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A DISSERTATION  
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LES CONTENTS OF ODET DE TURNÈBE: A CRITICAL STUDY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PLÉIADE DRAMATIC THEORY ON THE STRUCTURE OF <u>LES CON-</u> <u>TENTS</u> . . . . .	12
III. APPEARANCE-REALITY . . . . .	32
IV. ART AND LIFE . . . . .	45
V. STYLE . . . . .	68
VI. CONCLUSION . . . . .	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	96

## LES CONTENTS OF ODET DE TURNÈBE: A CRITICAL STUDY

### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION

A critical study of Odet de Turnèbe's comedy Les Contents presents many difficulties because the work, printed posthumously, was not prepared for publication by the author himself. A friend of his, Pierre de Ravel, had it published in 1584 under the title: Les Contents. Comédie nouvelle en prose Française. The editio princeps was published in Paris by Felix le Magnier, Librairie Juré en L'Université de Paris, au Palais en la Galerie allant à la Chancellerie.

A second edition appeared in 1626 published by Charles Maupas who changed the title to: Les Desguisez. Comédie Française. Avec L'espliation des Proverbes et mots difficiles. The play did not appear in print again until 1856 when Jannet included it in the seventh volume of the collection entitled Ancien Théâtre François. The second and last publication before the twentieth century was in the collection Théâtre Français au XVIe et au XVIIe siècle of Fourrier published in 1871. In 1961 Professor Norman B. Spector of Northwestern University in Evanston,

Illinois, edited a critical edition of Les Contents. This edition was based on the editio princeps of 1584 with modifications of orthography and punctuation.

The date of composition of the play has not yet been specifically established. Possible dates of composition range from 1579 to 1581. The historical or circumstantial themes of Turnèbe's poetry composed while at Poitiers are easier to place chronologically. His twelve sonnets dedicated to Catherine des Roches commemorating the exploits both historical and legendary of the Lusignan family must have been written shortly after the year 1574. These sonnets were an effort on the part of the poet to preserve the memory of the ancient lords of Cyprus after their ancestral castle was destroyed in 1574 by Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Montpensier, during a siege against local Huguenots who had barricaded themselves behind its walls.

Turnèbe's second poetic collection is a two hundred line octosyllabic madrigal composed on the occasion of a far less serious incident. During his participation in the legal debates known as "Les Grands Jours" of Poitiers and as respite from his duties at the court, Turnèbe frequented the salon of the Desroches ladies. He and others, among them Etienne Pasquier, who also left an excellent account to posterity of the Grands Jours, went:

comme tous les beaux esprits de cette haute cour, chez les dames Desroches, qui donnaient alors le ton pour les choses de poésie et de mode dans la capitale poitevine. Tout y était prétexte, à jeux d'esprit, matière à galanteries, aussitôt moulées en jolis vers par quelques-uns des rimeurs de cette magistrature en gaieté.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edouard Fournier, Le Théâtre français au XVIe et au XVIIe siècles, Tome Ier (Paris: Garnier, n.d.), p. 230.



In this salon -- a precursor of that of Mme de Rambouillet -- the carefree magistrates amused themselves "à faire le bel esprit" in light conversation and in the composition of gallant verse. Any occasion of frivolous origin might stir them to write. When one hot summer evening a fly persistently remained like a black mole on the white bosom of Madeleine des Roches, the beautiful daughter of the hostess, it caused peals of laughter, and the insolent insect became immediately not only the center of attention but also an inspiration for the composition of madrigals by Turnèbe and other young magistrates. Soon a whole collection of poems, similar to the Guirlande de Julie in the seventeenth century, was formed, and its publication drew notable attention from the cultivated public and the socialites of Poitiers.

This literary activity in Poitiers and in its nucleus, the salon of Mme des Roches and her daughter Madeleine, is vividly depicted in George Diller's book Les Dames des Roches. According to Diller the poetic tournament on the fly incident was published in 1582 with a reprint the following year under the title La Puce de Madame des Roches. Another valuable work for a general study of the literary salons in the second half of the sixteenth century is Clark L. Keating's book Studies on the Literary Salons in France 1550-1615.

Although critics have made casual remarks upon the unusual qualities of Odet de Turnèbe's poetry, no study has been made exclusively on his poetic output. Fourrier finds great promise in young Turnèbe's lyric poetry and regrets that his untimely death stopped his creativity from reaching its fullest potential.

Odet pour son compte n'avait pas écrit moins de deux cents vers, dans le rythme de huit syllabes, alerte et leste comme ce qu'il chantait. On juge par là de ce qu'aurait été son souffle et son entrain en des sujets plus grands et plus dignes.

The same promise is discerned in his comedy Les Contents. This is his only play and was written shortly before he died in July 1581 at the young age of twenty-eight. Whether the play was written in 1579, 1580, or 1581 is rather immaterial; what is regrettable, as in the case of his poetry, is that since this is his sole theatrical endeavor there is no possibility of tracing the evolution of his dramatic art as can be done with the art of Shakespeare. However, with these limitations taken for granted, there is much that can be done in the way of interpretation and criticism; and one can but be grateful to the editors, especially Norman Spector, for saving the work of this brilliant mind from oblivion.

The mystery of Odet de Turnèbe's outwardly uneventful life has only attracted one biographer, G. Cavallucci. He published Odet de Turnèbe simultaneously at Naples and Paris in 1942 with no apparent intention for the book to be distributed commercially.<sup>2</sup>

From the scanty factual material available it is known that Odet de Turnèbe was born on the 23rd of October, 1553, with a name already made famous in literary circles by his father. Adrien Turnèbe (or Tournebu), a Hellenist and a Latinist, was the first person to be appointed to the professorship of Greek by Francis I in the newly established school, independent of the Sorbonne, Les Lecteurs Royaux. He

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<sup>2</sup>Literary reference indicates that this biography was "pas mis dans le commerce." The author of the present study has not seen this work.

also served as director of the royal press. He was "un des hommes dont le savoir aida le mieux au progrès en France des deux littératures, la grecque et la latine, d'où notre Renaissance."<sup>3</sup> He died when Odet was only twelve years old. Odet learned Latin at a very early age, and he knew it so well that after his father's death, he wrote the dedicatory chapters for two of his father's works. These works, Plutarchi de Fato and Adversaria, were published posthumously in 1566. He was a student at the Parisian college of Lisieux and in 1571-72 he studied law with his brother Etienne at the University of Toulouse. After the completion of his studies he became a lawyer at Poitiers, and was nominated First President of the Court des Monnaies, shortly before his death. This occurred the 20th of July, 1581 from an attack of fever. Professor Spector has compiled a detailed bibliography pertinent both to Turnèbe's background and to the sources of the play which he included in his critical edition of Les Contents.

There is no evidence of any collection of Turnèbe's personal letters or mementos published in the United States or in France. If any are extant, the originals are probably in French archives.

Periodical material on Les Contents amounts at the present time to only two articles written sixty-six years apart. The first, by Jules Lemaître, is entitled "Les Contents d'Odet de Turnèbe" and appeared in the Revue Hebdomadaire des Cours et Conférences in 1893. The second article, "Odet de Turnèbe's Les Contents and the Italian Comedy" by Norman B. Spector was published in French Studies in 1959. Professor

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<sup>3</sup>Fournier, Le Théâtre français, p. 229.

Spector has aptly stated in this article:

Odet de Turnèbe's Les Contents is acknowledged as the masterpiece of French Renaissance comedy, and it occupies an important place in the history of the French comic theatre. Despite this, the play has never received its due, perhaps in part because of its unavailability, perhaps because no one has yet made a detailed study of it.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of the present work is a study specifically of the conventions of plot, character, and style. The conventions of the Renaissance comic theater, it may be stated now, were seldom original creations. They derived from Roman comedy, from the farces, from the commedia erudita of Ariosto and his successors, from the commedia dell'arte and from the novelistic tradition of Boccaccio.

Turnèbe's play reminds one of the Contenti of Parabosco and Les Esbahis of Grévin, while the casuistry of Françoise, the religious hypocrite in the play, echoes the cunning priest Frate Timoteo in Machiaveli's comedy La Mandragola. However, this study is not interested in the sources of Les Contents. What we will try to do is to establish the conventions the author adheres to and to give an evaluative judgment of the variations Turnèbe created within this pattern that enabled him to provide a contemporary atmosphere to his comedy within an accepted framework. In general, and particularly in Turnèbe's case, the important aspect of his work is that he began his career with a more than ordinary sensitiveness. Objects and episodes in life, whether the life of every day or of the mind, produced upon him a deep and precise impression.

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<sup>4</sup>Norman B. Spector, "Odet de Turnèbe's Les Contents and Italian Comedy," French Studies, XIII (October, 1959).

During his adult life Turnèbe moved into a society that was predominantly legalistic, intellectual and italianate. It is possible that a repetitious observation of the legal cases in the courts must have at length created emotional convictions called sometimes 'a writer's philosophy' or attitude in him. The part played by the intellect in his work is essentially subordinate to the irony, which illustrates the gap between real morality and the bourgeois concern for appearances. However, the intellect's subordinate function may be much more important in expounding and conveying the universe of Turnèbe's experience.

His conventional plot taken from the common life of everyday events is saturated with the quality of life the writer discerns. The characters and various aspects of the play are in part a re-creation of the conventions available to him, and in part a reflection of the existing world around him. It is the second that brings to the fore the sensitivity of the creative writer as he discerns the world that surrounds him.

The last quarter of the sixteenth century coincides with a very significant change in the French Renaissance theater. In the period of the Pléiade (1552-1574) three forms of the comic theater were already well known in France: the native farces, the plays of Terence, and Italian comedies. The farces were still firmly alive though they had passed their heyday fifty years before, at the end of the fifteenth century.

When Etienne Jodelle wrote L'Eugène, which his contemporaries hailed as the first native French comedy, the plays of Terence and Italian comedies provided the Pléiade group of comic writers with two further models. The first was more literary than theatrical and the

second only intermittent. There was a remarkable number of editions of Terence in France used in schools and universities, and his lively dramatic style made him suitable for the study of rhetoric as well as of other aspects of the dramatic art.

As for the Italian comedies, their performance in France at this time, such as that of Bibbiena's La Calandria in 1548 at Lyon, or of Alamanni's Flora in 1555 at Fontainebleau, were isolated. Their influence does not become properly significant until the establishment of Italian troupes in France in the early 1570's.

At the time of the Pléiade, ten comedies at least were written. The authors of the first generation - Jodelle, Grévin, Belleau, La Taille - created a successful fusion of the living theatrical tradition of the farces and the classical models. From the farces they took the octosyllabic meter and its satire on the characters of the mari complaisant and his wife with her easy morals. From Terence they borrowed the five acts, the rather large number of characters, the serious nature of some of the speeches (such as Arnault's in L'Eugène on the professions of scholar and soldier) and the developed characterization. In practically all of them the plot develops around a relationship, illicit or otherwise, the peril that threatens the relationship and how the peril is avoided at the end. The situation, as a whole, remains farcical and is less developed than it might have been in one of the Italianate plays of the kind of Les Contents.

In the late 1570's a new period began not only in the history of comedy, but in the literary and artistic scene as a whole. The Italianism of the time of the Pléiade, that by reaction had for a time

become less evident in France, now returns in a different way, and in strength. The difference from a broad point of view can be explained only in a general sense that covers all aspects of life of which the comedy forms a part.

As the Renaissance wore on during the sixteenth century, all western Europe was inwardly shaken by tremors of malaise and distrust. The evidences are everywhere: in the growth of the Reformation, the blood baths of Saint Bartholomew, the disciplines enforced by the Council of Trent, and the equivocal policies of the Jesuit order. Manifestations of this malaise appear in philosophy, literature, science, the arts, and in the very conscience of this era. Montaigne's easy skepticism, Bacon's reliance upon private judgment and experience, the restlessness of Tintoretto's paintings and the elastic, uneasy figures of El Greco are all manifestations of what Wylie Sypher calls "a crisis of history and consciousness."<sup>5</sup>

Italian Renaissance life as it was portrayed in the learned comedies commanded the attention of the Elizabethan and French playwrights. The plots of intrigue, the devices of disguises and mistaken identities, and the witty dialogue in the Italian plays fascinated the European playwrights. There was something unchaste, irreligious, and definitely salacious in the portraiture of everyday life in Italy that drew authors to such models in spite of themselves. The effort now is to secure the maximum theatrical effect. Authors were becoming more sensitive to the spectacular side of the theater rather than observing a strict adherence to the unities.

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<sup>5</sup>Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1955), p. 102.

At the height of the Renaissance, authors imposed upon their aesthetic world a unity, a closed system of ratios based on a meticulously planned theory, out of which their art grew. Up to the time of the High Renaissance, it was the opposite. Then, the world of the Pléiade comic theater was founded upon a theory of correct proportions. The dramatic conventions established by the Renaissance theorists attempted to organize episodes and characters according to a principle of propriety, decorum or probability. The Pléiade playwright's emphasis is to create a technique that would explain how things happen and appear.

In the Italianate period of the French Renaissance comic theater, the Renaissance aesthetic founded upon the concepts of proportion and harmony and unity is significantly altered. Sypher states:

Until recently we have lacked any name to denote this period, when the renaissance optimism is shaken, when proportion breaks down and experiment takes the form of morbid ingenuity or scalding wit; art and thought curve away unpredictably along private tangents; approximation, equivocation, and accommodation are accepted, as working principles; the sensibility of writers and artists seems overexercised. Apparently we have now found a name for this disturbance: mannerism, a term adopted from art history.<sup>6</sup>

Les Contents also is a product of the mentality of crisis described above. Turnèbe's principal concern, unquestionably manneristic in orientation, is to use the structural logic of the conventions for psychological effects. A tendency in Les Contents to excess within rigid boundaries is in step with the temper of "tormenting doubt and rigorous obedience to ardently felt but incoherent dogmatic principles."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 127.



An analysis of the use of the conventions in Les Contents laid by the Pléïade within the principles of the Renaissance consciousness of proportion will reveal that Turnèbe has created within them a more architectural space to accommodate his action. In this action he achieves a higher degree of reality. It is a reality resonant with a fuller consciousness of man moving away from the sense of security and equilibrium expressed in Renaissance style to a phase of doubt and skepticism characteristic of the mannerist temperament. Appearance-reality, the position of the artist in society, and the study of speech will provide the basis for an understanding of the relationship between the form and content of Turnèbe's play. The analysis of the play in these chapters will also reveal his ability to offer through a relatively simple plot glimpses of a more complex and comprehensive sense of the quality of life of which he had been by chance a spectator.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE PLEIADE DRAMATIC THEORY

#### ON THE STRUCTURE OF LES CONTENTS

The evolution of Renaissance comedy of which Les Contents is a part takes its origin from the Greek New Comedy. The mixture of tones - sharp contrasts of comic and serious, rudeness and poetic elevation - obtained an established place in this type of drama. In the hands of the Romans, comedy, without losing the old, admitted a new element; it was dominated by what is among the most permanent of all literary interests - the interest of story. The story was usually a succession of incidents that moved in the form of complication and resolution. Attached to the main incident were elements of burlesque, fun, satire and caricature that were enlarged by such types as the saucy slave, the parasite, and the sharper. These interests belonged to details, or tended to make a separate sub-plot; the main plot rested, not upon the fun or extravagance of the matter, but upon the interest of the story itself with its complication and resolution.

The Renaissance theorists formulated canons that were a combination of Horace's Ars Poetica and Aristotle's Poetics. Horace placed

emphasis on dramatic situations and effects such as five acts, decorum, and probability. Aristotle, interested in the story for its own sake, suggested the plot action should be single with a beginning, a middle, and an end, and characterized by unity to time and place. Aelius Donatus in his fourth century commentary on Terence provides the terminology for the three-part Aristotelian division (apart from the prologue which is a mere introduction): protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe or denouement. The French critic J.C. Scaliger (Poetices libri septem) added a fourth division, catastasis, to Donatus's three. Scaliger apparently analyzing the structure of actual plays more closely than many other critics, concluded that a fourth division was necessary, which he called catastasis:

Protasis est, in qua proponitur et narratur summa rei sine declaratione exitus... Epitasis, in qua turbæ aut excitantur, aut intenduntur. Catastasis, est vigor, ac status Fabulae, in quæ res miscetur in ea fortunæ tempestate, in quam subducatur est. Hanc partem multi non animadvertere, necessaria tamen est. Catastrophe, conversio negotii exagitati in tranquillitatem non expectatam. His partibus additus, uti dicebamus, Prologus...<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance theorists did their best to reconcile the two theories, five-act and three part. The difficulty was certainly present. But in fact, the act-division in Les Contents and the other Renaissance comedies, as it will be seen, was relatively unimportant. The action of the play appears to be perfectly continuous from the end of one act to the beginning of the next. The theoretical discussion, as it is seen in the Scaliger quotation, of the parts of comedy and their disposition was much more often concerned with Donatus's three parts than with act-division.

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<sup>1</sup>J.D. Scaliger, Poetices libri septem, 5th ed., (Heidelberg, 1617), p. 33.

In fact, Les Contents can be analyzed according to Donatus's and Scaliger's principles, and it will be convenient to follow to some extent their division in discussing first the prologue and then the other parts of the play - which may or may not correspond to their divisions. The emphasis will be, however, rather on discovering the function of such parts in the total dramatic effect than on establishing them on any theoretical grounds.

The action of Les Contents, divided into five acts, begins with a prologue that is rather like a jester's monologue. The actor addresses only the ladies in the audience. His intention is to explain the subject but it is very uncomplicated, he adds; after hearing the first two or three scenes, the ladies will easily guess what the author is aiming at. He is certain that the theme of the play will be very pleasing to them anyway:

Car je puis conoistre à vostre mine, que vous avez desja desbouché les trous de voz oreilles, afin de recevoir par icelles le plaisir que l'on peut prendre en ayant reciter matieres semblables à celle que nous avons delibere vous presenter. Je laisse a penser à tout bon entendeur si les dames curieuse comme celles de Paris se contentent de poires molles et de peu de paroles.

Under a thin veneer of respectfulness he ridicules them in the rest of the prologue with risqué puns and salacious plays on meaning. He invites the ladies to feel free to see the actors behind the coulisse at the end of the play for further explanations in case the subject has not been entirely clear to them:

Je m'assure tant de leur gentillesse et courtoisie, qu'ilz en prendront bien la peine, et besogneront en sorte que toutes les doutes et difficultez que vous leur pourrez faire vous seront sur le champ resolues, se sentans

bienheureux d'employer tous les nerfs et les forces de leur engin et esprit à celle fin que vous demeuriez satisfaites et contentes.

Ladies' interests at least in a Renaissance court or salon were amorous and so was the focal point of Les Contents. Customarily, the Pléiade playwrights and many among Turnèbe's contemporaries used their prologues either to remind the audience of the care they took to follow classical schemes or to give the argument of the play. The prologue of L'Eugène, for example, claims that it is the first French comedy. The prologue to Les Néapolitaines explains that it is an exception to the usual rule that comedies are invented to please the 'simple populace,' and why. Godard's Les Déguisés was printed together with his tragedy, La Franciade, and the prologue is at pains to point out that this juxtaposition is intended to show how fortune strikes down the great but merely plays with the humble and leaves them happy in the end. These ideas can be as pedantic as those mentioned above certainly are.

The first act of Les Contents and the other four as well appear consistent with Renaissance practice. The structure of the plot does correspond to Badius's analysis of Terence:

In primo horum actuum ut plurimum explicatur argumentum.  
In secundo fabula agi incipit et ad finem tendere cupit.  
In tertio inseritur perturbatio et impedimentum et desperatio rei concupitae. In quarto remedium alicuius interventus affertur. In quinto autem omnia ad optatum finem ut iam saepe dixi perducuntur.<sup>2</sup>

The idea that a play should have acts and scenes at all was derived by Renaissance authors also from Donatus. Donatus states that

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<sup>2</sup>H.W. Lawton, A Handbook of French Renaissance Dramatic Theory, (Manchester, 1949), p. 30.

act-division of Terence's plays went back to the time of Varro; so that by 1550 the idea had a tradition of some 1600 years behind it. But the actual comedies of Terence and Plautus date from before that time, and as Duckworth says:

We may conclude that neither Plautus nor Terence applied any rule of act-division to their comedies, and that the plays were usually produced on the stage with complete continuity of action.<sup>3</sup>

Part of the first act in Les Contents is the exposition. The play opens with a dialogue between Louise and her daughter Geneviève. They are on their way to church very early in order to avoid Basile and Rodomont, who in Louise's eyes are both unwelcome suitors for Geneviève. The unusually early hour provokes a debate between the two women. When Geneviève asks her mother why she roused her so early, her mother explains that she wants to avoid Basile and Rodomont. Geneviève, who loves Basile, finds no legitimate reason for such an opposition to a marriage between her and Basile. Louise herself, is unable to justify it clearly and resorts to vague generalities, imploring her daughter to obey her, for she, as her mother, knows what is best for her daughter. According to Louise, because of Geneviève's youth, she does not know what is good for her:

Louyse: -Genevfiève, Genevfiève, ta bouche sent encores  
le lait et la boulie. Tu monstres bien que tu n'es qu'un  
enfant.

Then she tries to discourage her daughter as to the sincerity of the young man's feelings toward her:

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<sup>3</sup>George Duckworth, The Nature of Roman Comedy, A Study in Popular Entertainment (Princeton, 1952).

Louyse: - Ne vois-tu pas bien qu'il salue ainsi toutes les filles de la paroisse?

Geneviève reminds Louise that in the past the latter liked him:

Geneviève: - Si est-ce que vous l'avez recherche autrefois.

Louise answers her thus:

Louyse: - Je ne scavois ce que je faisais alors, et m'en repens de bien bon coeur.

She then uses religion as a psychological trick to bend the girl's resistance by reminding her that her filial obedience will be compensated by God.

Louyse: - Geneviève, si tu m'obeis, avec ce que tu gagneras le royaume de paradis, tu seras bien la plus heureuse fille de Paris.

During the argument Louise makes it known that the same evening she intends to arrange a marriage contract between her daughter and Eustache, a neighbor, the young son of a rather well to do widower. Geneviève, mortified, remarks that Eustache "est assez jeune pour manger tout mon bien et le sien." The animated conversation ends with the hasty departure of the two women to church while the church bell sounds in the distance for the last part of the mass. Turnèbe concludes the exposition linking the first scene with the second with remarkable ease. As they leave their house, Louise sees Nivelet, Rodomont's servant, who is standing at the street corner spying on her house on his master's order.

Louyse: - Mais qui est ce garçon habillé de verd qui attend au coing de ceste ruelle? Je vay gager bonne chose que c'est le laquais du Capitaine Rodomont.

To avoid him the two women pass through an alley.

After the exposition the course of the action concentrates around the house of Louise. In scenes II and III of the first act,

Rodomont first, and then Basile talk idly with their respective servants in front of the house. Basile tells his servant, Antoine, how desperate he is over Louise's obstinacy in refusing him Geneviève. At this the servant introduces the idea of a seduction with the help of Françoise, an old woman and a friend of Louise and Geneviève. Rodomont with his servant eavesdrops on the entire conversation under a porch roof. Antoine is dispatched to find Françoise who agrees to help them carry out the plan. She convinces Geneviève to let Basile in her house while her mother is at church. It is also agreed that Basile will go in dressed in Eustache's costume since the latter, being Geneviève's fiancé, has easy access to Louise's household.

Act II. Girard wishes to arrange the engagement of his son Eustache to Geneviève, but Eustache is reluctant because he knows that she favors Basile. Françoise succeeds in cooling Eustache's ardor for Geneviève completely by telling him that the girl's breast is eaten by cancer. Scene III is Eustache's monologue thanking God for sending him Françoise "comme l'ange à Tobie, pour m'advertir de mon salut." Rodomont, the braggart, is the only remaining obstacle. In scene IV he borrows a scarlet costume from Eustache identical to the one Basile has already borrowed from him. Scene VII is a dialogue between Françoise and Basile during which she describes to him how she eliminated Eustache from Basile's way.

Act III. Thomas, a merchant and money lender, brings in three constables to seize Rodomont for unpaid debts. He leaves them in front of the house of Girard for he knows that the braggart is inside. In



scene II Rodomont comes out of Girard's house wearing his disguise. The constables immediately arrest him and take him to prison. He offers no resistance and actually begs them to set him free, but to no avail. On his way there he laments his bad luck: "Ha, Dieu, que je suis misérable! Au lieu d'aller fiancer ma maistresse, l'on me fait espouser une prison. With the entrance of Basile a new scene is declared. Basile, disguised in a costume identical to Rodomont's and seeing him also in the same clothes, understands the braggart's motives, a fact that makes him for the first time realize that Rodomont is not so negligible a threat as he always thought:

Basile: - ... mon bonheur m'a tant favorisé que de m'avoir osté cest empeschement, qui a la verité n'eust este petit si ce grand pendart fust entré avant moy, ainsi qu'il luy eust esté bien aisé sans ces sergens, a qui Dieu doint bonne et longue vie.

Saucisson, a pimp, interrupts his monologue and a new scene begins. Saucisson is bringing Alix, Thomas' wife, for Eustache's pleasure. He briefly mistakes Basile for Eustache. Basile goes into Louise's house leaving Antoine to wait for him outside. The servant thinking of the meeting between his master and the girl inside, gets absorbed in a reverie of a sexual nature. Meanwhile, Louise driven by the cold weather, returns from the church earlier than she was expected. Antoine, too late sees her come but has not time to alert Basile. Louise goes in, looks through the keyhole of the living room, takes Basile for Eustache, locks them in, and off she goes to find Girard. Dominated by her emotions and deeply insulted she talks in a confused way as to the measure she should now take to correct the insult inflicted upon her daughter's honor:

Louyse: - Mais quel conseil puis - je prendre en ce cas si inespéré? Dois-je envoyer querir le commissaire? Si je le mets (Eustache) en justice un chascun se rira de moy, et qui plus est, on me jouera aux pois pillez et à la bazoche. Si d'autre costé je luy fais espouser ma fille, je ne seray pas assez satisfaite de l'outrage qu'il m'a fait. Mais aussi, luy dois-je donner la clef des champs, afin qu'il se vante partout de son beau chef-d'oeuvre? Non, non, je les tiendray prisonniers dans ma salle, que j'ay fermee à double resort, attendant que j'ay sceu de mes parens et amis ce que j'en doy faire. Je m'en vay premierement trouver Girard pour me plaindre à luy de son fils, et le menasser, s'il ne m'en fait raison, de le faire mettre en une basse fosse, où il ne verra ny soleil ny lune de long-temps ... etc., etc.

Meanwhile, Antoine, with Perrette, Geneviève's maid, gets Basile out of the locked room through a window. Basile is very preoccupied with Geneviève left behind, abandoned to her mother's wrath. Now he feels more bound to her morally than ever. At first, he brags a little to Antoine about the success of his visit, which prompts Antoine to conclude that Basile is not probably going to remain interested in Geneviève after he has attained his purpose. He tells him that he knows "beaucoup de personnes qui ne voudroient pour rien espouser une femme de qui ils auroient jouy auparavant le jour des nopces, quand bien elle les aymeroit uniquement." Basile answers that those who act that way deserve "d'espouser une potence ou un pilory."

Antoine comes again with a new solution. He suggests that they go to Eustache's house, give Alix Basile's disguise to wear, take her to Geneviève's house in Basile's place, and in that manner confuse Louise. Basile agrees and their departure for Eustache's house concludes the third act.

Act IV. In the first scene Thomas is musing over Rodomont's debts again. He is vexed for he hoped to get all the money owed to him

by the braggart. On the way to prison, a mutual friend who saw Rodomont's plight offered to pay half of the debt with the promise to pay the other half in six months should Rodomont find himself unable to pay. His soliloquy is cut short when he perceives Basile and Antoine fetching Alix to Louise's house. He is not fooled by the disguise; certainly the costumed person is a woman:

qui va planter des cornes au plus haut des biens de quelque pauvre mary. O Dieu, que l'homme est malheureux qui espouse de telles chiennes et begasces! Quant à moy, je remercie Dieu de ce qu'il m'a donné une des plus preudes femmes qui soit d'icy à Nostre-Dame-de-Liesse, là où elle est allée faire un pelerinage, sans que l'hyver et le temps dangereux l'ayent peu destourner de sa devotion.

Alix, to escape her husband, covers her face with the end of her cape. Thomas senses that the three strangers are bothered by his stares and he decides it is better to return home "pour voir si tous mes escus sont de poix." Meanwhile, Alix has reached her destination, Antoine is dispatched to find Françoise, and Basile returns to his house to await the result of the trick.

In the following scene (ii) Eustache alone on the stage is expressing his admiration over Basile's success with women in general, and particularly with Geneviève:

Eustache: - Il merite certe une bonne fortune, et n'y a si grande dame dans Paris qui ne se deust sentir heureuse d'estre courtisée d'un si galant homme pour les bonnes et grandes parties qu'il a. Mais quand tout est bien considéré, il ne pouvoit mieux s'adresser qu'à Geneviefve, puisqu'il est vray que l'affection qu'elle luy porte est si desmesurée qu'elle n'a point craint mesmes de hazarder son honneur pour luy monstrier le bien qu'elle luy vouloit.

Rodomont, suddenly back from the prison, comes on stage still dressed as Eustache. The event with the constables that he describes to Eustache

takes heroic proportions. His skill as a fencer helped to disperse the constables for his blows are fatal. Carried away he continues about other exploits in the past: in the battles of Moncontour, Jarnac, and Lepantho he performed superhuman deeds but his modesty prevents him from dwelling on his bravery - but:

si ma rapière pouvoit parler, elle diroit choses qui vous  
faire le signe de la croix.

Ashamed of the humiliation of his arrest he seeks to redeem it with further bragging about his sword:

elle a esté faite en Damas par le mesme ouvrier qui forgea  
Durendal et Flamberge. C'est pourquoy je la nomme Flamberge,  
encores que son droit nom soit Pleuresang. Ainsi qu'un grand  
cler m'a dit avoir trouve escrit sur la poignée en lettres  
grecques, que je n'ay peu jamais lire, ny tous mes parens.  
Car jamais homme de ma race n'eust le coeur si lasche que  
de s'adonner aux lettres (Act IV, ii)

Rodomont came into possession of it in Alexandria. An inscription on it reads that it was forged for the Sultan of Babylon. The tale amuses Eustache for it has at least the advantage of being incapable of disproof: "Je vous en croy sans jurer, mais non pas demain" he mutters under his teeth. At last Rodomont reaches Geneviève's door but decides it is too late to try to enter Louise's house. Meanwhile Louise comes with her brother Alfonse and taxes Girard with his son's supposed attack on Geneviève's honor. Finding it difficult to talk reason to her, Girard remarks that to seek a solution through the courts would be futile:

Il me semble quand vous aurez mon fils en justice que vous  
y gagnerez peu! Car l'on ne vous croira pas toute seule,  
et puis vostre fille ne sera pas si eshontée comme quelques-  
unes ont esté, que de dire qu'elle a esté despucelée

Reconciliation would be the best solution for him to avoid scandal, and he offers to conclude the marriage contract as soon as possible. His

offer cannot appease Louise's anger. She wants to take the case to the courts and she asks her brother to accompany her to Monsieur Bartle; a lawyer, for legal advice. Alfonse takes Girard aside and promises him to do all he can to avoid the courts. He is particularly impressed with Girard's reasonableness.

The exit of the two begins a new scene. Girard alone on stage, laments his situation with a series of ridiculous wishes. First, he wished he had never married; then he envied those who had married but lost their wives before they had time to give them any children. Since he had children, he wished they had all perished while little, and so on and so forth. He is deeply afraid that his son may end up his days on the Grève square. Eustache disperses his fears when he tells him that it was not he in the house of Louise but Basile.

Eventually, Louise unlocks the door but instead of a man she finds only Alix with her daughter.

Act V. Antoine is running from one church to another to find Françoise. She comes later to inform Basile that she has been at Louise's house and that the mother's latest idea is to marry Geneviève to Rodomont, since Eustache is flatly refusing to marry her now. As she tells him this, Louise and Alfonse are seen coming out of the house in search of Girard. Louise intends to ask his help in persuading Rodomont to accept a marriage with Geneviève. Upon seeing them come Françoise, Basile and his servant retreat into a spot on the stage from where they can hear the conversation without being seen.

Alix's presence has not calmed down Louise's anxiety over her daughter's reputation. To the contrary she is now alarmed over the idea

that her daughter may have perverse sexual leanings. She reminds Alfonse of what their family doctor once said on the subject:

Ne vous souvient-il point que Maistre Damian nostre medecin nous disoit dernièrement qu'il y avoit des hommes qui avoient les deux sexes, et les nommoit, ce me semble, garçons-fillettes et barbes-fleuries?

Alfonse: - Vous voulez dire hermafrodites. Je ne croy pas que Dame Alix soit de ce nombre, mais vous faites bien en ce cas icy de craindre et de prendre tousjours les choses au pire. (Act V, ii)

In the following scene, Geneviève at her window and Basile below exchange declarations of love. In scene iv Rodomont in his usual manner airs his indignation that "un petit bourgeois de Paris" like Basile managed to steal Geneviève away from him. So, he decides to kidnap her, burn her house and half of Paris, if necessary, but he quickly abandons his plan when Nivelet, his servant, remarks that now it is too late, for would he be "si poltron que de prendre le reste de Basile?" He would never respect him after that. Upon this comment the braggart decides to follow Eustache's example:

Allons trouver Eustache. Puisque j'ay failly à mon entreprise, j'ay delibere de faire comme luy et prendre le temps ainsi qu'il vient, sans plus m'embrouiller le cerveau de ces amoureuses passions. (Act V, iv)

The scene between Girard, Louise, and Rodomont, proves to be very humiliating for Geneviève's mother. Rodomont refuses the marriage offer and blandly names Basile as Geneviève's seducer. Girard verifies the braggart's statement. Louise decides to give in and to accept Basile as her son-in-law. Fearing a third refusal she solicits the help of her friends. They all promise to be on her side. Basile's entrance begins the last scene of the play. Informed by Antoine who had overheard the

the conversation, he hastes to reassure Louise of his loyalty:

Madame, toute la faute que j'ay faite a esté en ce que je n'ay point attendu vostre consentement ainsi que je devois. Mais je vous puis dire que je n'ay point ravi l'honneur de vostre fille, d'autant que j'estime son honneur estre le mien propre, puisqu'il luy a pleu m'accepter pour son mary. Et s'il vous plaist me recognoistre pour tel, j'espere vous faire paroistre un jour par mes bons services que vous ne pouviez eslire un meilleur genre, quand bien vous eussiez cherché par tout Paris...assurez-vous que vous n'aurez plustost aujourd'huy donné un mary à vostre fille que acquis un humble serviteur pour vous. (Act V, vi)

Louise declares that she pardons him with all her heart and she invites everybody to her house for supper: "pour achever ce que de vostre grace vous avez si bien encommencé." They all accept and before they start for Louise's house, Rodomont steps forward and invites the audience to participate in the approaching wedding festivity.

The epilogue concludes the speech to the ladies that the prologue had started. Rodomont addresses them in the same tone mixed this time with a lot of personal bragging:

Mesdames, qui vous avez pris patience de nous ouïr ceste aprèsdisnee, s'il vous plaist revenir en ce lieu le jour des noces de Basile et Geneviefve, vous aurez le plaisir de voir courir la bague, rompre la lance en la lice, combattre à la barriere, à la pique et à l'espée, et dix mil autres passetems desquelz une bonne troupe de capitaines, mes amys et moy, honorerons ce bienheureux mariage. Et là vous pourrez cognoistre avec quelle dexterite je manie un cheval, à courbettes, au galop, a bons, à ruades et luy donne carriere. Et de quelle grace j'emporte un bague, de quelle force je scay rompre une lance de droit fil jusques à la poignée, branler la pique et manier l'espée. Mais, Mesdames, gardez que les esclats qui en voleront ne vous touchent, et que le vent de mon espée, lequel a fait souvent esvanouir les hommes d'armes, ne vous face choir à la renverse toute plattes contre terre. Car ce seroit fait de vous, et pourriez bien dire vostre In Manus. Cependant vous

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<sup>4</sup>In Manus: It is the beginning of a prayer: In manus tuas Domine, commendo spiritum meum.

ferez bien de vous retirez chez vous. Car voicy l'heure que l'on commence à souper aux bonnes maisons. Et si nostre comedie vous a esté agreable, je vous prie de nous le faire cognoistre à quelque signe d'allegresse. (play ends here)

The festive end of Les Contents around the marriage of the central characters is a convention built into the structure of the play from the very beginning. From the prologue the play is characterized by an impetus to complete a story that Turnèbe does not explain but the formula of which seems to be known in advance, making the end predictable. The normal action is the effort of Basile to get possession of Geneviève kept away from him by her mother's opposition. The obstacle is eventually overcome and a new society is formed around them at the end. This structure, then, normally is characterized by three phases: the obstacle represented by Louise, the removal of it with the intrigue of the seduction, and the reconciliation.

The plot development corresponds to the Aristotelian three part division rather than the five act division. The emphasis is on the single, clearly defined aim of the action, which is announced in the protasis or beginning of the play. Delayed by the complications of Louise's opposition, the intrigues and counter-intrigues in the epitasis or middle, is finally brought to completion by the catastrophe or denouement. The action is one aiming at the union of Basile and Geneviève, and it takes place within twelve hours. Robortello in a short treatise written in 1548 on Aristotle's Poetics reduced the unity to time from twenty-four hours to twelve, since the dramatic characters would surely be sleeping at night.

Turnèbe adheres to the unity of time and takes care to state the passing of it as the play goes on. It begins in the early morning and



ends just before 'souper' according to Louise: "Mes amys, il semble qu'il est bien près de six heures." (V, vi) Time serves a dramatic purpose. Thus, in scene one of the first act it is so early that the sun is not even up and the conversation bears very largely on why Louise and Geneviève are up at this unusually early hour. In Act II, scene v, it strikes 10 a.m. while Eustache and Saucisson talk. The latter promises Eustache that within an hour he is going to bring him a beautiful woman to animate the supper the two will have that evening at Eustache's house during the absence of his father. A little later lunch is eaten (scene vii). The assignation made for 1 p.m. by Saucisson, is carried out in Act III, scene iv. In Act IV, iv, the greeting 'Bon vespre' is used. In Act IV, vi, Louise states that it is an hour and a half since she locked Eustache into her living room (III, vii). In Act V, scene i, Antoine says it is an hour since he went on his errand (VI, i). In the last scene of the play (Act V, scene vi) Louise mentions that it is nearly 6 p.m. and she invites the company to supper.

The artificiality of the convention is further minimized by the assumption that the houses of Louise and Girard where the greatest part of the action takes place are near each other. Most of Acts III and IV take place there in the afternoon (après-disnée) and we feel no lack of any indication of time. When the action is reported Turnèbe allows plenty of time for it to take place. Rodomont is led off to prison in Act III, scene ii and returns free in Act IV, scene ii. Time becomes precise only for a dramatic effect - for example, in the hurry of the early morning in Act I, scene i, when the church bell is heard sounding the parts of the mass. When it is not essential to the plot, time is vague.

The unity of place is achieved through the sameness of the stage setting. His stage set requires three compartments: the houses of Girard, Louise, and Monsieur Bartole the lawyer. The first needs a door, and in Act IV, v a window above is implied (Qui est là-bas?) The second needs a door which can be locked with a key (it is so locked in V,iii) and a window above which opens and closes (V, iii). None of the action other than reported action needs to go on inside Louise's house, but we know some things about its interior: it has a 'petit oratoire' (III, vii), a 'salle' below (III, vii) and a room or rooms above I, i: Qu'on se des-  
peche de descendre). The 'salle' has windows opening into the cour (Act IV). The house also has a 'huys de derriere' (V, ii). Monsieur Bartole's house needs only a door (IV, iv-v).

These three compartments are supposed to be near each other in terms of the play itself (in III, iv Basile, who is outside Girard's house, speaks of the door of Louise's house as 'ceste prochaine porte,' while from IV, vi we gather that M. Bartole's house is near Girard's). Girard's house appears to be a mere 'flat' because in IV, v Girard and Eustache speak in the street, rather than in the house, for no dramatic reason at all; the only reason that suggests itself is that the set does not allow them to enter. Turnèbe minimized in that way the artificiality of the scene convention by placing all the houses involved in the action very close to each other. All three have an open space or street in front of them. It appears that there is more than one street, or at least the illusion of more than one street on stage. The stage convention in Les Contents corresponds to Serlio's comic scene including the small

alleys off the main central space (I, i, end of exposition). Serlio's comic stage shows the same basic design - a neutral central space surrounded on the three sides by stage elements.

The realism of the stage has, like the Serlio design, an external reference to the outer world and to normal experience, a reference in which likeness or correspondence is one of the aims. For in spite of the economy of his stage Turnèbe succeeded in creating a sense of local atmosphere of Paris in 1579. Two scenes are especially significant in this respect. In Act IV, scene vi, Girard upon hearing that Alix was in Louise's house dressed in man's clothes, takes it first as a pleasant farce. But women, he adds, "en ceste ville" (Paris), if all is taken into consideration, have so much freedom that it is not surprising that they go about dressed like men. If Paris is the purgatory of the litigants, a hellish place for mules, it is Heaven for women. Girard's comments give a glimpse into the life of a city rapidly becoming urbane and impersonal. The plight of the litigants in sixteenth century courts is further illustrated in *Alfonse*. He, the earliest apparently wise and enlightened reasoner of the French comedy, acts as a foil to his unreasonable sister. Contrasting him to Louise, Turnèbe - like Molière later - wants to stress that error and excess are incurable by rational argument. The dialogue between the two reminds the audience of legal battles of similar nature and the moral cost involved in such cases.

To the Pléiade theorists' assumption that the unity of action required unity of time, of place, of social classes and of illusion, that is, keeping the action on one level of plausibility, Turnèbe added depth

through the illusionist effects that the skillful representation of Parisian reality provides to the play. The technical skill of Turnèbe in following the conventions of construction is a subordinate factor. His real skill then consists in knowing how to subordinate them to achieve illusionist principles that would give him the possibility to create a composition in depth with measurable intervals.

Principles of probability, unity, and decorum that dominated the Pléïade theorists corresponded to the Renaissance idea of perspective attained by artists. The design of Serlio illustrates the effort to enclose the world in proportional cubic space. The same technique to attain symmetry is seen in the architectural space in which Turnèbe accommodates his action. Confined as it is by the wall of the three houses, the contrasting movements of the plot are arranged like the lines in the orthogonal space of Serlio's design. The mechanics of those movements are clear: Basile is measured against Eustache and Rodomond, Geneviève is measured against Louise, Françoise, and Alix, Antoine against Nivelet, Alfonse against Louise, Basile's love, and his gallant stature, against the affectations of Eustache and Rodomond.

The theoretical aspiration of the Renaissance theorists to enclose the world in a proportional cubic space is successfully worked out, at least as far as the mechanics are concerned, in Les Contents.

The clear outlines of the structure come to disturb, however, the clashes of attitude on the part of certain characters. A dramatic tension is caused by the ironic play between real morality and the bourgeois concern for appearances. The agitated wit, the ambiguous statements

of the characters are all points of interference in the very fabric of this play and disturb the Renaissance sense of equilibrium and proportion inherent in the structure. These interferences bring us to the threshold of mannerism and its technique of equivocation as working principle.

### CHAPTER III

#### APPEARANCE--REALITY

Mannerism means overcleverness in handling the conventional forms of proportion, clear outline and stable relations. Thus the conventional forms that come under the sophisticated attack of the mannerist are disarranged.

In *Turnèbe* such evidences are noticeable in the manipulation of character, language, and response. The tensions and contradictions of this transitional technique are best illustrated in *Françoise*, the entremetteuse in whom hypocrisy emerges as an important characteristic. This reflects indirectly a segment of the general development of the French society and cultural life.

The first entremetteuse in the French Renaissance comedy is Marion in Les Esbahis of J. Grévin. The type as presented by Marion serves as a standard of a typical Renaissance comedy personnage. In Les Esbahis Marion's status is immediately defined. Her occupation is stated from the very beginning. "N'est-ce pas cy ma lavandiere" (I, ii) Josse remarks as he sees her coming. Her occupation corresponds to her social position.

She addresses everyone formally with the exception of the two servants to whom she is evidently equal in birth. Marion is addressed by everyone with the "tu" form. Officially she is a laundress and all call her simply Marion.

Marion's language corresponds to her being. Her contempt for the disgusting Josse gives her opportunity to make a wealth of unflattering comparisons. Even her description of him leaves nothing to be wished in vivid crudity. Before he has become engaged to Madelon, one sees that

Il estait plus sale  
 Plus froisse qu'une vieille male,  
 Plus marmiteux et plus crotte.  
 Les joues de chaque coste  
 Luy pendoyent d'un pied et demi,  
 Tant il semblait à l'ennemi  
 Car a le voir si laid et  
 On l'eust pris pour un homme mort.

(I, ii)

Her joy in purely animal expressions of life bears witness to the elemental condition of her ethos.

Je le (l'avocat) mettray dans la chambrette  
 De Madelon, en la tendrette  
 Ne sera du tout si mauvaise  
 Qu'elle n'endure bien qu'en la baise

(II, iv)

This betrays a rather simple frame of mind with no feelings of shame or effort to conceal it. Her hints in conversation at sexual precedents in her life demonstrate a turbulent life. Her language corresponds to her being.

Marion fits the Ciceronian description of comedy as "imitatio nem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis," a principle faithfully followed by the Pléiade playwrights and theorists alike. For

Peletier, the things which should be reflected are:

l'avarice ou la prudence des vieillards: les amours et ardeurs des jeunes enfants de maison: les astuces et ruses de leurs Amies: La vilenie et deshonnêteté des Maquereaux: la façon des Pères tantôt sévères, tantôt faciles: l'assentation et vileté des Parasites: la vauterie et braveté d'un soldat retiré de la guerre: la diligence des Neuvrices: l'indulgence des Mères.<sup>1</sup>

which are the characteristics of middle-class people and their servants and hangers-on, selected according to Terentian models, as opposed to the kings and nobles of tragedy. Among the type listed above represented by Marion is the first entremetteuse of the French Renaissance Comedy. She serves as the standard of an early renaissance comedy type as opposed to the less clear-cut type of Françoise, her counterpart, in Les Contents. Of all the characters Françoise in her capacity as an entremetteuse is the most active figure and consequently the main force that moves the action to its end. This woman, that Chasles characterized as "le plus original des caractères" in Les Contents, is busy in many things, diligent in service, she runs from one house to the other and knows how to get in anywhere.

La vieille Françoise, l'amie de tout le monde traverse la comédie d'un pas sourd et modeste, allant de l'un à l'autre rendant service à tous et rappelant à chacun qu'elle est besogneuse. Elle est dévote, elle court les églises, elle parle doucement et avec réserve. Auprès des mères, elle joue le rôle de confidente; auprès des filles c'est la tentation en personne. Quant aux jeunes gens, elle mesure ses bons offices à la récompense qu'elle attend d'eux.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jacques Peletier du Mans, L'Art poétique, (Lyons: A. Boulanger, 1555), p. 186-87.

<sup>2</sup>Emile Chasles, La Comédie en France au Seizième Siècle, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), p. 147.



It was said early in this study that the Pléiade playwright's emphasis is to create episodes and characters that would explain how things happen and appear.

While in Les Esbahis in Les Contents Françoise's social status is not determined. From the way she is addressed one cannot detect anything. She is, as a rule, addressed as Madame Françoise and she herself addresses everybody in the polite form.

Françoise is a friend of Louise, Geneviève's mother, whom she greets as "commère." When Françoise talks to Basile about Louise, she refers to her by her first name.

In regard to Françoise's education one knows nothing. However, her speech is dominated by pompous expressions. She describes Geneviève as follows: "Vous estes une hardie lance de craindre vos amis." (I, vii) On the other hand she cajoles her for her timidity: "Vous estes une amoureuse peu hardie, vous n'avez pas encores monte sur l'ours." (I, vii)

Marion's temperament is crude and her low realism lacks the capability for free psychological observation. Besides, both she and her customers see in marriage only the fulfillment of crude sensual needs. She is an entremetteuse with no pangs of conscience about it and with an extensive degree of avarice. In general, Grevin treats Marion's character as a defined human type. She is a laundress, a lowly person, and her impertinence and lively coarseness are drawn with verve and verbal richness. Her thoughts, clearly exposed in monologues and asides, leave no doubt as to her sentiments or rather the lack of them. She gives her opinion in the choice of a husband in a folksy manner:

Qui bon l'achete, bon le boit  
(I, iii)

She apostrophizes herself also in the same manner:

Ha Marion, c'est maintenant  
Que le tout sera decouvert  
(IV, iv)

Marion is a rather crude figure that serves to set in motion the intrigue of the comedy. She lacks the vitality of Françoise, her power of persuasion and her extraordinary presence of mind.

Turnèbe's variation of the entremetteuse concentrates on the moral and psychological aspect of the type. Through Françoise he delves into what Lanson defined as "les dessous de l'âme: les motifs, les ressorts, les essences."<sup>3</sup> He states that: "On peut se demander s'il n'y a pas en elle une sorte de philosophie du temps et quelques constations désabusées."<sup>4</sup>

This figure in Turnèbe's hands becomes really enigmatic in expression, pose, and situation. Through her attention is turned upon an interior image rather than the outer reality as is the case with Marion.

It was said before that there is no proof in regard to Françoise's profession or past life. However, an experience in love affairs is recognized in her. Atoine advises Basile to seek her advice:

Voyla Madame Françoise qui vient vers nous laquelle pour son  
aage et l'experience au fait d'amours, vous en pourra departir  
plus que ne pourrait faire un pauvre jeune garson ignorant  
comme moy.  
(I, i)

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<sup>3</sup>Lanson, Histoire de la litterature francaise, Ausgabe 8, p. 575.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

That she diligently puts her experience into the service of others is seen from the anticipation implied in Basile's statement in regard to her ability:

Si dame Françoise voulait pousser à la roue et parler en ma  
faveur à Geneviefve, je me fay port d'en venir a mon honneur.  
(I, 4)

A further significant characteristic is that the figure of the entremetteuse reaches in this play its highest representation in the Renaissance, for where the relationship of person to person becomes more and more difficult, one must seek a bridge which will make possible the reaching of another person. The Renaissance belief in human ability receives a particular significance not only in the person of the entremetteuse but also in the nature of the obstacles. Françoise's ability is based on the power of her arguments developed around the psychological circumstance of the persons involved. With Françoise's appearance a certain link is given that originally connects the various acting persons.

She is a friend of Louise and in regard to her relationship to Louise, she has this to say which is indicative of the latter's dependency and confidence in Françoise's judgment:

Elle ne tournerait par un oeuf, par maniere de dire sans  
m'en demander conseil (II, 2)

When she first comes on stage she is on her way to start the intrigue. The intrigue to be artistically effective must be developed around the psychological circumstances of the character to be implicated in it. To Antoine she gives a hint of the state of things before the intrigue. With an effort, by following every hint, one can see in her a character constructed from without but never revealed from within. One can see in her an ambiguity by the exact portraiture she gives in regard

to others: she confides to Antoine her certainty over the success of the affair for she knows in advance Geneviève's kind:

Croyez que je n'eusse jamais mis si avant les fers au feu  
si je n'eusse bien seu de quel bois elle (Geneviève) se  
chauffe. (I, 5)

From Françoise's clever understanding of Eustache's character, one can see that in her sphere of influence she has absolute power. The incident begins with her mocking covetousness. She pretends total disinterest with financial rewards for her services for she is sure it will cost her nothing to keep such pretenses. The tone of her speech indicates that she has already known on other occasions Basile's generosity for she says "pour l'avoir desfoi par plusieurs fois experimente." (I, v) With Eustache, however, she is not so sure and so she changes attitude in regard to this matter. At first, to elicit a reaction from him she complains about her financial troubles:

J'ai trois pauvres filles à marier sur le bras, sans scavoir  
ou est le premier denier de leur mariage ... et mon hote qui  
me menacait encore hier de m'envoyer un sergent pour deux  
termes que je lui dois (II, ii)

Eustache remarks that "Ceux qui ont bonne esperance en Dieu ne sont pas trop riches," (II, ii), and then he suggests that she should solicit aid from Basile's purse. When she pretends that she does not know him at all, he decides to seize his chance. He promises to help her provided she tells him what she knows about Geneviève and Basile. Françoise, knowing that the best weapon in his case would be flattery, tries to disassociate herself from this very cause that she will use on him. She first tells Eustache that Geneviève is very much interested in him. The following dialogue ensues:

Françoise: Je ne me ferais prier de vous le dire, n'estait que je crains que vous m'avez eu reputation d'une flatteuse.

Eustache: Madame Françoise, vous me faites tort. Je vous ay eu opinion de la plus femme de bien de toute nostre parroisse. Et suis bien seur que vous ne voudriez pour mourir tacher vostre conscience de ce vilain vice de flaterie. (Act II, ii)

She again takes the opportunity to stress her unworthiness in regard to the flattering femme de bien Eustache attributes to her person: however, she goes along with his setting her free from the vice of flattery which could be so harmful to her conscience. Her master stroke in Eustache's feelings towards Geneviefve culminates with the cancer scheme. After having praised Geneviefve's virtues to the sky and excited him over the thought of possessing such an ideal woman, she lets Eustache understand that the otherwise highly desirable Genevieve suffers from a cancerous wound that has eaten out one of her breasts:

Elle est bonne catholique, riche et bonne menagere. Elle dit bien, elle escrit comme un ange. Elle joue du luth, de l'espINETTE, chante sa partie seurement, et scait danser et bailer aussi bien que fille de Paris. En matiere d'ouvrages de lingerie, de point coupe et de lasser elle ne craint personne. Et quant est de besogner en tapisserie, soit sur l'estamine, le canevas en la gaze, je voudrais que vous eussiez veu ce que j'ay veu ... Vous devez scavoir que la pauvre fille est infiniment tourmentee d'un chancre qu'elle a a un tetiu, il y a pres de trois ans, et n'y a autre que sa mere et moi qui en scachent rien. Mais nous avons bonne esperance qu'elle se portera bien avant qu'il soit quinze jours. (Act II, ii)

Whereupon, Eustache withdraws from the arena. Françoise's power manifests itself as a trait which is generally a characteristic of Renaissance thought in which the feeling of power is based upon personal ability. This manifestation still germinating in this period will develop later

into a disturbance evidenced in the arts, the politics, the religion and the very conscience of the period during which Turnèbe wrote his play. This disturbance Sypher has found as very interesting for us today, because we also have been living through a crisis of conscience. The comparison of the two women illustrates the change the type has undergone while Marion's expressions and temperament fit the principle of probability and the principle of decorum found in Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace. Aristotle advises the writer to:

endeavor always after the necessary or the probable; so that whenever such and such a personage says or does such and such a thing, it shall be the necessary or probable outcome of his character.

What is Françoise's character? And what influences does it undergo? What is her education? In describing Geneviève's fears she uses metaphorical language. (I, 7) On the other hand she makes fun of her resorting again to the same adjective: "Vous estes une amoureuse peu hardie, vous n'avez pas encore monte sur l'ours." (I, 7) At times her language approximates Marion's: "Ce jeune-homme-cy pense me tirer les vers du nez." (II, 2) But she is determined to outwit Eustache and she adds: "Fin contre fin n'est pas bon à faire doublure." (II, 2)

From Françoise's hypocrisy and her relationship to religion emerges an important characteristic of cultural change in Turnèbe's time that stemmed from the Counter-Reformation. The effects of the Counter-Reformation left their mark on the entremetteuse of the Italian comedies. This is the country where the Counter-Reformation gained the earliest entrance and where the Jesuits were educated. Aretitine begins a sort of stage description of this figure with the words:

Se io fossi una Ruffiana ... io mi vestirei di bigio, e  
 disciuta, e scalza con due candele in mans masticando  
 paternostri, e infilzando ave-marie, dopo l'havere fiutabe  
 tutte le chiese. (La Lena)

Cecchi describes the entremetteuse in Assinlo as:

pinzochera bigia que va tultavia per quieste chiese con  
 una filze tanto binge di paternostri siembre biasciando  
 pissi pissi (I, 2)

Françoise, in her speech, is humble and has no pretensions or self-glory.

When Eustache calls her the most pious woman of the parish, she answers  
 modestly:

je suis une pauvre femme, qui offense Dieu plus souvent  
 qu'il n'y a de minutes au jour, et que, si Dieu ne m'use  
 de misericorde, a grand peine le pourray-je jamais con-  
 templer a sa gloire (II, 2)

At another place she describes herself when Eustache asks: "Quelle femme  
 estes-vous?" (II, 2) as "Une pauvre pecheresse qui court a la mort le  
 grand galop." (II, 2) Nivelet, Rodomont's servant, when he sees her pass  
 by, utters the following remark: "Elle a accoustume d'estre plus a  
 l'eglise qu'a la maison." (I, 6) And Antoine, Basile's servant, remarks  
 on one occasion to his master that he was looking for her a whole hour  
 over the city of Paris without being able to find her:

J'ai este a Saint-Jean, Saint Gervay, Saint-Paul, Saint-  
 Antoine, l'Ave-Maria pour voir si je la trouverais, d'autant  
 qu'elle est plus souvent aux eglises qu'a sa maison.  
 (V, i)

In order that people are daily made aware of her pious way of life anew  
 she runs from one church to the other as may be seen from the above  
 report. When Basile asks Françoise to prepare the way for his access to  
 Louise's house during her absence, Françoise pretends great surprise and  
 reacts with a "Benedicite Dominus."

Considering herself "Une pauvre pecheresse" (II, 2) makes her appear to stand with one foot in life with her eye always upon death which is near. Such an attitude makes her advice gain absolute validity and authority:

Vous pouvez bien penser qu'estant sur le bord de ma fesse,  
preste de rendre compte a Dieu de ce que j'ay fait en ce  
monde, ne vous voudrais induire a faire chose qui penst  
tant soit peu souiller mon ame en la vostre. (I, 5)

When purely human arguments are in vain, she uses the argument of love of fellow man which is here used for the first time in French literature for the purposes of the entremetteuse. She strengthens her arguments in that she fills them with sermons which Geneviève has heard:

Vous avez ouy dire souvent a vostre confesseur qu'il faut  
aymer son prochain comme soy-mesure, et qu'il se faut bien  
garder de tomber en ce vilain vice d'ingratitude, qui est  
une des brances d'orgueil, lequel a fait tresbucher au plus  
creus abisme d'enfer les anges, qui estaient les plus belles  
et les plus heureuses creatures que Dieu eust faites. Ne  
seriez-vous pas une ingrate, une glorieuse, une outrecuidee,  
si vous ne faisiez conte des justes prieres de celuy qui ne  
voit par autres yeux que par les vostres (I, 7)

Whether Françoise distorts the sermons out of good intention or out of hypocrisy, there is no way to say positively. Maybe she is mocking piety; maybe she is not.

Nivelet, who has been eavesdropping during the whole scene of persuasion, comments ironically on the successful effect the old woman's casuistic ability had on Geneviève:

Voyez comme ceste vieille scayt bien prescher, et avec  
quelle audace ... elle ne cessera tant qu'elle l'ayt  
convertie ... Je croy que ceste vieille sempiternelle a  
este a l'escole de quelque frere frapart, tant elle scayt  
docternement prescher et amener de vives raisons. Voyes  
comme il faut fiare son profit des sermons. O quelle  
belle instruction! (I, vii)



She makes Geneviève believe that for her not to receive Basile could be considered a sin against a fellow Christian. Here is the ambiguity in regard to Françoise's character. Whether she is a naive woman of good faith or whether she is distorting the biblical commands, there is no way to tell from the quotations cited above. She is ready to recognize marriage as the rightful culmination of a love affair. She demands that Basile promise to marry Geneviève. Only on that condition is she going to help him carry out the seduction

Il ne tiendra pas a moi qu'il ne jouisse de sa maistresse:  
j'entens au loyal mariage, autrement non. (I, 5)

To Geneviève also she gives the same assurances:

Je ne vous conseille chose que je ne fusse si j'estois  
en vostre place, et certes vous le devez faire, puisqu'il  
n'y va rien de vostre honneur. (I, 7)

Here she is obviously manipulating the truth. Antoine's comment after the seduction that there are many men who would never "espouser une femme de qui ils auraient jouy auparavant le jour des nopces, quand bien elle les aymerait uniquement," leaves no doubt that what she tells the girl in regard to feminine honor is a distortion of reality.

Françoise's tactics of equivocation and her overcleverness in handling religion to her own uses bring this conventional type under the sophisticated attack of the mannerist tradition. She is a product of what Wylie Sypher calls

the mentality of crisis ... a condition that occurs whenever there is vagueness or inconsistency in ideals together with a vivid awareness of one's immediate situation and a proclivity to act on the stimulus of that awareness.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style, p. 141.

Françoise appears almost abstract compared to Marion. Who is this old woman? What is her past? What does she do for a living? Any comments made link her to the church: "Elle a accoustume d'estre plus a l'eglise qu'a la maison." (I, 6) No insinuations are made around her name with the exception of Nivelet who calls her "vieille sempisternelle." We know nothing about her. We only perceive a certain perversity, an incomparable talent for intrigue and her hypocrisy.

Everything concerning Marion is known, through monologues, asides, dialogues. Grèvin informs us as to her profession, past life and special condition. Not so with Turnèbe. Coherence in regard to the type is gone and one must go about to seek the truth in the same manner. Françoise goes from church to church. Grèvin looked upon Marion as a defined human type and treated her with a breadth of possibilities. The change in the figure of the entremetteuse from Marion who carries her role openly and talks about herself without any hesitation to the ambiguous status of Françoise is symptomatic of a new direction in the religious and social condition of Turnèbe's time that will be examined in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### ART AND LIFE

Turnèbe's play is the product of the spirit of an age characterized by uncertainty. In the closing years of the sixteenth century France and the rest of Europe were inwardly shaken by feelings of uneasiness and distrust. France by the time Les Contents was written had already known persecution, violence and civil war.

Turnèbe, like other writers and thinkers, could not escape a sense of insecurity, an awareness that change surrounded man at every turn. The same awareness haunts the play from the very beginning in Louise's inexplicable change of disposition and irrational determination to block her daughter's marriage with Basile:

Genevieve: N'est-ce que cela? Vrayment je n'ay pas peur de ce beau capitaine de foin. Quant est du Seigneur Basile, la rencontre n'en peut estre que bonne. Car vous scavez que c'est l'homme du monde lequel ayme mieux nostre maison.

Louyse: Voyez-vous ceste becquenaud? D'autant qu'elle scait bien que je ne voy volontiers Basile, elle m'en dit du bien. Mais venez ca! Comment scavez-vous que Basile nous ayme? Qui vous l'a dit? Je croy, que vous l'avez songe ou que vous estes de son conseil!

Genevieve: Pardonnez-moy, ma mere. Je n'en scay rien sinon ce que vous m'en avez appris autrefois, lorsque, vous me

voulustes marier avec luy, et aussi d'autant que je le  
voy vous saluer bien humblement quand nous passons.

The abrupt change of disposition to something the mother formerly approved creates an atmosphere of equivocation and uncertainty. The immediate situation of peril that this imperious will casts results in a desire for accomodation. Accommodation usually demands an action that is difficult to keep within a moral context. Turnèbe consequently manipulates the characters for the sake of the intrigue in which they are engaged. Everything and everybody help directly or indirectly, knowingly or not to defeat Louise's opposition: change, the servants' schemes, and the naiveness even of Basile's rivals. Rodomont is stopped for debts and does not come back until after Basile's triumph. Eustache not only withdraws from the arena after Francoise's revelations, but he helps both his rivals by lending them the costumes that will give them access to Genevieve's home.

Moreover, the way Turnèbe handles the character of Louise makes her appear mechanically possessed by her humor which appears dramatic but unnatural. Can it be that her religious conscience would find it fair for her to treat her daughter in this way? Somehow the manipulation of this character is not for dramatic expediency alone. It seems that it reflects also the malaise that the religious strife had created. The irrationality in Louise's attitude does not coincide with the mood of devotion that permeates the exposition. For the same reason the ridicule of the prologue does not coincide with the seriousness of the situation in the exposition. Such ability to accomodate diverse psychological moods associates Turnèbe with the mannerist instability and tension of the contemporary Jacobean drama in which the psychological situation of the

characters remains suspended. Psychologically they are detached and are constantly evading points of contact. These lines from Women Beware Women are spoken by a man just before he hears of his wife's infidelity:

Honest wedlock  
I like a banqueting-house built in a garden,  
On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight  
To cast their modest odours.<sup>1</sup>

This unexpectedness is found repeatedly in *Turnèbe* in surprises of plot and in unexpectedness of feeling. The aim is to stimulate suspense, to give a fresh and unexpected impetus to the plot. Louise, for instance, is capricious in her small domain of power, and at times talks in a manner that reminds one of predestination and the way God must have appeared to both Jesuits and Calvinists who saw him as despotic, inexplicable, and perhaps equivocal:

Louise: - Genevieve, si tu m'obeis, avec ce que tu gaigneras  
le royaume de paradis tu seras bien la plus heureuse fille  
de Paris (I, i)

To Geneviève's remark that she may one day regret her decision

Louise's arbitrariness continues in full force:

Louise: Repentir ou non repentir, si faut-il que vous en  
passiez par là, et que Basile s'en torche hardiment  
la bouche (I, i)

Significantly piety is a particularly mannerist theme in Les Contents. Françoise's trifling in puns about her sins and her fear of hell, is either extreme devotion or extreme insolence, and one cannot clearly tell which. *Turnèbe*'s technique seems to be a response to over-intellectualize the renaissance comic drama which did not in the time of

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<sup>1</sup>Middleton, Thomas, Women Beware Women, ed. by Charles Bouleer, (Berkeley: University of California, 1969), III, i, p. 62.

the Pleiade experience similar strains. Their presence in Turnèbe suggests a curious division between faith and doubt. Turnèbe bears the mannerist helplessness before the arbitrariness of life and ultimately of God.

It is no exaggeration to say that Louise is seen in the same way as the God of Calvin, John Knox, and the Jesuits, despotic, arbitrary, perhaps equivocal. John Knox in his book Predestination (1560) showed man's relation to God as very personal and at the same time uncertain. The uncertainty results in a loss of confidence, but at the same time this deprivation gives a melodramatic sense of the unpredictable:

But why it pleased God to show mercy to some, and deny the same to others, because the judgments of God are a devouring depth, we enter not in reasoning with him.<sup>2</sup>

The implications of the activities of a capricious divine permeated all levels of society and in the arts they disturbed the renaissance conception of symmetry and generated a reaction that in Les Contents for instance would be more concerned with ends rather than means:

The answer to Calvin's terrifying system of arbitrary predestination was furnished by the casuist, who yields suavely to the eccentricities of God by his system of pro and contre and exploits uncertainty for his own benefit. The Jesuits simply utilized the play in the mannerist world, where things fitted together with great tolerance. The structure of the mannerist universe is not wholly determined; it is open and shifting, and the quivocations in casuistry are a special tactic of mannerist conscience, just as an extremely elastic logic is the special tactic of mannerist art, or as the double meaning, the ambiguity, is the tactic of the mannerist verse.<sup>3</sup>

If the effects of this logic are taken into consideration, the seduction that Antoine suggests to Basile in Act II should not be regarded

<sup>2</sup>John Knox, in Predestination, 1560, from Sypher, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1955), p. 138.

as being unusual or particularly immoral.

Antoine: Si la chose est ainsi que vous dites, il n'y auroit meilleur remede pour vous mettre en repos que de trouver moyen de consommer le mariage avec Genevieve, prenant gentiment un pain sur la fournée. Pour le moins auriez-vous tousjours cela sur et autant moins. Et puis, si Eustache la prenoit à son damn, (I, iv)

In these words Antoine with calm audacity develops a sort of double probability. One can be sure at least that things will work one way or the other and if after all Basile does not marry Geneviève he will have the consolation that his love was requited and perhaps the hope that even if Eustache marries her, he can still adapt to the situation even further by keeping her as his mistress:

The strain within the mannerist or Jesuitical conscience, is reduced by a legalistic wit, a juggling with opposites, by taking advantage of the doubt in the elliptical, shuttling system of things - in short, by accomodation.<sup>4</sup>

The effects of casuistry have already been seen in Turnèbe's satire on Françoise's touches of equivocation in order to carry out the intrigue. Her behavior illustrates aptly the mannerist psychology and conscience of the play, characterized by a psychological rather than structural focus. It is best illustrated in the consciousness of a division in the soliloquies, of a disassociation of forces operating outside the expected.

Louise's opinion of her daughter before and after the seduction is a psychological attack on the disassociation of appearance from reality. On her way back from the church she lavishes her daughter with praise:

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

Louise: - Je voy bien qu'il faudra que je perde vespres aujourd'huy, mais nous les dirons Genevieve et moy, aupres du feu. Aussi bien je pense qu'il luy ennuye d'estre toute seule en la maison. Vrayment le bon vrayment, je serois bien marrie si ceste fille-la avoit mal, car c'est bien la meilleure fille et la plus obeissante qui soit possible dans Paris! Tout le long du jour, apres qu'elle a donné ordre a mon mesnage, au lieu de lire dans les livres d'Amadis, de Ronsard et de Desportes, elle ne fait que de dire ses heures ou prier Dieu en son petit oratoire, à genoux devant un crucefis et une Nostre-Dame-de-Pitié. Je prie à Dieu qu'il la veuille tenir en sa sainte protection et luy donner un mary tel qu'elle merite. Mais qui a laissé ainsi la porte ouverte? Vierge Marie! Les larrons seroient-ils bien venus pendant mon absence? J'ay grand'peur qu'ils n'ayent emporté toute la vaisselle d'argent qui estoit dans la salle. Il n'y a remede, je m'y en vay voir. (III, 7)

What she finds at home suffocates her with anger. This unexpectedness is found in unexpected turns of plot and in surprises of feeling. The sudden changes have a transient effect and lay most stress upon plot and narrative. It contrasts with the method of the *Pléiade* which gives all clues, expectation and not surprise, the satisfaction of perfect knowledge. Turnèbe writes as if he had neither a care nor a conviction in the world. A skeptic in morals, an observer only of the surface of life, he mirrors faithfully the contemporary social scene of the town life of his time. By his own principles, principles which were based on his own perceptions, Turnèbe gives a durable modification of character by character or experience. Louise's idiosyncrasy is her passion for having her own way in all things. In the first soliloquy she admires the absolute obedience she imposes over her daughter and her household. The comic irony in the second soliloquy is that her attitude inevitably brings all the trouble on herself:



Louyse: - Vray Dieu, qu'est-ce que j'ay veu! Qui eust jamais pensé que Genefiefve eust voulu faire une telle playe à son honneur? J'en suis si estonnée que je ne scay si je songe ou je veille! J'avois peur que les larrons fussent entrez en ma salle, et pour m'en esclarcir, avant que d'y entrer je me suis mise à regarder pa le trou de la serrure de l'huis. Mais je n'y ay veu qu'un larron qui voloit l'honneur de ma fille et le min. (III, 7)

Similar shock tactics are found in several instances throughout the play. Opinions have hardly been uttered when events discredit them completely. Thomas' praise of his virtuous wife whom he thinks of on a pilgrimage and her passing disguised in front of him illustrate the conflicting state of feeling and conduct:

Thomas: - Mais qui sont ces gens qui viennent vers moy? Je pense cognoistre les deux de veue, et quant au troisième qui est habillé d'incarnat et qui se couvre la face, je ne scay qu'il est. En bonne foy, tant plus je le regarde, il me semble qu'il a la façon d'une femme plutost que d'un homme. Je croy que c'est quelque bonne piece de-guisée qui va planter des cornes au plus haut des biens de quelque pauvre mary. O Dieu, que l'homme est malheureux qui espouse de telles chiennes et bagasces! Quant à moy, je remercie Dieu de ce qu'il m'a donne une des plus preudes femmes qui soit d'icy à Nostre-Dame-de-Liesse, là ou elle est allée faire un pelerinage, sans que l'hyver et le temps dangereux l'ayent peu destourner de sa devotion. (IV, i)

Appearance versus reality are continually played off against each other. Rodomont is reported in prison and suddenly he appears on the stage. His presumptuous foppishness finds an outlet in his warlike pretensions. To regard Rodomont with sympathy or with contempt is a response of mood only. He is, however, more than a servile product of Terence's Thraso, for he mentions real battles in which he participated:

Rodomont: - Ouy bien, ce dites-vous. Mais je vous puis asseurer que à la bataille de Moncontour, d'un seul coup donné en taille ronde l'ay coupé deux hommes par la ceinture. Vray est qu'ils n'estoient armez que de

jaques de maille. Et de ceste façon je pense avoir fait mourir plus de quarante hommes à la rencontre de Jarnac en moins de quinze coups. Pleust à Dieu que vous eussiez esté avec moy à la journée de Lepantho. Vous m'eussiez veu souvent abbatre quatre testes de Rurcs d'un seul coup d'espée. (IV, ii)

The idea of going into battle to protect the fatherland would have never crossed his mind except for the possibility of plunder. As soon as the rumor of war spreads, Rodomont appears ready to leap immediately into the saddle. When Girard tells him that he is glad to see him in order to inform him about something important, Rodomont thinks immediately of war:

Rodomont: - Comment, avez-vous eu des nouvelles que l'on va en Flandres à ce coup, ou en Portugal?

Girard: - Je ne vous veux point parler de guerre, mais de paix. J'ay charge de sçavoir si vous avez desir de vous marier.

Rodomont, in view of his evident cowardliness, is accepted into society with surprising readiness. He boasts emptily and he is mocked. He has hazy ideas about warfare. His professional poverty parallels his economic condition. He is portrayed as a poor wretch by the servants:

Antoine: - Mais se porroit-il bien faire que Madame Louyse fust si despourveue d'entendement que de bailler sa fille à ce capitaine qui luy fait l'amour à descouvert, lequel pour tous biens n'a que quelque vieil harnois tous descloué et quelque meschante haridelle, qu'encores possible il doit? (I, iv)

The bragging about his warlike activity, his action in dangerous scenes which does not correspond to this boastfulness, the crude lies with which he seeks to save his honor, the absolute lack of sensitivity which he has toward honor and martial bravery, the low sensual element, the pride and exaggeration, the desire to appear educated, the unashamed

conviction that he is irresistible to women - all of the inherited traits of the miles are here blended together as a framework for this figure in order to criticize the bad traits the French soldier of the sixteenth century derived from his social class. In the following passage there is an intentional satire, a playful caricature of pedantic and Petrarchan terms Turnèbe illustrates that Petrarchism and pedantry are closely bound:

Rodomont: - J'avois tousjours jusques icy pensé que tout ce que l'on lit dans Perceforest, Amadis de Gaule, Palmerin d'Olive, Roland le furieux et autres romans fussent choses controuvées à plaisir, comme du tout impossibles, ne me pouvant me mettre en la test que l'amour ayt peu induire ces chevaliers et paladins à faire choses si estranges. Et toutes les fois que je lisois le desespoir du beau Tenebreux, les preuves de Florisel, les combats d'Agésilan, les folies de Roland et autres semblables, je ne pouvois croire qu'une seule des-faveur de leurs dames ou une petite jalousie qu'ils se forgeoient en la teste les peust faire entrer en telle furie, que les unes en perdoient le sens, les autres ne craignoient de s'exposer à des aventures estranges, etc. (II, iv)

Yet, secondary conditions also existed in French which reveal the comfortless place of the warrior. A poor soldier, no matter how much nobleness of spirit he might possess, is poor because of these conditions. Places are possessed not by virtue of courage but by money. Wealth, not bravery, makes a man admired. Rodomont appears to make a particularly pointed remark when he says:

Rodomont: - Ha, poltron! Ma vaillance seule vaut mieux que tous les revenus de ton maistre, et tandis que j'auray le bras en la manche, je n'auray que trop de biens. (I, iv)

That such people were not able to seize their positions and to demand discipline and comradeship of their subordinates by means of loyal conduct, is very closely related to this. Characteristic of the conduct of the captains are Nivelet's comments in crude language about Rodomont's

inability to live according to his appearance:

Nivelet: - Je croy qu'il sera cause, avant peu de temps que mes souliers ne me feront gueres de mal à la vue pour les voyages extraordinaires qu'il me convient faire tout le long du jour. Encores ne suis-je pas assuré que mon maistre m'en redonne bientost de neufs. Au contraire, J'ay peur qu'il en veuille faire comme de son habit de velous, lequel il porte autant meschant que bon. Cela me tourmenteroit peu si c'estoit en autre temps qu'en hyver et en autre lieu qu' à Paris. Là où ces vieux escarpins tous descousus qu'il me donne, après les avoir portez un an ou deux, ne me peuvent gueres bien remparer la plante des pieds contre le froid et les voues.

(Act, I, ii)

The return to the financial conditions of the Captain at least appears to be clear; they were in general poor. And this might be explained only as follows - in peace time these people threw away their money which they had won in war. In peace time there was nothing left for Rodomont and his kind except to go into debt or to suffer. Naturally, the servant had to suffer alone on account of the needy condition of the captain.

This was the picture which the captain offered to the watchers of this period. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, when Spain under Philip II attained the highest peak of its political power, France moved into a relationship of dependence of Spain. Its literary dependency has already been pointed out in the discussion of Françoise. Turnèbe hints the importance of Spain and its uncontested possession of the European hegemony at the time when Rodomont uses it metaphorically to illustrate his great love for Geneviève:

Rodomont: - Tu t'en peux bien assurer, car je puis dire que tous les diables d'enfer ne me sçauroient estonner. Et pour l'amour que je luy porte, je ne craindrois d'affronter le camp du roy d'Espagne. ... (I, iii)

The panting eagerness is upset when Rodomont rejects Geneviève with a civilian's prudential wiliness. The sudden twist brings the role of the braggart within more purely bourgeois comedy. We approach nearer to this comic point when we recognize the strength of the dramatic tension that Turnèbe creates between Rodomont and the rest of the play. Rodomont's part is external, he remains a spectator, detached and observant. His being accepted as Geneviève's husband by Louise leads to a situation that is dramatically compelling but does not succeed in removing the sense of alienation between the character of the braggart and the rest of the play. They do not consciously feel identified with him, for he himself wants no such identification: they may hate or despise him, but he is there like the figures of Bronzino, decorative but also expressive in an uneasy way. He holds his distance even though he dramatically approaches their world. Turnèbe, like the mannerist painter, seems to have Rodomont possess them as most of them possess each other - by calculation and double entendre. There seems no way of reconciling these two worlds. The braggart is a convenient focus on the personal relations within the society and the paradox of life itself. By being ridiculous he readily becomes pathetic but his uninhibited speeches become at the same time a commentary on everyday life:

Rodomont: - Pardieu, je puis dire que je suis plus craint  
 qu'aymé, sinon possible des medecins, barbiers et  
 chirurgiens, ausquels je donne force pratiques.  
 (IV, iii)

The braggart represents another kind of movement, elliptical so to speak to the main movement of the play which moves horizontally across the action. The overthrow of the obstacle personified by Louise does not

bring a change to the actual hierarchy of society. Only the personal relations within the society are altered. But the braggart moves through the play not as a participant but rather a spectator character. He and his servant appeal to us as spectators rather than participants. Their way of speaking has a penetrating quality, that transcends the plot and gives a glimpse of the social situation of the time. Nivelet repeatedly brings the question of money into the fore and the losing battle his master is waging because of the lack of it:

Nivelet: - Ha, pardieu! C'est cela que l'on dit argent faict tout, et qui a de l'argent a belle amie. Fy du mestier qui ne peut nourrir son maistre! Au temps où nous sommes, le mestier des armes ne vaut rien qu'a creer des debtes. Et combien que mon maistre face aussi bien valoir son estat qu'homme de sa robbe, soit à piller, rançonner, desrober les gaiges des soldats, faire trouver force passevolans à la monstre, partir le gain avec le threshorier et contreroleur, et chauffer les pieds à son hoste, si n'a-il jamais assemblé cent escus en une bourse qu'il ne les ayt aussitost despendus aux dez, aux bordeaux et aux cabarets. Et tout le pis que j'y voy, c'est qu'il n'y a si peut en ceste ville qui ne le sçache, jusques là mesme, quand on veut parler d'un homme liberal, voire plutost prodigue, on n'use plus d'autre comparaison, sinon que l'on dit: il ressemble au Capitaine Rodomont. Vrayement, je ne m'estonne pas si le Seigneur Basile est en grace, puis qu'il a le bruit d'estre riche et de ne faire folles despenses. Quand il seroit plus vieil que Mathusalem, plus puant qu'un retrait et plus laid qu'un diable, les bonnes qualitez qu'il a auroient bien la puissance de le faire sembler aagé seulement de vingt-cinq ans, mieux fleurant qu'unre rose et plus beau qu'un ange. (I, vi)

Fest in his study on the Miles Gloriosus remarks that a completely harmless nature was hidden behind the miles' warlike appearance to the point that he appears even to have served school boys as an object of scorn. Turnèbe combined in the braggart the pantaleone characteristics and in the servant the new role of a satirical observer of that which

happens around him. To be sure the braggart is amusing but he is also used to make laughable the sententious posing and boasting of the most prominent characters: Refusing Geneviève, the braggart unmasks the bourgeois expediency hidden behind the appearances:

Girard: - Comment? L'on m'avoit dit que vous perdiez les pieds pour son amour, et maintenant que vous estes en beau chemin pour en jouir, vous reculez arriere. Il semble en bonne foy que vous craigniez la touche.

Rodomont: - Sans mentir, je l'ay aymée pendant qu'elle estoit fille, d'aussi bonne amour que jamais gentil-homme ayma. Mais depuis que j'ay descouvert qu'un autre estoit le mieux venu en son endroit et qu'elle avoit laissé aller le chat au fourmage, je ne suis pas deliberé de m'en rompre jamais la teste.

(V, v)

Inside the general characteristics of simplicity and awkwardness Turnèbe labors persistently on finer shadings of character hinting, to the difference between seeming and being. Behind Rodomont's foolish appearance a not completely harmless nature is hidden. Turnèbe has added to this figure a certain rascality and maliciousness reminiscent of the Spanish gracioso. Basile never considered Rodomont as a dangerous rival and this underestimation prepared the shock he experienced finding him at Geneviève's door lamenting while he is hauled off to prison for his debts. Instead of going to his betrothal he goes to marry a prison. Turnèbe continues the particular twist in the braggart's part in order to achieve sensational results even if this particular character is not placed within any logical framework of events. For Louise to accept Rodomont as her daughter's husband would simply defy logic for Basile:

Basile: - Non, non, ne pense pas que ce beau capitaine de trois cuites y puisse jamais parvenir. Vrayment, elle seroit pourveue d'une belle happelourde. Louyse est

trop accorte pour faire un contract si peu à l'avantage de sa fille. Elle pourroit bien dire que son douaire seroit assigné sur un gibet, car je pense que ce beau traine-gaine n'a point de plus certain heritage.

(I, iv)

It would defy logic for the renaissance writer and artist for whom beauty was exact proportion, clear outline, stable relations. Then mannerism broke open conventional patterns by holding everything in a state of dissonance, dissociation, and doubt. This is the art of Les Contents, where ambiguities and complexities are exploited. The arbitrariness of action in the play parallels the arbitrariness in life. Piety covers a multitude of sins. Turnèbe varies the theme of seeming and being by including hidden disease or indeed any kind of evil that develops unseen. Geneviève's reported sickness is an old trick of the stage, but the difference lies in the exact correspondence between character and action. Turnèbe uses old stage devices but fills them with new meaning. There is a difference between the clever and sensitive first generation Renaissance writers and the new generation of the later 1570's that is characterized by a certain personal disenchantment. Turnèbe used the clichés in the early dramatic style to produce new effects. He intellectualized them by adding to them a witty affectation, a distortion of language through preciosity, or a play with conventional patterns, characters, and attitudes.

In mannerism Turnèbe discovered the more insidious pleasures of the double-meanings and used them provokingly, with intent to shock or to mock. The action of the characters is far from convincing. There is a lack of adjustment between person to person, a variety of psychological



states without centering of attention. The relation between the characters is left suspended. The roles of Louise, Geneviève, Françoise, Eustache and even Basile acquire a perverted originality. They move by calculation and double entendre. The way Antoine talks to Basile after the seduction leaves no doubt that he is not beyond suspicion regarding his true intentions. Eustache describes him as handsome, a great favorite of ladies, a frequenter of amusement places, and perhaps a writer of conceits. Their love duet is a renaissance cliché which hardly conceals Turnèbe's revolt from the bourgeois' notions of platonism. The bourgeois of the city began to rival the nobility in the richness of their costume, so much so that laws were passed permitting only certain people to wear velvet, silk, and fur on certain items of clothing. Imitation of clothes implied also imitation of manners. The late sixteenth century was, as Lefranc remarks, an era of many new and many old things in the daily life of the Frenchman. It was a time of relative prosperity for the bourgeoisie, which was composed of many types of people from ministers of justice to merchants. During this time, the oldest of the "réunions littéraires et artistiques" began and ended (1570-1584). Important men of the time gather together to listen to music and to discuss poetry. The first "salon" of Paris met in the middle of the century with Jean de Morel and his wife Antoinette de Loynes as the leaders. In 1570 appeared the "salon de l'hôtel de Retz" which was a "conservatoire des belles manières et du beau langage" (p. 67). Celebrated writers and especially poets came to the "Cabinet de Dictynne" where petrarquism was the vogue. Among the men who attended this "salon" was Jean de Vivonne, the father of the marquise de Rambouillet who fifty

years later would form a renowned "salon" of her own. There was also the "salon des dames des Roches" familiar to Turnèbe, which was comprised mostly of the "noblesse de la robe" and those of the "corps médical."

The term "salon," which came from the Italian, was not used until the end of the next century, however. At the beginning of the century, women did not have an important place in these "salons," but as the century progressed, the social niche was enlarged for contemporaries of Marguerite d'Angoulême and Louise Labé. With this change, the society became "moins rude, plus galante, plus artiste, plus polie, aux manières élégantes et raffinées." (p. 83)

The real originality of Turnèbe in the love duet is his personal manipulation of the Petrarchan and the précieux in the way of situation, language, and response. The crude imagery in which Basile's language disintegrates after a beginning of aristocratic elegance and mannerist pose will be examined later.

The vitality of Turnèbe's play stems from the author's ability to overintellectualize the renaissance comic drama which had not experienced strains. Their presence in Turnèbe suggests a curious division that bears the mannerist helplessness before the arbitrariness of life and ultimately of God. It is no exaggeration to say that the conventional pattern that Turnèbe inherited from the Renaissance comedy can be identified with the scheme of things in his time:

For the renaissance artist beauty was exact proportion, clear outline, stable relations. Ghiberti said, 'Only proportion makes beauty.' Alberti repeats that beauty is a harmony, congruity, and consent of all the parts. Spenser believed that God framed the world in a comely Pattern. Then a spasm broke open this goodly pattern, and religious schisms cleft a world

charged with the new forces of the Protestant era - forces that played through politics and commerce as well as faith, and diverted the course of history on two continents.<sup>5</sup>

The conventions of French Renaissance comedy, Jeffrey states, are seldom original creations. Turnèbe's reliance upon a dynamic plot, not a closed design, is like the loose and surprising adjustment and counter-adjustment of figure in Parmigianino's paintings, with their evidence of subjective stress. Turnèbe's world also is not organized in stable relationships. Contingency becomes the prevailing law. Louise's motives are not clear but her will is. Already in the exposition the tone becomes that of a subjective view of reality. To satisfy the needs of this kind of atmosphere is to defy the transition and sequence of the Renaissance rules and to operate by a personal manipulation of design, material, situation, language, and response. The logic makes no attempt at organization - it is rhetorical and dramatic putting sudden stress on language and gesture. Girard's soliloquy about his predicament as a father and husband presents man as trapped and unable to carry the affliction and the fear of his condition:

Girard: - O Dieu, que ceux-là sont heureux qui n'ont jamais mis sur leur col le pesant joug de mariage! Que ceux-là pareillement sont heureux qui, étant mariez, se sont veus aussitost en liberté par la mort de leurs femmes! Ou bien (si le malheur a voulu que leurs femmes fussent de longue vie) n'en ont eu aucuns enfans, ou s'ils en ont eu ils les ont perdus pendant leur bas eage, avant qu'ils eussent le moyen de tourmenter leurs peres par leurs follies et desbauches. Si la mort eust ravi dès le berceau mon Eustache, je ne serois maintenant en peine pour luy, et ne serois en crainte de le voir chastier comme un ravisseur de filles. Faudra-il que celui que J'ay eslevé avec tant de peine et

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<sup>5</sup>Wylie Sypher, p. 117.

que j'ay nourry si delicatement serve bientost d'exemple  
à tout un peuple au milieu d'une Greve ou d'une halle?  
Mon Dieu, je te prie de m'oster de ce monde, plustost  
aujourd'huy que demain, s'il est arresté que mon fils  
doive estre pasture des corbeaux ou forçat d'une gallere.  
Mais pourquoy est-ce que je me desconforte ainsi? Dois-  
je croire aux premieres paroles de ceux-cy qui possible  
ont controuvé ceste fable de despit qu'ils ont que je  
n'ay voulu accorder leurs articles desraisonnables?  
Vrayment, ce n'est pas sagement fait de me faire mal-  
heureux avant le temps. (IV, v)

His utterances respond, however, to the needs of the mannerist drama which above all seeks excitation. He uses an ethic of dramatic expediency that operates within a framework of extreme values. Any moral value can be invoked to sharpen the psychological tension. At any given moment, Turnèbe swings his characters to opposite responses, unpredictably, erratically, illogically. Though the pattern of the play is conventional and the characters conventionally posed, they are, however, situated in an ambiguous context in which their presence is dramatic but unnatural. Louise's motives, Françoise's piety, and Geneviève's morality are approached and accomodated from a rather arbitrary angle. Logically the contradictions in them cannot be adjusted to each other; dramatically they can - provided we look at the situation in this Parisian quarter from a rather narrow premise if we want to preserve the illusion. If we try to define who Françoise really is, we find that we must take one of two incompatible points of view: we must either take a quite arbitrary narrow approach and consider her as a "hypocrite" or we must look at her from many angles as if we circled about this figure. Turnèbe, in the fashion of the mannerist artist, is always experimenting with points of view and approaches. She corresponds to the figura serpentinata of the plastic arts that Panofsky describes as follows:

The figura serpentinata of the mannerists, presenting what I have called a 'revolving-view,' seems to consist of a soft substance which can be stretched to any length and twisted in any direction. It conveys the impression of an insecure, unstable situation, which however could be transformed into classic equilibrium if the aimless versatility of the figures were directed by a stabilizing and controlling force.<sup>6</sup>

Like the mannerist statue, most of the characters in Les Contents cannot be satisfactorily seen from any one point of view. We do not feel content with any one impression we have of them, so we must look for supplementary views by projecting personal impressions about these uneasy characters with their elastic proportions. Their unexplained reversals - Geneviève's conversion, Louise's unexplained change of heart in regard to Basile, Rodomont's refusal to solve his lamentable financial situation by marrying Geneviève, and Eustache's ambivalence, are reversals moved by an obscure mechanism of pro and contra.

Even the denouement is tinted by a certain cynicism in Basile's tribute to his future mother-in-law and his reassurances:

Basile: - Madame, il vous peut souvenir qu'il y a plus d'un an que je suis après, pour faire ceste alliance aux conditions que vous m'avez offertes autrefois. Vous sçavez que j'ay perdu ma peine et que n'y avez jamais voulu entendre. D'autre costé, vous vous estes bien peu apercevois, si vous n'estiez du tout aveugle, de l'affection que vostre fille me portoit... Ma mere, vous ne vous repentirez point d'avoir fait alliance avec moy. Et puisque je vous trouve si benigne en mon endroit que de me pardonner une faute qui à la verité de prime face semble bien grande, asseurez-vous que vous n'aurez plus-tost aujourd'huy donné un mary à vostre fille que acquis un humble serviteur pour vous. (V, vi)

Norman Spector makes the following remark in regard to the question of the true situation between Louise and Basile:

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<sup>6</sup>Panofsky, Erwin, Studies in Iconology: humanistic theories in the art of the Renaissance, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 176.

La 'courtoisie' dont Basile faisait étalage à l'égard de tout en faisant la cour à sa fille, aurait pris l'aspect, du moins pour la mère, d'un attachement sérieux. On ne s'étonnerait pas que Louyse eût nourri pendant quelque temps l'espoir d'épouser elle même Basile. (On se demande du reste pourquoi Turnébe aurait fait de Louyse une veuve, au lieu de s'en tenir à la situation traditionnelle des père et mère opiniâtres. C'est un trait que je n'ai jusqu'ici pas réussi à retrouver dans les comédies italiennes.) Elle se serait rendu compte tôt ou tard que les soins de celui-ci à son égard n'allaient pas plus loin que les devoirs envers une future belle-mère, ou que de toute façon l'intérêt de Basile n'allait pas jusqu'au mariage. C'est donc, nous semble-t-il, dans l'amour-propre blessé de Louyse que l'on trouverait l'explication de la rupture.<sup>7</sup>

Two indications in the play point toward the possibility of Louise's personal interest in Basile and the subsequent rejection: first Basile appears, though it is not mentioned, to be older than the conventional age of the young lovers in previous comedies; moreover unlike Eustache he appears to be financially independent and not depending on parents like Eustache. Louise's haste to give her daughter to Eustache, though she knows the superficiality of his character, can be interpreted as the result of her spite and jealousy. It is an hypothesis without any direct evidence in the text itself. This equivocal rapport between the two is based only on what is implied but never stated. It is best exhibited in Louise's precipitation and anger in the exposition each time her daughter speaks in defense of Basile - "Voyez-vous ceste becquenaud! D'autant qu'elle sçait bien que je ne voy volontiers Basile, elle m'en dit du bien! ... et que Basile s'en torche hardiment la bouche!" In the following act her anger flares up again when Françoise finds nothing wrong in the attachment of her daughter to Basile:

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<sup>7</sup>Norman Spector, LV, LVI.

Louyse: - Ma commere, m'amie, Geneviefve est une mauvaise fille, car il n'a tenu qu'à elle qu'elle n'ayt esté accordée.

Françoise: - A qui donc? Au Seigneur Basile?

Louyse: - Ne me parlez jamais de cest homme-là si vous me voulez faire plaisir!

Françoise: - Pourquoy, ma commere?

Louyse: - Par Saint-Jehan, pource que ma fille n'est pas pour luy, et qu'il s'en torche hardiment le bec!  
(II, ii)

Françoise's discreet allusions seem also to reinforce the hypothesis on several instances:

Basile: - Comme je traversois tout à ceste heure l'église, je l'ay veue avec sa mere, qui n'a pas faict semblant de me voir.

Françoise: - Je sçay bien pourquoy. Mais motus, on ne sçauroit empescher les mauvaises langues de babiller...  
(I, v)

Françoise: - Trouvez le moyn de faire vostre paix avec Louyse...  
(V, i)

Basile follows her suggestion in the apology of the final reconciliation by declaring to Louise that she has acquired "un humble serviteur" for her by marrying her daughter to him. Again, one could interpret his whole statement as nothing but expected 'courtoisie' to his future mother-in-law; and again nothing prevents our believing that Basile's response was an accomodation to Louise's deepest wishes.

Turnèbe's "subjective" relation to his world reminds one of Montaigne. Our senses give us only the impressions of outside objects; impressions and objects are two different things. Consequently we are constrained to live with appearances. Les Contents is a play that echoes

the philosophic voice of mannerism: Montaigne. What do we know, Turnèbe repeats as he moves freely between impressions and objects. Yet, impressions and objects are different things, and since we must live amid appearances, we must protect ourselves by having recourse to reason, as Alfonse pleads in the last act. Courts are supposed to administer justice which is most of the time based on appearances. Appearances do not always correspond to reality. Plaintiffs are exposed and ridicule instead of being justified.

Turnèbe like Montaigne did have a sense of insecurity brought about, as has already been explained, by living in a world without a known order. Turnèbe's art bears this sign of struggle with a psychological effect that diverges from the structural logic of the Pléiade comic construction. Overintellectualizing the Renaissance conventions, Turnèbe seeks emotional response; therefore he created a kind of comedy in which the motives and the actions need not be consistent with any scheme of moral values. The idea of comedy as "imitation de vie, mirouer des coustumes, et image de vérité" of Grévin (Bref discours pour l'intelligence de ce théâtre, in Théâtre complet, ed. Pinvert, p. 7), cannot apply to the mechanical activity of Les Contents. This means that morality is always being adjusted to the needs of the immediate dramatic crisis. Thus, it is the opposite of the Ciceronian description of imitatio expounded in the Renaissance theories and followed by the Pléiade playwrights rather closely.

Turnèbe was a talented and sensitive man who was very aware of the times in which he lived and of the crisis of history and consciousness that characterized it. His work, in the realm of the drama, shows



the same upheaval manifested in the arts, the religion, the politics, and in the very mode of living of this era. It is difficult to perceive the disturbance at first, for as it has been shown in a previous chapter of this work, the conventional structural pattern of the play remains intact. Some critics praised it vaguely as the masterpiece of Renaissance Comedy in France, mainly for Turnèbe's ability to ease the stiffness of the conventions, particularly those of the décor simultané and of time-sequence in it. Another reason was language and the quality of his prose.

Les Contents is unique in two ways: First the minimized artificiality of the conventions inherited from the Pléiade is in itself a technical achievement. Second, within this close knit pattern, new working principles in the form of scathing wit, approximation, equivocation, and accommodation bring the play to the threshold of mannerism. Turnèbe borrowed the conventions of comic structure from the Pléiade, he perfected their dramatic unity and at the same time brought into them a new emotional predisposition evidenced in the art and life of his time.

Mannerism is a transformation, a disassociation from the concepts of unity that the Renaissance established, but the break in Les Contents is only in the clashes of attitudes and language among the characters. Turnèbe's ability to bring into the dramatic structure dissimilar elements and at the same time to achieve great coherence is a talent lost to the later dramatists of Hardy's generation and regained only by Molière eighty years later.

## CHAPTER V

### STYLE

Turnèbe's play provides one of the clearest and most successful illustrations of the transition in French Renaissance comedy which began in France in 1574. The essence of the transition can be found in the shift in the attitude of expression as well as its function in life and society.

There is a difference between the clever and sensitive first or so called Pléiade generation of the French Renaissance playwrights and the new generation of the mannerist writers scourged by some personal disenchantment. Many of the affectations in Renaissance style were clichés. Mannerism is nothing if not intellectual. Wit and sharply phrased statements become key notes. Turnèbe's play is extraordinary in that it does offer knowledge of the intellectual tone of his time and at the same time a private view of the change that the implications of the social, political, and religious uncertainties brought in human attitudes and in the direction of the art.

The Pléiade comedies used the vehicle of the native French farce, the octosyllabic verse, without alternate masculine and feminine rhymes.

Turnèbe used prose, a medium implying in the author a frame of mind with a minimum of formal articulation. The reason that Turnèbe chose prose is that his mode of experience is not predominantly emotional. Verse forms in comedy could no longer be cultivated for their own sake. The perceptions Turnèbe's style expresses are an accumulation of social experiences. Style and theme become the vehicles of expressing the emotional and moral atmosphere of a strained period. With this aim in mind Turnèbe offers a glimpse of the transformations that changed the Renaissance style that was founded upon concepts of coherence, optimism, and proportion.

Turnèbe's work is extraordinary in that it does offer knowledge of the intellectual tone of his period and at the same time a private view of the change that the implications of the social, political, and religious uncertainties brought in human attitudes expressed through art. The first manifestation of change in the play is the prologue. Basically, the prologue's main function is to establish a relationship with the audience; to ease the transition from the audience's world to the players' world. The most common device used to achieve this transition was to give some information about the plot in the manner of Grévin quoted below:

Ce nonobstant, j'ai sceu de luy (le poète),  
Comme une chose bien secrete,  
Que ceste Comédie est faicte  
Sur le discours de quelque amour,  
Qui s'est conduit au carefour  
De Saint Servin; mais je vous prie,  
D'autant que vous avez envie  
D'estre secrets, de tenir coy,  
Car je voy cy derrière moy  
Le sire Josse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jacques Grevin, Les Esbahis, Théâtre complet et poésies choisies, ed. by Lucien Pinvert, (Paris: Garnier, 1922), p. 117.

while Jodelle in the prologue of L'Eugène claimed that his play was the first French comedy. Turnèbe rejected an approach similar to the above. He saw that the prologue's function, though not essential to the play, could be manipulated by virtue of its position to provide comic effect. He treats the love theme of the play from unexpected points of view and eccentric angles with an ultimate goal to mock or to shock, although the play revolves around the love of a young Parisian couple of the bourgeoisie and the obstacles against their wish to get married. In the prologue the love theme is debased; the sentimental aspect is ignored while the sexual is overemphasized with agitated witticisms and equivocal metaphors. Love has cooled in Turnèbe's wit and is scourged by some personal disenchantment unfamiliar to the clever and sensitive first generation. The sensuality of the tone conveys dubious motives and double entendre that blanket both the feminine world of the audience and of the play. Skepticism of feminine morality is repeatedly expressed throughout the play. Turnèbe parodies the theme giving it a dramatic intensity through the subjective relation of language to the world of his comedy. The real merit of Turnèbe was in his ability to accommodate within the conventional forms and elements the tension of the mannerist technique by putting into practice like Montaigne his private ideas on the rapport between a person's thinking.

Turnèbe's style of writing can be classified into five basic approaches which vary according to circumstance. The first approach is in the theme of the intrigue; the second on the concept of honor, the third revolves around the disguise, the fourth on religious hypocrisy

and the fifth deals with the servant's coarse joking in the Gallic fashion. The first theme stems from Louise's aversion to Basile. It is ambiguous and antagonistic - the justification for this aversion is nowhere evident in the play. Spector says that Louise's obstinacy was a convention that imitated closely the complications of the Italian imbroglio. In his opinion Turnèbe should have developed the reasons for Louise's antagonism in order to reinforce the comic effect of the play. Louise's decisiveness of gesture and sensational acting are not meant to be placed within a logical framework of events but rather to become sources of ambiguity to fit the sensationalism involved in her paradoxical language. Louise refuses to explain her attitude in the exposition and hides her motives with an excited defense that betrays the erratic and feverish logic of mannerist drama:

Louyse: - Qu'on ne m'en parle plus, car pour mourir je ne voudrois que Basile fust ton nary.

Geneviefve: - Si est-ce que vous l'avez recherché autrefois.

Louyse: - Repentir ou non repentir, si faut-il que vous en passiez par là, et que Basile s'en torche hardiment la bouche.

With the second theme on bourgeois honor the entirely dramatic and irresponsible morality of the mannerist play is brought to bear with the displacement of values. Honor preoccupies practically everybody in the play since it is directly associated with Geneviève's sexual morality in particular and with all women of her class in general. Geneviève herself is preoccupied considerably with her reputation and her language reveals that to save the appearances is her main concern:

... mais encores ne puis-je croire que, faisant entrer Basile en nostre maison, je ne fache une grande breche à mon honneur. Et tous ceux qui en ouyront parler ne le pourront interpreter qu'à mal. (I, vii)

Her fear of gossip rather than the loss of her innocence it quickly appeased by Francoise's expert rhetoric:

M'amie, nous avons remedié à tout cela. Il viendra habillé de l'habit qu'Eustache luy presta hier au soir, et se couvrira la face du bout de son manteau pour n'estre reconnu. Si bien que si on le voit de fortune, on pensera incontinent que c'est Eustache, lequel on a veu plusieurs fois entrer en vostre maison à cause du voisinage. Et pour mieux donner le fil, il sera bon qu'il se retire au logis d'Eustache quand il sortira de chez vous. Mais quand il viendrait mesmes habillé de ses accoustremens ordinaires, vous ne devez craindre qu'il soit veu des voisins, d'autant que à cause de la feste les boutiques sont fermées, et personne ne se tient à la porte à cause du froid. Davantage, ce sera à une heure après midi, cependant que beaucoup de gens sont encores à table et les autres au sermon. (I, vii)

Irony gives this urbane dissimulation of honor a free play of mind that exposes the author's detached view of behavioral contradictions on which the social realities are based. When Rodomont's servant Nivelet remarks that:

La pauvre fille! Elle n'a peur que de l'entrée et de la sortie, car elle seroit bien aise qu'il fust tousjours dedans. (I, vii)

he projects also Geneviève's nature as it is intrinsically grasped in its immediate actuality by the means of the irony technique. Furthermore irony, besides revealing a character's nature in its essential reality, also makes the same character, on account of his contradictions, appear palpably more of a human being and less similar to the character-type of the Pléiade period.

As the theme of honor develops and the seduction is discovered dissimulation gives way to violence. At first, Louise's preoccupation is to cover the situation:

Mon Dieu que feray-je? Que dira le monde quand il saura  
la faute de ma fille? Nous voyla deshonorées à jamais si  
mon frere ne trouve quelque expedient pour sauver l'honneur  
de l'une et de l'autre. (III, viii)

Soon she is seized by violent sentiments and her desire for revenge spurs her to expose rather than cover her daughter's fall. The state of tension in Louise, her seizure by forces which are too powerful to control is a mannerist situation rich in experimenting with points of view and approaches unparalleled when compared with the Pléiade comedies. Louyse suffers from a discontinuity of decision moved by some mechanism of pro and contra and she goes through a reversal as she declares to Girard who believing that the culprit is his son wants to conclude the marriage:

Dites-vous? Pensez-vous donc que je face si peu conte de  
mon honneur? Le cas me touche de trop près! Venir en plein  
midy desbaucher ma fille et la ravir par maniere de dire jus-  
ques dans mes bras. Et puis vous pensez qu'il en soit quitte  
pour l'espouser? Par la mercy Dieu, il ne sera pas vray!  
(IV, iv)

The climax of this particular situation is discord unresolved that echoes the Parisian courts of Justice in a place where nothing is too sacred to touch. There Turnèbe must have viewed the spectacle of life with a half-tolerant half-amused attitude. Scenes like the following could find their model at Court:

Girard: - ... et puis vostre fille ne sera pas si eshontée,  
comme quelques-unes ont esté que de dire qu'elle a esté  
despucelée. Cela ne seroit ni beau ny honneste, et  
serois bien marry, tant pour vous que pou moy, qu'il  
nous en fallust venir là...

Alfonse: Ma soeur, je trouve que Girard commence à se  
renger à la raison. Encor faut-il faire une fin.

Louyse: Mais, mon frère, pourrois-je endurer que Eustache  
fust mon gendre après avoir ainsi deshonoré ma maison?  
Serois-je bien si sotte que de livrer mon propre sang  
entre les mains de mon mortel ennemy? Je ne le feray  
jamais! (IV, iv)

The contradictions in the spectacle of life before him take shape with  
remarkable ease in the spectacle of his play. Recognizing the fact that  
nothing is really so serious he uses for every question of conduct legends,  
history, or literature that place the subject in question in a certain  
moral category. So Louyse and Alfonse in their desire to cover the  
scandal try to make Rodomont assume the role of the courtly knight that  
he refuses:

Louyse: - Vrayment, Monsieur, vous avez tort. Geneviefve  
est fille de bien.

Alfonse: - Mon capitaine, vous monstrez bien à voz sots  
propos que vous avez la teste sans cervelle de parler  
ainsi au desavantage de ma niepce, qui vaut mieux que  
vous!

Rodomont: - Je ne pense point avoir parlé autrement que  
je ne dois.

Louyse: - Ce n'est pas parler en homme de bien d'accuser  
les filles d'un peché où elles ne songerent de leur  
vie.

Alfonse: - C'est being loing de soustenir leur honneur et  
de couvrir leurs fautes, quand elles seroient coupables,  
ainsi que faisoient les anciens chevaliers de la table  
ronde (V, v)

Fictitious or historic events in the ordinary life of the Renaissance  
tend to crystallize and are applied as a proof of a general moral truth.  
Chivalrous ideas did not die out without having borne some fruit. Taine  
once remarked that in the middle and lower classes the chief motive of



conduct is self-interest. Chivalry becomes the ideal of life in this particular moment in the comedy for its social value. Reality personified by Rodomont gives the lie to these high illusions of a noble social life to which nevertheless the character in question has pretensions. Turnèbe shows that the ideas of chivalry had not been transformed into probity and conscience for the mainspring for such sentiments is a soul fierce and passionate. It is pride that makes man feel the need of self-respect. Without pride ethical values cannot be achieved, with the exception of Louyse, for all that occurs is always related to honor. In his extravagances Rodomont places Geneviève on a pedestal much in the fashion of the courtly novels. After her fall he abandons her, using vulgar expressions:

Sans mentir, je l'ay aymée pendant qu'elle estoit fille, d'aussi bonne amour que jamais gentilhomme ayma. Mais depuis que j'ay descouvert qu'un autre estoit le mieux venu en son endroit, et qu'elle avoit laissé aller le chat au fourmage, je ne suis pas délibéré de m'en rompre jamais la teste. (V, v)

Love in the case of Basile becomes the field where all moral and cultural perfections flower. He has pretenses to the spiritual element as the dominant aspect of his feelings. He loses himself in a lengthy tirade that goes straight to the *Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris. The *Roman de la Rose* not only determined the aristocratic conception of love during the remainder of the Middle Ages but it also became the treasure-house from which the middle class society drew a great part of its erudition. As Huizinga stated: "To formalize love is, moreover, a social necessity, a need that is the more imperious as life is more ferocious." (108) Once again Turnèbe displays how superficial and inconsistent the

Petrarchan ideal becomes in the hands of the bourgeois - a mere formalism to cover vulgar motives and inability of exaltation:

Basile: - Il ne sera jamais, en ma puissance, quand je vivrois jusques à la fin du monde et que je posséderois tous les honneurs et richesses de l'univers d'acquiter la centiesme partie de l'obligation qu'elle a sur moy, si ce n'est qu'il luy plaise de prendre pour argent contant ma bonne volonté et le ferme amour que je luy porte ... O Dieu, que je fus abusé quand j'ay pensé que ma passion amoureuse prendroit quelque par la jouyssance, tout ainsi que la faim s'apaise par les viandes, la soif par le boire, et le froid par un beau grand feu ...

Tone is not an attitude adopted by Turnèbe for its own sake but it is a technique used by the playwright for a specific effect. In the whole play it is a commentary on the social realities of the Renaissance man. The commentary is not stated directly but it is rather diffused throughout the play and thus it creates the tone and feeling of the play. In the above passage the language of the love duet, lofty and précieux at the beginning, falls by means of tone into a prosaic imagery at the end setting the tone, so to speak, for the revelation of the bourgeois mentality. It is the tool used by the author for the specific effect he wants to create. Basile's speech - a blend of lyrical images taken out of Ronsard and courtly love clichés from the chivalric novels - creates an ironic effect. His metaphors and similes descend gradually from the spiritual to the corporeal.

Basile: - O que je suis un homme miserable d'avoir esté cause que ceste pauvre fille soit tombée en la male grace de sa mere, pour aymer trop ardemment. Il ne sera jamais en ma puissance, quand je vivrois jusques à la fin du monde et que je posséderois tous les honneurs et richesses de l'univers, d'acquiter la centiesme partie de l'obligation qu'elle a sur moy, si ce n'est qu'il luy plaise de prendre pour argent contant ma bonne volonté et le ferme amour que je luy porte. Lequel je sens d'heure en heure croistre dans

mon coeur et avec ses traits d'or y engraver en cent endroits le beau pourtrait de ma belle Geneviève. O Dieu, que je fus abusé quand j'ay pensé que ma passion amoureuse prendroit quelque relasche par la jouissance, tout ainsi que la faim s'apaise par les viandes, la soif par le boire, et le froid par un beau grand feu.

Geneviève's statements establish the same tone. As she listens to Basile's lyrical effusions she assumes the role of the courtly lady but upon his declaration of eternal fidelity and service to her person she hastens to suggest that the best service would be to conclude the marriage as soon as possible:

Mon grand amy, je vous remercie bien humblement de ceste offre si liberale. Seulement, je vous prie sur tous les plaisirs que vous ne voudriez faire, de parler à ma mère le plus tost que vous pourrez, ou luy faire parler par voz parens et amys, et mettre ordre que le mariage de Rodomont et de moy ne se face.  
(V, iii)

The racy element in the tone of the prologue and the epilogue connected with the seduction in the play and the ambivalent situation created around the girl's status are solidified in the ironic comment uttered by Antoine Basile's servant when he announces to his master that Louise, appeased by Girard, consents to give now Geneviève to Basile:

... mais enfin elle a esté appaisée par Girard, auquel elle a promis de vous donner sa fille si vous lui faites cest honneur que de la prendre.  
(V, vi)

Moral values are exploited in the interest of dramatic shock and in Les Contents this effect is achieved through lack of all trust in the validity of the idea of feminine honor. In the epilogue Turnèbe introduces again the tone of the prologue dominated by an ethic of dramatic expediency:

Rodomont: - ... Mais, Mesdames, gardez que les esclats qui en voleront ne vous touchent et que le vent de mon espee, lequel a fait souvent esvanouir les hommes d'armes, ne vous face choir à la renverse toutes plates contre terre.

Car ce seroit fait de vous, et pourriez bien dire  
vostre In Manus.

The tone and the idea are inseparable. In each of the quotations a concrete image is evoked to give definition to the writer's silent thought. The propensity for casual pleasures is picked up once more in the use of devotion in the person of Alix. Pilgrimages and church going to cover amorous pursuits were common in Turnèbe's time. It was a practice that had a rather lengthy tradition. In an examination by Huizinga of the sentiment of late fifteenth century thinkers such as Nicholas de Clemanges and Gerson, he found both expressing great disillusionment, particularly in the religious attitudes of their contemporaries. Nicolas de Clemanges was disturbed to see people, especially young wives, steal away from home and give themselves to pleasure under the pretext of pilgrimages to distant churches. He noted with dismay that religious places had become nothing better than the meeting place of procuresses and of people with amorous purposes. (Jesuit polity in the late sixteenth century approached God in the same manner. It condoned the emphasis on the ritual aspect of religion and considered that if people did the same they had a "sufficient" vision of truth.) The bourgeois contemporary of Turnèbe was controlled again by the same principle of authority that dominated the religious way of life of the fifteenth century. Many were those who went to church without religious conviction but merely to conform and sometimes to escape their immediate reality. Turnèbe adds a touch of realism to the picture of false piety. In Act V, scene i, Antoine pursues Françoise through a dozen churches in which he hopes to find her. The majority of those churches are in the first and fourth present arrondissements situated at a distance

from each other. The distance that Antoine is obliged to cover in pursuit of the old woman excites laughter. Individual and social life in a Parisian quarter of the sixteenth century is correlated with Church. All that is meant to stimulate spiritual consciousness is reduced to commonplace profanity, to a startling worldliness in other-worldly guise.

Louise's monologue reveals Turnèbe's principal thematic concern:

... c'est bien la meilleur fille et la plus obeissante qui soit possible dans Paris. Tout le long du jour, après qu'elle a donne ordre à mon mesnage, au lieu de lire dans les livres d'Amadis, de Ronsard et de Desportes, elle ne fait que dire ses heures ou prier Dieu en son oratoire, à genoux devant un crucefis, et une Nostre-Dame-de-Pitié.

The patterns of delivery such as the prologue, and epilogue, and also the monologues and asides of the plot become links of connection in Turnèbe's effort to distinguish the excrescences or aberrations from the normality of an age. The monologue gives Turnèbe a freedom to measure the deviation from an ideal which is not his own but that of the society in which he moves. Louyse's statements in the previous monologue are completely reversed in one uttered a few minutes later:

Geneviefve, Geneviefve, ce n'est pas l'instruction que ton pere, à qui Dieu face pardon, et moy t'ayons donnée. J'y ay esté trompée la première, car te voyant si devote et faire tant la sainte nitouche, par mon ame j'avois tous-jours eu peur que tu ne te fisses religieuses.

(III, vii)

The frequent use of monologue reinforces his attitude of irony and his desire to indicate uncertainty, and disorientation. Monologues and asides are basically exaggerated conventions. The fondness for them is part of a whole style of acting in the Renaissance. These easily over-acted pieces of dramatic convention have in Les Contents a style

that is natural and part of the essence of the play. They stand at focal points of the plot such as the beginning of acts or at points of tension or realization. Thomas, the merchant, opens the fourth act with a monologue on his financial relations with Rodomont. He congratulates himself on his sharpness and two-thirds of the monologue paints the portrait of the shrewd financier:

L'on dit bien vray que pour faire plaisir on reçoit  
souvent desplaisir, et pour prester à un mauvais rendeur,  
d'un amy on en fait un ennemy. Je le cognois clairement  
par moy-mesme, qui n'avois un meilleur amy que le Capitaine  
Rodomont. Avant que je luy eusse baillé à credit de ma  
marchandise, il avoit accoustumé de me venir voir fort  
souvent. Mesmes il venoit parfois manger et boire en ma  
maison, et estoit la plus grande part du jour en ma boutique  
à deviser avec moy ou avec ma femme. Mais depuis un an en  
çà que je le fis adjourner en recognoissance de cedula, et  
qu'il fut dit par sentence du Prevost de Paris que les  
quatre moys passez il seroit contraint par corps, tant s'en  
faut que nous soyons amis, que au contraire il menace de me  
tailler en pieces et de me faire passer son cheval sur le  
ventre. Mais je ne le crains pas, Dieu mercy. D'autant  
que je sçay bien qu'il y a plus de braverie en son fait que  
d'hardiesse. Et aussi que nous sommes en une ville où la  
justice regne. J'ay esté adverti par un de mes valets qu'il  
estoit entré au logis de Girard et qu'il parlait d'y disner.  
Je serois bien de mon pays si je perdois ceste oportunité de  
le faire payer ou de le mener en prison. (III, i)

The scene concludes with a contrast - Thomas again congratulates himself for the virtuous and religious wife he possesses as he sees his wife Alix pass by him in disguise. Suspecting that it is probably foul play he laughs at the cuckolded husband of the woman involved in the masquerade:

O Dieu, que l'homme est malheureux qui espouse de telles  
chiennes et bagasces! Quant à moy, je remercie Dieu de  
ce qu'il m'a donne une des plus preudes femmes qui soit  
d'icy à Nostre-Dame-de-Liessr, là où elle est allée faire  
un pelerinage, sans que l'hyver et le temps dangereux  
l'agent peu destourner de sa devotion. (IV, i)

In Act I, scene vi Nivelet paints the portrait of the professional soldier characterized by rascality, debauchery and dexterity:

... piller, rançonner, desrober les gaiges des soldats,  
faire trouver force passevolans a la monstre, partir le  
gain avec le thresorier et le contrevoleur et chauffer  
les pieds a son hoste.

Girard's monologue depicts another kind of situation: It is a long complaint on the condition of the benevolent father and the hazards he risks because of his benevolence. The monologue is structured on a series of ridiculous wishes against his son Eustache whom Louyse wants to prosecute for her daughter's seduction. He wishes first that he had never married; or in case he had, that his wife had died childless; or in the case of the wife's longevity, that she still had remained childless; in case of children, that they had been kidnapped at a young age "avant qu'ils eussent le moyen de le tourmenter par leurs follies et debauches." A technique the author uses with consistency in this monologue is the rhetorical question that a bewildered Girard utters when faced with the vicissitudes of life:

Faudra-il que celui que j'ay eslevé avec tant de peine et  
que j'ai nourry si delicatement serve bientost d'exemple  
à tout un peuple au milieu d'une Greve ou d'une halle?

From the peak of anxiety reached in the above question calmness is restored in the following ones:

Mais pourquoi est-ce que je me desconforte ainsi? Dois-je  
croire aux premieres paroles de ceux-cy qui possible ont  
controuvé ceste fable de despit qu'ils ont que je n'ay  
voulu accorder leurs articles desraisonnables?

The monologues and asides were considered a more normal part of the dramatic structure than they generally are today. Turnèbe achieved

many possible combinations without violating the realistic detail in the conventions. It was mentioned that the essence of the style of the monologue in the play is to achieve intensity at the beginning of acts or at points of tension or realization. The essence of the style of the aside in Les Contents is an attempt by Turnèbe to visualize rather complicated facts. The essential element of the aside is an effort to be precise. It is added to a point of tension or realization in order to give a precise picture of the emotion of the thought that the author is trying to communicate. Many different combinations are effected. A typical grouping is that of a monologue followed by an aside, followed by a dialogue, like the following:

Girard: - (monologue) O Dieu, que ceux-là sont heureux  
qui n'ont jamais mis sur leur col le pesant joug de  
mariage! (etc.)

(aside)

Il me semble que j'entens sa voix. C'est luy sans doute.  
Dieu soit loué. Il fait bien dire qu'il aura trouvé  
moyen d'eschaper. Eustache, ouvre-moy!

Eustache: - O mon pere, je ne pensois pas que vous deussiez  
revenir si tost. (Avez-vous disné? Vous plaist-il  
pas d'entrer?)

Typically, a dialogue will not begin or end without being ushered in or out by a monologue:

Rodomont: - He, mes amis, ayez pitié de moy!

Sergent: - Nous ne pouvons. C'est trop presché! Sus,  
sus, menons-le dessous les bras comme une mariée!

Rodomont: - Ha, Dieu, que je suis miserable! Au lieu  
d'aller fiancer ma maistresse, l'on me fait espouser  
une prison!



Basile: - (who hidden watches the scene and, relieved to see his rival eliminated, goes into a monologue.)  
 J'ay eu du plaisir pour plus de dix mille francs de voir ce fendeur de naseaux si empesché au milieu de ces sergens, qui le veulent comme je croy, mettre en cage pour apprendre à parler.

The most effective use of the aside is on the two themes that Turnèbe satirizes the most: false piety and the concept of bourgeois honor. Nivelet eavesdropping on the conversation between Françoise and Geneviève gives vent to his indignation in an aside with cynical commentaries on the hypocrisy of the two women and Geneviève's preoccupation with the social compromise rather than the moral:

Geneviève: - Voire, mais je crains

Françoise: - Vous estes une hardie lance de craindre vos amis.

Geneviève: - Ce n'est pas cela. Je crains que quelcun de nos voisins ne le voye entrer ou sortir.

Nivelet: - (aside) La pauvre fille! Elle n'a peur que de l'entrée et de la sortie, car elle seroit bien aise qu'il fust tousjours dedans.

Each of them - monologues or asides - defines the writer's silent thought and serve as a kind of solidification in order that his personal opinion be effective while the author himself remains impersonal. The aside or monologue is the interposal of a thought that contrasts what is said with a hidden reality:

Françoise: - M'amie, (to Geneviève) nous avons remedié à tout cela. Il viendra habillé de l'habit qu'Eustache luy presta hier au soir, et se couvrira la face du bout de son manteau pour n'estre reconnu... Mais quand il y viendroit mesmes habillé de ses accoustremens ordinaires, vous ne devez craindre qu'il soit veu des voisins, d'autant que à cause de la feste les boutieques sont fermées, et personne ne se tient

à la porte à cause du froid. Davantage, ce sera à une heure après midi, cependant que beaucoup de gens sont encores à table et les autres au sermon.

Nivelet: - (aside) Je croy que ceste vieille sempiternelle a esté à l'école de quelque frère frappart tant elle sçayt doctement prescher et amener de vives raisons. O quelle fine femelle!

Nivelet's vocabulary "doctement prescher," "vives raisons,"

"fine" announces the Lettres Provinciales in its attack on the dishonest and opportunistic methods of casuistry. Turnèbe's indirect satire of François's Jesuit tactics of equivocation and contingency puts him ahead of his time - he gives already a definition of the mannerist psychology and conscience that was slowly developing in the conscience and arts of his time.

Another stylistic technique - the proverbs - gives the style of Les Contents a concreteness that relates man directly to his immediate and personal reality. The use of the proverbs provides understanding of abstract ideas and a grasp of the ideas that the themes in the plot embody. The proverbs express the wisdom supposed to be proper to the bourgeois characters. The proverbs correspond to the sententiae of the tragedy put into mouths of kings and aristocrats in order to express a certain stoicism fitting to their elevated rank and their particular reaction or attitude to misfortune. Their distribution within the play becomes indicative of the author's desire to emphasize the themes and situations important to the development of the plot. This particular kind of imagery is most common particularly in François's speech. From the first act François becomes very important for it is around her that the menaced lovers and thier friends rally for help. Her speech is a

series of pious expressions and clichés that she constantly uses to strengthen her arguments and hide her thoughts. Her whole reputation as "la plus femme de bien de toute nostre paroisse" is based on the sum of these expressions. The stereotyped expressions in Françoise's mouth, however, acquire an ironic significance. While Françoise would, of all the characters, be expected to use church imagery, she dots her casuistic speeches with images and terms that contradict her saintly interests. Some of her references are to food: "Voyez comme ils sentent desja tout leur rost." (II, ii) On another occasion, to underline Louise's dependence on her spiritual guidance she says using again food imagery: "Elle ne tourneroit pas un oeuf sans m'en demander conseil." (II, ii). She also draws from household imagery "allait de fil en equille..." (II, ii) and from finance and the professions: "Je m'en eusse mis si avant les fers au feu" (I, v), and "Je suis comme la tresorière de ses menus affaires." (II, ii). At times her imagery takes on martial connotations: "Vous estes une hardie lance." (I, vii)

All the other characters use proverbs with the exception of Geneviève, Alix, and Gentilly, Eustache's servant. Françoise is the one, as it is said, that makes the greatest use of them - about twenty - and then Antoine - about twelve - Girard five, Louyse, Basile, Nivelet, and Rodomont four each, Eustache and Alfonse two, and Saucisson one.

Speech acquires more conventional standards with the older generation. Louyse, Girard, and Alfonse are preoccupied with bourgeois morality backing it frequently with allusions to property, honor, accomplishments, and God's will that they often take in their own hands.

Louyse: - Geneviefve, si tu m'obeis, avec ce que tu  
gagneras le royaume de paradis, tu seras bien la  
plus heureuse fille de Paris. (I, i)

Girard's talk is similar as he admonishes his son Eustache to accept the advantageous marriage contract with Geneviève and thus ally himself with a good, respectable family:

Girard: - Avant que Dieu m'oste de ce monde de te voir  
bien pourveu et allié en quelque bonne maison.  
(II, i)

The following speeches, always in the tone of family interest and propriety, alternate according to the circumstances:

Louyse: - Je prie à Dieu qu'il la veuille tenir en sa  
sainte protection et luy donner un mary tel qu'elle  
merite. (III, vii)

Girard: - Eustache, j'ay trop supporté tes jeunesses. Si  
je t'eusse esté ainsi rude et severe que sont plusieurs  
peres à leurs enfans, tu cheminerois mieux en la crainte  
de Dieu que tu ne fais. J'ay grand peur que Dieu ne me  
punisse de ce que je t'ay esté trop doux et facile.  
(IV, v)

Alfonse: - Ma seur, ma seur, il fait bon croire conseil et  
non sa propre teste. Quant à moy, d'autant que le  
fait me touche aussi bien qu'à vous, je vous conseille  
en saine conscience, comme je voudrois que l'on fist  
en mon endroit si la fortune m'estoit advenue, dont je  
prie Dieu me vouloir garder. (IV, vi)

The servants Antoine, Nivelet, Gentilly and Perrette in their kind of speech reveal a low status by repeated allusions to their humble social origin. Their role is to invent solutions to the entangled situation in which their masters are found. In the case of Nivelet the poverty that plagues him and his master causes long laments that echo in him not so much the loyal French servant but the Spanish pícaro whose master's financial situations and rascality drive him to despair about life:

Nivelet: - Qu'au diable soit l'amour et qui premier le trouva! Je croy qu'il sera cause, avant peu de temps, que mes souliers ne me feront guere de mal à la veue pour les voyages extraordinaires qu'il me convient faire tout le long du jour. Encores ne suis-je pas assuré que mon maistre m'en redonne bientost de neufs. Au contraire, J'ay peur qu'il en veuille faire comme de son habit de velours, lequel il porte autant meschant que bon. Cela me tourmenteroit peu si c'estoit en autre temps qu'en hyver et en autre lieu qu'à Paris, là où ces vieux escarpins tous descousus qu'il me donne, après les avoir portez un an ou deux, ne me peuvent gueres bien remparer la plante des pieds contre le froid et les boues. (I, ii)

When Louyse comes home unexpectedly from the church and finds Basile still with Geneviève in the house, Perette, the servant girl, is in despair for she knows that the wrath of her mistress will fall on her:

Perette: - Antoine, mon amy, nous sommes perdues si Dieu n'a pitié de nous! Et tout le mal tombera sur moy, d'autant que l'on pensera que j'en auray esté la courtiere. (III, ix)

Antoine represents the best of the servant's loyalty in reassuring his agitated master:

Antoine: - Je vous promets, foy de pauvre garson, que je pourvoyray bien à tout.

The language of Saucisson, Alix and Thomas the minor characters in the play - is strictly associated to their particular roles. Saucisson's reply, for instance, to Eustache's invitation to dine at his house fits the gluttonous image of the pimp:

Saucisson: - J'iray volontiers, mais j'ay peur que je ne mette la famine chez vous. Vous avez plusieurs fois veu de mes prouesses, et comme je sçay jouër dextrement de l'espée à deux mains a table quand j'ay mes coudées franches. Partant, si vous voulez avoir le plaisir de me voir bauffer, faites en sorte que la table soit bien couverte, qu'on ne puisse voir la nappe, et qu'il n'y ayt faute de breuvage. Je croy que vous m'avez ouy dire souvent quand je mange un

coq d'Inde ou un cochon de trente-cinq sols, qu'il  
m'est advis que je casse une noix. (II, v)

Alix in her conversation with Saucisson, her pimp, illustrates Turnèbe's sensitivity to every level of life about him. The fullness of life's experience, from the Petrarchan love duet down to the coarse conversation of the demi-mondaine, shows itself in the language of the play:

Alix: - Vrayment, Saucisson, vous avez bonne grace de me  
mener chez un homme que vous ne connoissez! Que sçay-  
je s'il a point quelque mal sur luy? En bonne foy, je  
ne fusse ja venue si j'eusse pense que vous m'eussiez voul  
voulu faire ce tour. (III, v)

A few other minor figures in the play serve only to express certain attitudes, without ever being true individuals. Eustache belongs to this category. He seems to despise everything connected with women, especially the care they take in putting on makeup. He is attached to Geneviève because:

ceste beauté naïve, dont elle monstre ne tenir grand conte,  
me plaist sans comparaison plus que ces grandes dames si  
attiffées, goderonnées, licées, frisées et pimpantes qui  
ne font autre chose tout le long du jour que tenir leur  
miroir pour voir si elles sont bien coiffées et si un cheveu  
passe l'autre, et à toute heure ont la main à leur teste ou  
à leur collet. Surtout une femme fardée me desplaist, quand  
elle seroit belle comme une Helene, et ne la voudrois baiser  
pour grand chose, d'autant que je sçay bien que le fard  
n'est autre chose que poison. Il me souvient d'avoir une  
fois gouverné une femme fardée, et par mignardise il m'advint  
de luy baiser le front et la joue. Je vous jure Dieu que les  
levres m'enleverent aussitost, et pensay bien estre empoisonné.  
(II, ii)

Eustache remains a cardboard lover. He is a very cautious person and lets his opportunities for success with Geneviève pass him by. His main pre-occupation is himself and despite his young age he is already cynical and debauched. Françoise penetrates the inner character of this person and she leads him skillfully to his defeat for she sees that he trusts others

too much to win. In presenting the two, Françoise and Eustache, in their verbal duel, the author studies men as they really act and he realizes that there are weaknesses in human nature which prevent one from winning all the time:

Françoise: - Il ne se faut donc plus estonner si ces visages blanchis, vermeillonez, et qui ont une crouste de fard plus espesse que les masques de Venise commencent à perdre leur credit entre gens de bon esprit, puisqu'au temps où nous sommes les jeunes hommes de dix-huit ans sçavent plus de besongnes que les vieilles gens qui vivoient lorsque j'allois à l'escole.

Eustache: - Pensez-vous que les jeunes hommes facent la court aux dames pour sçavoir quel goust a le sublimé, le talc calciné, la biaque de Venise, le rouge d'Espagne, le blanc de l'oeuf, le vermeillon, le vernis, les pignons, l'argent vif, l'urine, l'eau de lis, le dedans des oreilles, l'alun, le canfre, le boras, la piece de levant, la racine d'orcanete et autres telles drogues dont les dames se plastrent et anduisent le visage, au grand prejudice de leur santé? D'autant que, avant qu'elles ayent atteint l'aage de trente-cinq ans, cela les rend ridées comme vieil cordouan, ou plustost comme vieilles bottes mal gressées, leur fait tomber les dents, et leur rend l'haleine puante comme un trou punais. Croyez que quand je pense à telles villenies, peu s'en faut que je ne rende ma gorge.

Françoise: - Saint-Jean, vous estes plus sçavant que je ne pensois! Mais vous ne devez craindre que Genevieve use de tous ces artifices. (II, ii)

In this verbal struggle Eustache is no match for Françoise's intelligence. He has a rather Boccaccian air about him, not that of the intelligent hero who triumphs through his wits but that of a fool who credits himself with great intelligence. He is not an absolute simpleton, although he is a simpleton who thinks himself cunning and witty. His is a rather ambitious stupidity; he becomes comic especially when he falls into the trap that truly cunning persons like Françoise set for him. He is the object

of the trick that Françoise plays with the scheme of Geneviève's repugnant cancerous breast wound.

Turnèbe's basic method which serves as a scaffolding for this type of dramatic structure rests on a paradox: a contrast between two types of life and two types of art. Classical man was trying to fit corporeal vigor and beauty to spiritual vigor and beauty. He proceeded from wisdom to virtue. The Renaissance proceeded from wisdom to the pleasures of life. Luther, when he visited Italy doubted seriously that this could be the regenerated world. His accusations of impiety and moral irresponsibility for their actions were not groundless. A world which admired beauty and symmetry found it natural to strive to cultivate the aesthetic principles more than the moral ones. People and their interests kept on being the force behind all the spiritual and psychic events from the late Middle-Ages on. The man and the art of the Renaissance were an alteration of the classical types.

One can see that the originality of Turnèbe is his aim to demonstrate the principal inclinations of his time through the themes he used. Turnèbe's mockery of love and the attack of his sophisticated mannerist prose create a certain disturbance to the coherent distinction of the decorum in speech prescribed by Renaissance theories on speech. By a truly remarkable use of the character-symbols and a careful attention to tone he creates through irony, imagery, and rhythm an extraordinary sense of unity in his play. Though Turnèbe's style combines the conventional proportions, images, and attitudes of the Renaissance dramatic theory it is inspired and controlled by relatively clear forms that are perhaps manifestations of some shadowed aspects of the Renaissance itself.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The preceding examination of plot, character, ideas and speech in Les Contents demonstrates that variety is the keynote of this play. Turnèbe while obeying the conventions of the Pléiade comedy introduces into its characteristics the first symptoms of mannerism, which are evidenced in his use of agitated wit, and in his study of the "Jesuit style" of equivocation through Françoise's portrait.

In this respect his play stands apart from all other examples of the French Erudite comedy. Critics up to the present have limited their praise of this comedy to the remarkable skill and ease with which Turnèbe minimized the artificiality of the conventional patterns of distribution such as the unities, stage set, and language. Only Brian Jeffery in his recent study of the French Renaissance Comic Theater comments also on the theme of appearance-reality in Les Contents but only briefly:

It is a lively play, with memorable characters, and the interesting counterpoint between hypocrisy and actual disguise gives it an unusual depth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brian Jeffery, French Renaissance Comedy, 1552-1630 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 30.

The theme of appearance-reality which actually serves as a sub-structure for all his play is the axis on which his ideas concerning men as they really act turn. In Turnèbe's play the neat mechanics of the renaissance Order have been disturbed by the power of a capricious sort of divine will. The insolence and calculation in mannerism do not arise from self-confidence, but are really signs of anxiety and repression:

Françoise: - M'amie, en ma conscience je ne vous conseille rien qui ne soit bon. Et pouvez bien penser qu'estant sur le bord de ma fosse, preste de rendre conte à Dieu de ce que j'ay fait en ce monde, ne vous voudrois induire à faire chose qui peust tant soit peu souiller mon ame ou la vostre. (I, vii)

Is she mocking God? It is hard to say. She understands, however, the psychological situation and the state of repression in which Geneviève has been reduced by her mother's capricious will. Louise unjustified to her daughter's marriage with Basile becomes the symbol of a new awareness - the arbitrariness of Calvin's God. His will is rationally unknowable but terribly immanent in its effects. In a similar manner Louise's will is terribly immanent in its effects upon the daughter:

Louyse: - Car j'ay bien resolu, avant qu'il soit demain nuict, de t'accorder avec Eustache, fils unique du Seigneur Girard, lequel m'en presse fort. Mais qu'avez-vous à souspirer? (I, i)

In order to escape from this helplessness man will have to allow for contingencies. He will have to rely on accommodation and maintain an appearance of righteousness even while the truth may be deeply reserved or only loosely approximated. Françoise's approach corresponds to the answer furnished by the casuist to the arbitrariness of predestination. She yields suavely to Louyse when she is in front of her, and exploits

for her own benefit the uncertainty that her eccentricity created:

Louyse: - Ma commere, je sçay bien que Basile est de vos bons amis et voisin, et à cause du voysinage il n'est pas qu'il ne vous ayt communiqué de ces affaires, d'autant mesmes qu'il vous voit hanter avec nous assez privement de vostre grace. Mais je vous supplie sur tous les plaisirs que vous me voudriez faire, de ne parler de luy à Geneviefve. Car j'ay deliberé de la donner à Eustache, fils de Girard, lequel me presse bien fort et luy fait de beaux avantages, ayant desja accordé les articles ainsi que je les luy ay baillez.

Françoise: - Sainte-Dame, je n'ay garde de luy sonner mot, puisque vous me l'avez deffendu. (II, ii)

Turnèbe's rejection of traditional verse forms and the sharp style of most of his prose demonstrate his attitude toward traditional playwrights like Jodelle or Grévin whose primary concern was not intensity.

The principal technique used by Turnébe to express his ideas is the character-symbol. If one had to choose one particular adjective to categorize Turnèbe's theater most effectively, it would be essentially impressionistic. Despite its adherence to classical formulas, Turnèbe's play has a vibrant quality which comes from the intense pace of the comic action. The author recaptures the local color of life in Paris during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The character-symbols are extended throughout the play in one vivid sketch following another and the most important ones gradually take on deeper meaning. His characters in the play represent a series of fixed ideas which reflect the author's vision of the world. Françoise is the most fascinating character of the comedy, a procuress and a religious hypocrite. She is a figure from the obscure world of that age. She is a kind of opportunist. She involves the audience by shock tactics in the pressure of the author's own experience rather than the perilous situation of the young couple. She has psychological

quality rather than structural, for her concern with the lovers is Turnèbe's attitude toward religious and moral experiences. Louyse is the symbol of a capricious God, a character that embodies the mannerist situation inherently rich in discontinuities. Her will stems from an unexplained reversal that she has previously suffered. To the state of tension created by the reversals that most of the characters suffer Eustache's presence strikes a pose of languor in the same manner in El Greco paints certain figures characterized by a strange lack of internal vitality. His passivity destroys his triumph.

Turnèbe is also an expert in the creation of tone. By careful use of irony, syntax, monologues, and asides he is able to communicate exactly the feeling and understanding he desires. The technique of the monologue, for instance, contributes to the apprehension of the fullness of the experience. The intimate monologue is a mannerist mode of direct address like the sharply accented foreground figure in mannerist paintings. He faces outward toward the spectator, yet he gestures or glances inwardly toward the action behind him. The figure of the Speaker in Tintoretto's Presentation of the Virgin is the best example. He invokes the spectator psychologically aiming to create an immediate but equivocal rapport between the spectator and the picture. Turnèbe's monologues are the same forms of abrupt communication between actor and audience.

Turnèbe's play is a milestone in the French Renaissance Comic Theater. For the first time an author has introduced serious romantic elements in a stage comedy. The unprecedented importance of the ingenue, the précieux language, the mixture of refined high-mindedness and

salaciousness, the brilliant creation of the religious hypocrite, of the reasoner in the character of Alfonse, the benevolent father in the character of Girard - all these elements anticipate the change in theatrical taste which took place in the second half of the seventeenth century when comedy passed into the hands of Molière. Turnèbe, while turning back to the conventional structure of the Pléiade drama, created high comedy.

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