of Garrick's influence on Diderot's thought a very delicate matter.

(2) p.37 ibid.
Dr Hedgcock\(^1\) suggests that Garrick may have been asked to look over the manuscript of the *Paradoxe*, and points out that Garrick's displays of acting led to discussion of the principles of the art, which possibly induced Diderot to alter his ideas on the qualities necessary to a great actor.

It is true that Garrick communicated ideas which resemble some of Diderot's contentions in the *Paradoxe* to the circle of writers and actors who met at the house of Suard: so that Diderot might easily have come to hear of them through that channel. Although the contact of Garrick's thought and Diderot's on this point cannot be securely affirmed, yet the conversation as reported in Garat's *Life of Suard* is very interesting, because it shows Garrick in the light of an authority on such matters, and points to a very probable influence that he exerted on Molé, which is to be discussed later in this chapter.

"On ne connaît" wrote Garat\(^2\) "ni l'histoire des Beaux-arts, ni celui des grands artistes lorsqu'on imagine, comme pour s'étonner de leurs merveilles, qu'elles naissent toutes d'une sensibilité particulière et privilégiée... mais l'observation et la réflexion sont encore cette sensibilité qui se guide elle-même; c'est la même âme qui sent et qui

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réfléchit, il n'y en a pas deux. Elle n'attend pas seulement les inspirations, elle les prépare et les fait naître.

Le Kain disait: "Il m'a fallu vingt ans d'études pour me tirer à mon gré sur les planches, pour lever les mains et les yeux vers le ciel en vers la femme que mon rôle adore": et cent mots de Garrick que la mauvaise mémoire de M. Suard n'avait pu oublier, prouvaient qu'il ne lui avait fallu moins d'études que Le Kain ...... [Garrick] causait avec Molé, je crois, sur la difficulté de paraître sur la scène homme de bonne compagnie et ivre. Molé voulait lui faire voir comment il s'en tiroit dans un des jeunes marquis qui étaient ses rôles. "À merveille!" lui cria Garrick, "mais avinez plus vos jambes, et moins votre buste et votre tête. L'ivresse du peuple est dans tout son corps... un homme élégant, un Marquis, ne lui abandonne jamais son élégance."

Diderot's theory that observation and intelligence, rather than feeling, go to create successful imitation of nature on the stage, is contained in this account, and in the reflections that accompany it. Notable actors of the time also prove that Diderot's analysis of the actor's art was correct: Molé¹ and Prévillé² in their Memoirs; and it is of

(1) Mémoires de Mademoiselle Clairon de Le Kain de Prévillé, de Molé, etc; see pp.251-258 Mémoires de Molé, (ed. F. Barrière, Paris 1846.) See also an anecdote quoted from Étienne's "Notice" to his Collection de Mémoires sur l'Art Dramatique, on p.156, t.IX (octobre 1770) Corr. Litt. op.cit.
(2) pp.163, 176, 179, Mémoires de Prévillé; op.cit. note l. aup.
interest to remark that both Molé\(^1\) and Préville\(^2\) were friendly with Garrick.

On the whole, however, *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien*—whether in the original form of the Observations published by Grimm, or as Diderot rewrote it in 1773—cannot be said to owe the suggestion of its main theory to Garrick's conversations with Diderot, or with the philosopher's friends.

In the *Lettre à Madame Riccoboni*, Garrick is cited as a proof of the great part played by the actor's own emotion in arousing the corresponding sentiment in his spectators. The *Salon* of 1767, which was written two years after Garrick's longer stay in Paris, while the effect of his pronouncements on the art of the theatre was still fresh in the minds of Grimm, Suard, and Diderot, proves that real feeling on the actor's part was still regarded as a condition necessary to successful playing, for although the actor must 'imitate an ideal figure', he must also 'feel strongly'.\(^3\) When Diderot drafted the *Paradoxe* in 1769\(^4\), he quoted Garrick as the most

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(1) v. the passage just quoted, from Garat.
(4) A letter, dated 14 nov. 1769, to Grimm, published in the Correspondance Inédite de Diderot (p.102, Vol.I. Paris 1931) mentions the completion of the 'beau paradoxe'; "je n'aurais peut-être jamais rien écrit où il y a plus de finesse et de vie."
impressive instance of an artist who can control his expression of emotion on the stage at will, and who therefore does not actually "feel" his part. The references to Garrick in the 1773 version of this work are of the same nature. Although Diderot reproduces the chief ideas put forward in the "conversation" of 1767, they form part of his argument on natural acting, and this is a side-issue of the Paradoxe itself.

The true reason for Diderot's complete change of opinion as to the relationship of true feeling with its representation on the stage may be looked for in the deeper insight into the art of miming, which he had gained by practical experience in the theatre, between 1758 and 1770. Again, the evolution of Diderot's views on the working of the mind helped to bring about this change. In 1758, he was disposed to give sentiment a very important place in the psychology of poets, musicians, painters, and actors. By 1769, he had adopted another view, derived from his interest in natural science, and in Le Rêve de d'Alembert, he stated that the truly great poet, musician, actor, or philosopher, is not a man of feeling, but a man who has power to control this quality, and make it work in concert with the other faculties which make up what Diderot calls "le faisceau" of mental forces. His admiration of Garrick as an

(2) p.171, Le Rêve de d'Alembert, Vol.II. ibid.
actor was therefore due to different motives, at these various points in Diderot's development; and his knowledge of the Englishman's ideas on acting only deepened his own convictions, while Garrick's example supplied him with an impressive, living proof of their validity.

The latest theory of imitation, or the right way to achieve a natural effect in acting, joined with the view that an actor need not actually experience the emotion he has to represent, encouraged a revolution in the style of playing on the French stage. Because of Diderot's interest in English letters, and in Garrick, certain English ideas are reflected in the comments on this new departure in the theatre.

The first of these comments was made by Marmontel, who faithfully echoed the commonplaces of Diderot's circle. It appears in the Encyclopédie, and testifies to the strong impression which the London Merchant had made in that circle of thinkers.

"Les acteurs ne manquent point" wrote Marmontel in the article 'on Declamation' "de se plaindre que les poètes ne donnent point lieu à ces silences éloquents; qu'ils veulent tout dire, et ne laissent rien à l'action... Nos voisins sont plus hardis, et par conséquent, plus grands que nous dans cette partie. On voit sur le théâtre de Londres Barnweld, chargé de pesantes chaînes, se rouler avec son ami sur le pavé de la prison, étroitement serrés l'un dans les bras de
l'autre. Leurs larmes, leurs sanglots, leurs embrassements sont l'expression de leur douleur. Mais dans cette partie comme dans toutes les autres, pour encourager les auteurs et les acteurs à chercher les grands effets et à risquer ce qui peut les produire, il faut un public sérieux, éclairé, sensible."¹

Diderot used the same example in the Premier Entretien sur le Fils Naturel² to prove that the stage should present to the spectator a succession of "true pictures" - Barnwell in prison, and Philoctetes at the mouth of his cave, uttering the "inarticulate sounds" which, long before, Fénélon had praised for their powerful effect on the audience.

Then Diderot pointed out, in the discourse on dramatic poetry which appeared with the Père de Famille in 1758, that it was Richardson who had shown him how the actions of a character could be used to round out the significance of speech³:- "C'est la peinture des mouvements qui charme surtout dans les romans domestiques. Voyez avec quelle complaisance l'auteur de Paméla, de Grandisson, de Clarisse, s'y arrête. Voyez quelle force, quel sens, et quelle pathétique

elle donne à son discours. Je vois le personnage; soit qu’il parle, soit qu’il se taise, je le vois, et son action m’affecte plus que ses paroles."

In the same year, Diderot appealed to the evidence of Garrick’s performances during his visit to Paris in 1751, to prove that the gestures of an actor could really work upon the spectator’s feelings as strongly as his declamation of a speech: Garrick had mimed the actions of a father who had accidentally let his child fall out of an open window. Since the audience at the house of the duc de Duras did not understand English, Garrick did not speak a word. Diderot describes the effect of the actor’s movements thus: "Alors Garrick se mit à pantomimer le désespoir du père. Demandez à M. de Duras ce qui en arriva. Les spectateurs en conjurent des mouvements de consternation et de frayeur si violents que la plupart se retirèrent."

It was not the influence of English ideas alone which had helped Diderot to formulate this idea that actors and authors should try to create a succession of pictures on the stage. When Greuze exhibited "Le Père de Famille" in the Salon of 1755, Diderot immediately became aware of an affinity between his own aims in drama, and Greuze’s ideal in painting. An eighteenth-century critic puts it thus: "[Greuze est] le

(1) p.402, Lettre à Madame Riccoboni, ibid.
(2) p.170, La Quinzaine Angloise. le Chevalier Rutlidge. ed. Londres 1777.
premier peintre dramatique, c'est à dire, celui qui peint la vie humaine, et tire la représentation des vices ou des vertus de l'ordre morale pratique ordinaire." Side by side with this reforming zeal, a strong vein of sentiment runs through the work of Greuze, and this chiefly attracted Diderot, for the lack of it in Hogarth made him dislike the English painter's work; although it was the counterpart, in painting, to the art of Lillo and Fielding in literature. Greuze, then, opened Diderot's eyes to the possibility of writing "drame bourgeois" in pictures: and the actors of the day were equally alive to the dramatic element in his work, for "L'Accordée du Village" was turned into a stage-entertainment in 1761.

A hint from Fénélon, the accident of his turning to the criticism of art, the Merchant of London, and Richardson's novels, set Diderot's thought in motion, and he built up a theory of pantomime in drama, which was proved true and effective by the incomparable skill of Garrick. In this case, English ideas had given Diderot the stimulus his mind required to begin working out a systematic theory; and without their help, he might not have put his theory so forcefully, and illustrated it so aptly, nor would later playwrights and actors have taken it up so enthusiastically.

(2) pp.13 ff, 25 ff, and 50 ff. J.B. Greuze, by Camille Mauclair, (Paris 1905.)
The most telling corroboration of this, and the most convincing testimony to Diderot's independence of thought may be found in Voltaire's Preface to Les Soythes, written in 1767. "Qui aurait osé, comme Monsieur Le Kain, sortir les bras ensanglantés du tombeau de Ninus, tandis que l'admirable actrice qui représentait Sélimamis se traînait mourante sur les marches du tombeau même? Voilà ce que les petits-maîtres et les petites-maîtresses appelleront d'abord des postures, et ce que les connaisseurs étonnés de la perfection inattendue de l'art ont appelé la véritable action théâtrale. Le reste était une conversation, quelquefois passionnée.

C'est dans ce grand art de parler aux yeux qu'excelle le plus grand acteur qu'ait jamais eu l'Angleterre, M. Garrick, qui a effrayé et attendu parmi nous ceux-mêmes qui ne savoient pas sa langue.

Cette magie a été fortement recommandée, il y a quelques années, par un homme qui, à l'exemple d'Aristote, a su joindre aux sciences abstraites, l'éloquence, la connaissance du coeur humain, et l'intelligence du théâtre. Il a été en tout de l'avis de l'auteur de Sélimamis, qui a toujours voulu qu'on animât la scène par un plus grand appareil, par plus de pittoresque, par des mouvements plus passionés qu'elle ne semblait en comporter auparavant."

The effect of Diderot's emphasis on 'pantomime' was to be seen in Beaumarchais' careful stage directions, and the innovation which he tried to bring into his Eugénie: he
arranged that there should be actions without words during the intervals of that play, so that the unity of interest should not be broken at all, and the audience prepared for the next spoken scene. Sedaine in the *Philosophe sans le Savoir*, Collé in *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV* carried out Diderot's advice, by describing for the actors' benefit those movements which would best express the state of mind of their characters. In Beverley, Saurin took more pains to help the players with suggestions than Moore had done in the *Gamester*, while Mercier found, like Diderot, that Richardson was most inspiring, when he had to depict the actions appropriate to a scene of seduction. Fenouillot de Falbaire began his *École de Moeurs* with a picture of an English breakfast: so that the playwrights quickly perceived the advantages of this new point in the technique of drama.

The critics of the time accepted the idea that 'pantomime' was a most significant factor in helping them to

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(1) Eugénie; note en tête du deuxième acte; Oeuvres de Beaumarchais. (éd. Paris 1876.)
(3) *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV*, Act III, sc. xiii, (1775); see also p.348, *Journal Historique de Collé* (nov. 1762) (éd. van Bever, Paris 1911.)
(5) *L'Indigent*, Act II, sc.v, Mercier. (éd. Théâtre de Mercier, Amst. 1778-84.)
understand the writer's meaning. Palissot\(^1\), by his very vehemence in condemning Diderot's theory, showed that it was new and important: while Mercier\(^2\) and the *Nouveau Spectateur*\(^3\) may be taken as examples of its influence on contemporary criticism. The passage in the *Nouveau Spectateur* for April 1777 shows how the actors themselves tried to put Diderot's theory into practice, as well as its new-found importance in the judgment of plays. It is an account of the different interpretations given to the character of Beverley in Saurin's *Le Joueur*. "Mais c'est surtout au cinquième acte qu'il paraît prouvé que le Sieur Monvel a mieux saisi que le Sieur Molé le vrai caractère qu'il convient à donner à Beverley. Celui-ci paroit furieux, démoniaque, et hésite longtemps à boire le poison; il tremble, il meurt en poltron. Le Sieur Monvel se montre plus réfléchi, plus déterminé, moins craintif, plus philosophe; il boit le poison sans crainte, sans hésiter, avec tout le sang-froid d'un Anglais."

Molé, however, was recognized as the greatest artist in the representation of "drame"\(^4\). He had consulted Garrick

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4. The success of the Père de Famille, and of the Marquis de Longueil's Menusier de Londres was due in great part to Molé. see also p.369 ff. Le Mazurier, Galerie des Acteurs du Théâtre Français. (Paris 1820.)
on certain points of detail in connection with his art, and, like Garrick\(^1\), he tried to supply in his gestures and the expression of his face those qualities in his rôle which the poet could not express in words.

Thomas wrote to Barthe, describing Molé's efforts to do this in the following terms\(^2\): "Molé dans le rôle de Saint-Albin est étonnant. Jamais de sa vie il n'a été si applaudi. Ce n'est pas qu'il ne charge quelquefois. Il a des convulsions où il ne faudrait que du sentiment. Il est d'un bout à l'autre trop impétueux, trop violent, trop peu varié, mais il a des moments d'embarras, des demi-bégayements d'une voix tremblante, des mouvements, des regards, une expression dans ses attitudes, dans tous ses nerfs qui intéresse, qui attache, qui fait illusion – aux femmes surtout. Ainsi, disent-elles en sortant, "Ah! ce n'est plus ainsi qu'on aime."

It is suggested by Dr Hedgcock\(^3\) that this violence and exaggeration of tone and gesture in Molé's style were caused by his attempt to imitate Garrick, whose acting before the

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\(^1\) v. the passage quoted above, p.129, Vol.II, Garat's Mémoires... sur la vie de J.B. Suard, also Garrick's Portrait de Fréville, quoted on p.147, David Garrick et ses amis Français, by Dr Hedgcock. (Paris 1911.)


audiences in the salons and great houses of Paris was probably exaggerated in the same way, since the company did not all understand English.

This is very likely true, for the criticism of the new style of acting in France was very like that levelled at Garrick's in England. The adverse opinion of English critics blamed Garrick for "acting each word" in his rôles; and he himself had expressed to Grimm his conviction that the author should allow the actor scope to bring out the full meaning of his text by means of gesture and movement. Then the Prince de Ligne wrote of the French actors: "Il n'y a rien de pis non plus que ces énergumènes qui veulent tout peindre, qui ont le geste à la chose, qui jouent le mot, qui se démènent, roulent des yeux, s'agivent des bras et des jambes, et ressemblent plutôt à des convulsionnaires qu'à des comédiens."

There is further evidence of a similarity between Molé's style and Garrick's, afforded by two entries in Mrs Thrale's diary of her visit to Paris in 1775 with Johnson. She records her pleasure at a performance of Le Joueur, and declares that the only point in which Paris was superior to

(1) p.31, ibid, for quotations from the English critics.
(2) v. the passage quoted above from Grimm's Correspondance Littéraire, pp.316 ff. t.VI, juillet 1765.
(4) see the entries for October 3 and 19, 1775. The French Journals of Mrs Thrale and Dr Johnson. (ed. Manchester 1932.)
London was the acting at the Théâtre Français. As her taste was guided by Johnson's, there must have been some similarity between French acting and the style which Johnson admired in Garrick.

Lastly, the many references to Garrick as an authority on his art, which are to be found in French critical writing, with the proofs of his friendly attitude to Molé and Préville, his position as the interpreter of Shakespeare in both countries, and Diderot's view of him as the best exponent of the different style of acting appropriate to "drame bourgeois", make it safe to affirm that Garrick's contact with French society in 1751 and 1765 suggested certain ideas to actors and authors, which were accepted, and put into practice.

These ideas fitted in so well with Diderot's scheme of dramatic art that they helped to spread his new doctrines, which again had been partly suggested to him by the stimulus of the example set by Lillo's Merchant and Richardson's works: ideas so fresh and arresting that they shaped anew the course of development in the art of acting on the French stage, in every variety of drama.

Garrick's influence was thus secondary to Diderot's. It became an accepted rule that the imitation of nature was not a simple reproduction of ordinary life, that the actor need not experience the passion he had to express when
playing, that the staging of a piece should present a succession of pictures to the audience, and that authors should suggest, by careful instructions to the players, how gesture might supplement their dialogue. Although Diderot referred to Garrick's example in his elaboration of these points, and although Molé and Prévillé certainly took Garrick's advice on matters of detail connected with their art, and the Encyclopaedist group agreed with the views he expressed during his stay in Paris, it was not his direct contact with French minds, but rather Diderot's ordered arrangement of ideas on these subjects which exercised a profound influence on contemporary acting and play writing.

On the other hand, without Lillo, Richardson, and Garrick to show him that his ideas were of practical value, and without the better understanding of Garrick's art which the actor's second visit to Paris gave Diderot, he would not have endowed his reasoning with such persuasive force, and Beaumarchais, Mercier, or Molé, would not have sought the aid of English models in planning the action of a play, or the interpretation of a part on the stage.

Two facts stand out when we reconsider the effect of English ideas on the various points in the technique of French drama which lay open to their influence.

The first was the trick of telling a story in action, which contrasted with the French "conversations in five acts".
Those critics who desired to reform heroic tragedy found the obvious remedy in permitting the audience to see more of the events which precipitated the catastrophe. The writers of "drame bourgeois", to compensate for the loss of that poetry which surrounds the fate of kings and heroes, and following the precedent set by Lillo and Moore, enlivened their plays with bustling movement, and an unwonted pictorial appeal.

Consequently, English authority was invoked, to shake off the tyranny of the three unities. Mercier made the most determined effort to accomplish this, but only a very small measure of success rewarded all the attempts to break with tradition there. Further, the new "active" plays were a response to La Motte's criticism of French tragedy as unnatural, and as one of the salient points in his attack concerned the artificial quality of the verse spoken in these plays, it became the fashion to advocate the use of prose. Landois applied the idea to his experiment in domestic drama, and after him, Diderot took it up. He decided that prose was the better medium for "tragédie bourgeoise", since it blended harmoniously with the atmosphere and the social purpose of these plays of private woe; a truth instilled by the example of Lillo and Moore.

The second fact arose from the new desire to give pleasure to the eye of the spectator. Movement and decoration assumed great importance, and this increased when the
Comte de Laraguais "cleared the stage". Voltaire was one of the first to study grouping and gesture in tragedy; an interest stimulated by his acquaintance with the English theatre. Diderot was even more decisively influenced by Lillo, Richardson, and Garrick. Spurred on to creative thought by contact with them, he mapped out a complete theory of pantomime, and flashed forth a new vision of drama as a living picture. His "drame bourgeois" broke new ground, and was more sensitive to English influences than the older varieties of comedy or tragedy, which were hedged in by the conservative theory that nothing was to be learnt from England in matters of form. Therefore Diderot was the effective agent in spreading a revolutionary conception of stagecraft, whose vital force is not even yet exhausted.

At the same time, the value of a natural style in declamation and posture was realised. Again, Voltaire first awoke to the urgent need of modifying the stiffness of movement, and the conventional tones adopted by actors in tragic parts. Towards 1758 Diderot composed a guide to natural acting, where he adduced Garrick's performances as an excellent practical demonstration of his theory. General interest in this art excited further discussion; and writers who defined "natural" in different ways, and held opposing views on the place of sentiment in acting, all agreed in praise of Garrick as supreme master of his art. He himself took part
in this controversy, and communicated to his friends certain ideas that concurred with Grimm's and Diderot's position in the debate: but his example, and his precepts served only to hasten the development of French acting along certain lines, and not to determine its course.

On the whole, English influence on the technique of French drama confirmed tendencies that were already present, and guided it towards greater freedom and a more realistic style in writing and acting, without a break in the continuity of the tradition of form in France. There is nothing in the history of "drame bourgeois" to compare with the preparations for the Romantic revolt in the early years of the nineteenth century.
CONCLUSION.
CONCLUSION.

English contributions to experiments in French drama during the eighteenth century reflected most of the important movements of thought that arose from contact between the two countries, while the work of French playwrights bore witness to the diffusion and penetration of English ideas.

This emerges from a review of the part played by various English writers in stimulating the development of new forms of dramatic writing in France. To this end, we may divide their work into groups according to the form of expression chosen.

First we shall consider the effect of English thinkers as represented by Steele, Addison, and Shaftesbury, on the French theatre.

Steele and Addison promoted the rise of a novel type of comedy. They inspired Prévost with the idea that Terence was the father of sentimental drama. Marivaux, in Le Spectateur Français, and Prévost in Le Pour et Contre endeavoured to reproduce the Spectator's zeal for social reform, its sympathy with misfortune, and even its humour. This created an atmosphere conducive to the writing of moral, tearful comedy. Steele and Addison ranked with the great philosophers of the time, and they fostered the legend of the English capacity for reasoned
thought, which found expression on the stage in Boissy's Le français à Londres, and Marivaux's counterblast, L'Isle de la Raison. Although these two plays instituted no change in the form of comedy, they revealed the keenness of interest in England, which was the motive power behind later developments in the theatre.

The Spectator often pointed its morals with pathetic tales; and this met a need created in France by the passing of respect for balance and self control and by the growing tendency to enjoy sensibility, and to regard such a pleasure as a mark of virtue. Later in the century, the humour which seasoned the reflection and the appeal to feeling in The Spectator encouraged those French writers who used material from that periodical to introduce scenes of merriment into their "comédies sérieuses". Thus they departed from Diderot's conception of such plays, and their blend of sentiment, exhortation, and gaiety betrayed an appreciation of individual humours, after the English style. The influence of the Spectator does not wholly account for this difference between a play like Madame de Montesson's L'Heureux Échange and one like Le Préjugé à la Mode, but it must be allowed some responsibility for the change.

Three stories from the Spectator reappeared in French drama. The first, Steele's Inkle and Yarico served to propagate the belief that savages were more virtuous than
civilized men; the second, Addison's relation of Theodosius' love for Constantia, suggested to Baculard d'Arnaud a transmutation of Polyeuca into the values of every-day life; the third, Madame de Montesson's version of Eudoxius and Leontine was applied to the difficulties of education in middle-class homes, and pointed to the rediscovery of The Spectator as a mirror of the good life.

Shaftesbury touched the moral or inward content of the new drama in France. His work concentrated the teaching of the optimists, and its spirit so accorded with the aims which Diderot professed when he created "drame bourgeois", that the united energy of Shaftesbury's thought and of Diderot's exposition sped far and wide the message that human nature was essentially good, and that poets must employ the vital power of the connection between beauty in the moral world and in the world of art in teaching men to live aright. Although Shaftesbury counted for much in the formulation of this creed, it must be regarded as the result of many converging influences, both native and foreign, which clamoured for some spiritual consolation, since that of orthodox religion had been refused.

After the thinkers, come the writers of sentimental comedy and of domestic tragedy. Steele and Addison come forward once more, as the authors of The Conscious Lovers and of The Drummer. Destouches' comedy, Le Philosophe Marié,
the first to draw tears from an audience in Paris, owed something to Steele and to Addison, and its success marked the transference of popular favour from plays written in the tradition of Molière to those written in the style which La Chaussée was to perfect. Later on, Destouches' translation of The Drummer was acclaimed as an excellent "comédie larmoyante", and became a stock piece at the Théâtre Français, while the Preface to Quétant's version of the Conscious Lovers and Madame de Vasse's rendering of it define the subtle change of critical values, and the growing importance attached to a spice of gaiety in this type of play, which marked the latest phase of angломania towards 1789.

Some of the minor dramatists of England were imitated in such a way as to favour the appearance of this latter variety of "mixed" comedy. The success of La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV, which was built up on Dodsley's The King and the Miller of Mansfield had encouraged further attempts to blend humour - of a kind not unlike the English - with sentiment. Murphy's The Way to Keep Him revived the matter of Le Préjugé à la Mode, and it possessed a comic flavour which was by no means entirely absent from La Chabeaussière's or from Marsollier's handling of the theme. Moline also preserved, although less conspicuously, the peculiarly English combination of pathos and laughter in Kelly's False Delicacy.
Sheridan's *School for Scandal* became an instrument in the attempt to lay bare the snobbery and self-satisfaction which vitiated the sensibility of Rousseau's followers in fashionable circles just before the Revolution, while it seconded the example of Figaro by provoking a salutary distaste for the gloomy aspects of middle-class life presented in "drame bourgeois".

In France, English comedy had to combat a prejudiced judgment of its inferiority in design and in tone; hence it left no permanent mark on the traditions of this branch of drama, and its themes were generally taken up by the obscurer and less enterprising writers.

Conditions were more propitious when English domestic tragedy, represented by the work of Lillo and Moore, came to be known: at that time, French critics were beginning to show sympathy and understanding towards the serious drama in England, and Diderot's enthusiastic appreciation of *The Merchant* and *The Gamester* communicated itself to the more progressive men of letters.

These plays set before French eyes a clear, complete, and practical definition of a kind of tragedy which was deemed to be a necessary supplement to the heroic variety, and they saved Diderot from the complicated task of deducing its principles from the tentative efforts of his predecessors who had been groping towards "plays of private woe". English
precedent gave him confidence to assert that 'merchants had
the right to wear the buskin'; that the distresses of common
humanity might strike at the passions and persuade the spectat-
ors to virtue even better than imperial sorrows; and that this
was a legitimate enlargement of the graver kind of poetry.
Finally, Lillo undoubtedly contributed a hint for the "drama
of conditions", from which preceded the praise and description
of commercial life in Le Fils Naturel, Le Philosophe sans le
Savoir and Les Deux Amis.

Lillo's frank and poignant attack on the dangers of
prostitution overcame the delicacy and timidity of French
audiences, and was highly esteemed in Mercier's statement of
the problem: while the horror of Beverley's ruin and suicide
was preferred to Saurin's "rose-coloured" solution of the
intrigue, and to Pigault-Lebrun's portrait of the Gamester
repentant and reformed. Such a victory over the traditions
of French taste reveals the preoccupation with moral values,
and the delight in "strong scenes" which marked the revolt
from balance, restraint, and universal appeal in drama.

The formal side of writing for the stage was similarly
affected by the prestige acquired by The Merchant and The
Gamester in France. Mercier, La Harpe, and Saurin committed
minor breaches of the unity of place. Diderot favoured the
adoption of prose in "tragédie bourgeoise", because Lillo.

(1) Acte IV, sc.iv. Le Fils Naturel, t.VII, Oeuvres de
Diderot, éd. Assézat.
Moore, and Shakespeare had employed it. Since they admired the busy and picturesque action of these plays, Fréron deplored Saurin's omission of the scenes in the gaming house from Le Joueur, and La Harpe ventured to put the murder in Barneveldit on the stage, and Diderot was stimulated to the enunciation of his individual and constructive theory of pantomime, which began a revolution in acting and in the staging of drama.

Shakespeare's influence, although it was mainly directed towards the reform of heroic tragedy, permeated into "drame bourgeois" with Baculard d'Arnaud, who saw in him a master of "the sombre" and with Mercier, who claimed Shakespeare's authority for endowing "domestic" plays with a nation-wide appeal, who uttered his own opinions on love and marriage through the masks of Romeo and Juliet, and who condemned the observation of the unities, because he had learnt the transcendent force of Shakespeare's freedom from Johnson's Preface.

Richardson was the first-known and the best-loved of the English novelists in France. His skill in evoking sympathy for virtue in distress aroused emulation both in the novel and in the drama, so that his influence bore upon "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois" from two quarters. A quality implied rather than emphasised in Richardson's sentiment was more fully developed in France; this was the
value set upon feeling as the sign and prerogative of virtue, and upon the pleasure caused by exercising this emotion. The example of Pamela and Clarissa lent fresh vigour to Diderot's statement that the sorrows of private life could as worthily stir the pity and terror of an audience as imperial tragedies; while, as numerous plays adapted from them show, the opposition of the righteous middle classes and a corrupt aristocracy in these works fitted easily into the scheme of "drame bourgeois" and supplemented the social philosophy of Lillo and Moore. Richardson's use of action as an index of feeling had no small part in shaping Diderot's proposals for reform in the art of acting. On the whole, however, the sentiment in Richardson takes pride of place amongst the influences from the English novel that remoulded French drama.

His pupil, Mrs Sheridan, need only be named here as the author of the story which furnished the material for Mercier's L'Habitant de la Guadeloupe, and as the inventor of an addition to the stock-in-trade of the French theatre, the "uncle from America".

Fielding likewise increased the store of themes available to playwrights, and initiated a more realistic method of representing English life in "drame". It was late in the century before conditions would allow of such a change, but Desforges' vivid touches of local colour, the adroit management of his plot in Tom Jones à Londres, and the topical lesson,
which were all gleaned from his model, flattered the taste of his audience, who had caught the fever of admiration for all things English that raged in pre-Revolutionary France.

English poets also quickened the imagination of dramatists like Baculard d'Arnaud, who acknowledged his debt to Young's *Night Thoughts*, in the definition of the "sombre" variety of "drame bourgeois". Nevertheless, Young was the only English poet whose ideas directly affected this type of play.

Young's critical essay *On original composition* broadened Mercier's conception of the lesser tragedy, and armed him with revolutionary arguments, which, he hoped, would overcome the opposition of those conservative writers who upheld imperial tragedy and the orthodox comedy of manners. We have already touched upon the parallel influence of Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare* on Mercier's dramatic creed.

In addition, two simplified views of English life so gripped the interest of French writers, that several plays embodied them. The disposition to commit suicide was the first of these. Gresset and Destouches made it a matter of comedy, and built up a dispute on the moral issues involved. Diderot declared that it might fittingly conclude a tragedy of private life\(^1\); but, except in Saurin's copy of *The Gamester*,

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it was not approved in serious plays. The later comedies either mocked at self-murder as an English disease, or as a fashionable folly of French society. They revealed the hold which habits reputed to be English had gained in France, for "spleen" had been naturalised as "les vapeurs", and suicide occurred with growing frequency in the closing years of the century.

The other belief concerned liberty of choice in marriage. Favart and the Encyclopédie informed the public that English law sanctioned clandestine unions. Then Rousseau arrayed all the arguments of passion and nature against the law and custom of his country, which were repeated in a series of plays whose authors obeyed the prevailing taste by referring to English precedent.

Last of all comes Garrick, who contributed to the development of a different style of acting on the French stage. His personal friendship with French men of letters elevated him to the position of their advisor in matters connected with his art, but motives of courtesy or self-interest, rather than of true respect moved them to consult him. He was universally hailed as the supreme artist in declamation and gesture; but always because he illustrated a point, or proved some conclusion drawn by the writers who discussed stagecraft. His influence on Diderot was not creative, but co-operative; and thus he was only able to put life and fire into opinions
already held, and to remove some of the common prejudices against English drama.

We shall next briefly survey what the two more important experiments in French drama gained from familiarity with the literature of England. "Comédie larmoyante" made profitable use of Steele's discovery of Terence as a reputable ancestor. Richardson's sentimental novels paved the way for La Chaussée's triumph; and set the seal of universal applause upon a movement in which Prévost and Marivaux also took part. Collier's vindictive attack on the theatre of his country was metamorphosed into a plea for moral comedy in France; while the origin of "comédie larmoyante" may be traced ultimately to the questioning of authority consequent upon the taste for English science and philosophy.

The "drame bourgeois" reproduced certain salient features of that middle-class literature which had come to the fore in England. Rowe, Lillo, and Moore demonstrated the possibility of creating forms of drama intermediary between heroic tragedy and gay comedy. Much of the sentiment in "drame" bore traces of the adulation bestowed upon Richardson. Some of the lessons instilled by Diderot and his followers breathed the spirit of Shaftesbury, or were reasoned out with the disregard for authority and the dispassionate inquiry characteristic of English thought. Young and Shakespeare assisted in the liberation of French drama from the scruples
of seventeenth-century tradition, and the general trend of English influences fostered realism in every aspect of dramatic composition. At the end of the century, a recrudescence of sympathy for English comedy even succeeded in breaking down one of the most stable and cherished principles of French art, the unity of tone in writing for the stage.

It may throw a little fresh light on our enquiry to estimate the relative importance of personal relationships, of translations, and of interpretations of English thought, as channels of communication.

Personal contact was comparatively rare. Destouches, one of the earliest visitors to England, was extremely reserved in the application of his experience to the reform of French comedy. Prévost invested his descriptions of English life and letters with the zest of first-hand knowledge, but he had to combat a good deal of prejudice. Voltaire was consistently opposed to both the innovations in drama, and therefore could not directly control their development, while Rousseau went to England too late to modify his deepest convictions, and, like Voltaire, held aloof from "drame bourgeois". Diderot relied on his reading, rather than on his acquaintance with Englishmen for help in ordering his views on the theatre. Garrick promoted a cordial exchange of ideas between men of letters on both sides of the Channel, but his talk, and his acting in Paris, strengthened tendencies already present
there, without suggesting anything really unprecedented. Sterne passed through the Salons, and left no trace on the serious plays of middle life, and Johnson brought nothing to "drame" when he made a short stay in the French capital.

Translations could be read and re-read, and thus facilitated the deduction of theories, or the fabrication of plays with an unhackneyed theme. Hence Prévost, Clément, La Place, Suard and Madame Riccoboni, or obscurer writers like La Chapelle, Descazeaux, Desgranges, Patu, Bruté de Loirelle, Robinet, Quétant, and Madame de Vasse, assumed an importance far outweighing the intrinsic merit of their performance. The history of translation during this century also discloses a complete change of attitude with regard to English literature; from a rather shamefaced apology, for the original, and a severe revision of it, in conformity to French taste, it turned to a respectful accuracy of rendering.

Important though it was, the work of translators was subservient to public opinion; the mutation of English ideas into some ordered theory in works like the Lettres Philosophiques, or Diderot's Entretiens had power to control popular taste. Grimm's far-seeing criticism, Suard's intelligent direction of the Journal Étranger, and even Mercier's provocative arguments, inasmuch as they dealt with English literature, stirred less original minds to action. These men were the true begettors of the new drama in France, and
they drove the ideas generated by their sympathy with English writers and thinkers deep into its very heart.

Travellers' tales furnished a necessary background for these more gifted interpretations of English thought. Muralt, Moreau de Brasey, Madame du Boccage, and Grosley - to name only a few - satisfied the elementary curiosity of the French nation about its neighbour, and helped to bring certain general ideas concerning the English character into the plays which depicted it on the French stage.

Hence, English thought penetrated into most aspects of the experiments in French drama, when it formed part of some compelling thought on the subject expressed by a critic like Voltaire, or Diderot. It was widely diffused, because translations brought it within reach of provincial readers, and the obscurer dramatists, and both its penetration and diffusion were helped by the work of foreign travellers in France and England.

Diderot was the indispensable link between England and "drame bourgeois"; Prévost was the most important of the few who carried English ideas over into "comédie larmoyante"; and their work again stresses the importance of a critical presentation of such ideas, in order to prepare them for action on French drama.

Three questions arise from our study which demand some answer.
First, how far was the influence of English thought creative? There is nothing to prove that "comédie larmoyante" was derived from the theory or the example of English writers. We may more confidently assert that Lillo and Moore set the finishing touches to Diderot's theories of a drama which should teach virtue through picturing the sorrows of middle-class characters; and that Richardson and Shaftesbury represented those elements in philosophy and literature which imparted a different bias to the sentiment that animated "drame", and to the message it held for the nation. Again, a few types were added to the repertory of French characters as a direct result of the popularity enjoyed by English plays and novels.

Second; what were the changes suffered by English ideas before they came to life again in French drama? Generally speaking, they were altered so as to harmonize with the doctrines of the "philosophes", they were shorn of any exaggeration which seemed incompatible with the French love of refined sentiment and logical construction, and they were reproduced in some form which made no complete breach with the great traditions bequeathed by Corneille, Racine, and Molière.

Third; did these ideas lead to any permanent modifications in the dramatic art of France?

The "drame bourgeois" was continued in the melodrama of the early nineteenth century, while the "mixed" comedy of the
decade before 1789 may have some connection with Romantic
drama, and with modern comedy, where tears and laughter mingle.
There is more reason to believe that the part played by
English literature in forming Diderot's theory of conditions lived on in the comedy of manners of the ensuing centuries,
while the influence of England in shifting the centre of in-
terest from the inner conflicts of the soul to the clash of
circumstances, was perpetuated in the busier action of plays
written after the Revolution.

The movement of thought which we have examined touched
none of the great masters of French drama; yet our excursion
into the byways of eighteenth century literature may help to
explain the chief characteristics of English influence during
that period, while it defines the relationship of attempts to
reform the older tragedy and comedy with the forces which
produced the Revolution; and reveals the continuity of a tradi-
tion which remained unbroken from Le Cid and Andromaque to
Hernani.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.
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I. List of French plays, mentioned in this study, which showed signs of English influence.

II. List of English works which supplied material for writers of "comédie larmoyante" and of "drame bourgeois", with the translations probably used by the French playwrights.

III. Works of contemporary criticism and biography, bearing on the subject of English influences in this direction.

IV. Modern criticism and biography.

V. Works of general interest and information.
List of French plays, mentioned in this study, which showed signs of English influence.

In alphabetical order of titles.

Abbreviations used in the following lists: a. acte, p. prose, v. vers, v.l. vers libres, com. comédie, ed. édition, or édité; Th. Fr. Théâtre Français, Th. It. Théâtre des Italiens.


(ed. Londres - Genève, 1760. Th. Fr. July 26, 1760.)

École de la Jeunesse, L', ou Le Barneveld François,
Anseaume, com. 3 a.v., mêlée d'ariettes,

Époux Généreux, L', ou Le Pouvoir des Procédés, Bedeno

(1767. Oeuvres, Paris 1876.) Th. Fr.
Jan. 29, 1767.

Euphémie, ou le Triomphe de la Religion. Baculard d'Arnaud.
drame, 3 a.v.
(ed. Yverdon, 1768. never played.)

Fabricant de Londres, Le, Fenouillot de Falbaire. drame 5 a.p.
(ed. Paris 1771. Th. Fr. Jan. 12, 1771.)

Dec. 15, 1783.)

(1727. ed. Oeuvres, t.II, Paris 1768.)
Th. Fr. July 3, 1727.

Français en Huronie, Le, Dumaniant. com. 1 a.v.
(ed. Paris 1787. Palais-Royal, April 30, 1787.)

Femme Jalousie, La, Choudard Desforges. com. 5 a.v.

(ed. Neufchâtel, 1782. Th. It. April 15, 1782.)

Héloïse Anglaise, L', J. Aude. drame 3 a.v.
(ed. Paris 1783, Versailles, March 24, 1778.)

Henri IV, ou la Bataille d'Ivry. Du Rozoy. drame lyrique,3.a.

(ed. Oeuvres Anonymes, tome II, Paris 1782-85, never played.)

Homme à Sentiments, L', ou le Tartufe de Moeurs. Chéron de la Bruyère, com. 5 a.v.
(ed. Paris 1817, Th. Fr. March 10, 1789.)

(ed. Paris 1772. Th. It. 22 Nov. 1782.)

(ed. Paris 1734. Th. It. 24 Sept. 1734.)

(ed. Oeuvres, Paris 1781, t.I; Th.It. 20 Sept. 1727.)

Jenneval, ou le Barnevelt François, L.S. Mercier, drame, 5 a.p.
(Paris 1751. acted at Tours, 1775, by "la troupe de Monsieur").

Jeune Indienne, La, Chamfort. com. 1 a.v.
(Paris 1764. Th. Fr. 30 April 1764.)

Joueur, Le, Saurin. tragédie bourgeoise, 5 a.v.l.

Joueuse, La, Pigault-Lebrun. drame 3 a.v.
(ed. Paris 1789. Variétés Amusantes, 17 June 1789.)


Mélanie, ou la Religieuse. La Harpe. drame 3 a.v.


(ed. Oeuvres, Garnier, Paris 1877, t.IV.)
Th. Fr. June 16, 1749.


Orphanis, Blin de Saimmore. tragédie, 5 a.v.
(Paris 1774. Th.Fr. Sept. 23, 1773.)
Paméla, ou La Vertu mieux éprouvée. L. de Boissy. com.
3 a.v.l.

Dec. 6, 1743.)

Partie de Chasse de Henri IV, La, Collé. com. 3 a.p.
(Paris 1766. Th.Fr. Nov.16,1774; for
the Duc d'Orléans, 1762.)

(1758. ed. Oeuvres, Assézat. t.VII;
Théâtre de Marseilles, nov.1760. Th.Fr.
Feb.15, 1761.)

Philosophe Marié, Le, ou Le Mari Honteux de l'Être;
Destouches, com. 5 a.v.
Th.Fr. Feb. 15, 1727.)

Philosophe sans le Savoir, Le, Sedaine, com. 5 a.p.

Roi et le Fermier, Le, Sedaine. com. 3 a.v. mêlée de
morceaux de musique.

Séducteur, Le, Marquis de Bièvre. com. 5 a.v.
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(ed. Oeuvres, Paris, 1824, t.II. Th.Fr.
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   (Neufchâtel 1782. Never played.)
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List of English works which provided material for writers of "comédie larmoyante" and "drame bourgeois", with the translations probably used by the French playwrights.

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no translation.


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Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la vertu, tirés du Manuscrit d'une jeune Dame. Prévost d'Exiles. Cologne 1762.

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