Christian and Pagan Elements in the Works of Tristan L'Hermite

By

Lucy Broyles Golsan

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Lucy Broyles Golsan

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Chairman: Claude K. Abraham
Major Department: French

The purpose of this study is to determine where and how Christian and Pagan elements appear in the work of Tristan L'Hermite, and what effect this mixture has on the form and content of his poetry, theater, and prose.

Tristan is considered Baroque in his style and in the multiplicity of his themes. With this in mind, an attempt is made to explain his two contradictory themes, Christian and Pagan, and their development as typical of this kind of artist. Our main concern, however, is with Tristan's surprising philosophical ambiguity. In attempting to explain it, we have first presented a background of Christian and Pagan ideas which were influential at the time Tristan wrote. In the early seventeenth century, the Church was regaining its strength in France after the disastrous religious wars. It was bent on eliminating the Pagan influence of the Renaissance whose artists had

so admired the culture of Antiquity. In establishing a Christian society, the Church set up organizations to educate priests and laymen, and encouraged an outpouring of Apologies for orthodox Christianity. These Apologies composed a body of literature which existed side by side with secular philosophical writings in which men like Descartes tried to reconcile modern Christianity with Classical Stoicism, or writings which questioned the idea of an immortal soul. A delight in Nature and physical beauty was still expressed by many poets despite Church opposition.

In this climate Tristan wrote his poetry, his plays, one novel, a collection of letters, and two prayer books. In studying his work by genre, we have found no final resolution of his ideas on the Christian-Pagan dichotomy. Form and content both show a continuous mixture of the two, and the final synthesis necessary for a Classical writer is missing. We find him Baroque in his art and in his outlook on life. As a love poet, he is largely a Naturist in his delight in physical beauty; writing circumstantial poetry, he uses the ideas and the heroes of Antiquity. We find him admiring Stoicism, but psychologically more attune to Epicurean philosophy in all of his works. Throughout, Christian and non-Christian elements co-exist, sometimes happily, sometimes not. His two religious works still contain suggestions of a secular outlook on the part of their author.

Our conclusion must be that Tristan never decided to suppress either of his two contradictory themes, and that he remains Baroque in this open endedness. He explored all of the major arguments in the Christian-Pagan idealogical struggle going on in the early seventeenth century. The fact that this exploration continued throughout his lifetime makes him a valuable source of ideas as well as of poetic beauty.

INTRODUCTION

The term Baroque has been only partly successful in describing a current of poetry which existed during Tristan's time. Marcel Raymond has established that this poetry flourished in France during the hundred years between 1550 and 1650, and Jean Rousset has attempted to describe it by the mythological figure Circe, goddess of metamorphosis, and the peacock whose tail spreads itself in a dazzling display of sumptuous colors. The personification of these qualities of change and ostentation is helpful, but a final definition of Baroque eludes us.

In architecture the term suggests the ornate churches of Rome and Bernini's fountains of palm trees, a half submerged Neptune, and great stone fish spouting streams of water. Mythological figures, movement and exaggeration, are indeed part of this art. The churches are covered with decoration--with gold leaf and with light and dark marble. There are hundreds of angels with widespread wings suspended above us in endless motion. And there is that final flourish of the "trompe l'ceil," the painting high in the cupola which changes as we move to see it from another angle. Christianity, so unadorned and simple in its origins, had been dressed in an elaborate mantle by the architects of Rome. As Raymond claims, the Baroque often values decoration over theme. The idea that decor was

important independant of what it decorated is illustrated by what happened to Christian art during this period. The purity of Michelangelo's David was replaced by brilliant colors, elaborate sculpture, and paintings that deceive the eye with their cleverness.

This same love of decoration is part of Baroque music. Trills and grace notes decorate the intertwining themes of Bach's music. But it is not the decoration that we find best illustrated here, but the treatment of more than one theme simultaneously. If we think of Bach as a cerebral composer, interested in an intellectual exploration of more than one theme, we have an idea of the richness of a Baroque undertaking. It is not all decoration. If we remember that decorative notes embellish the multiple themes as they interlace and separate, then even more possibilities arise for artistic invention.

Applying this concept to literature, the possibility of style and content following this pattern becomes apparent. In the substance of a work, the content may include more than one idea. At the same time, style may be freed to become decoration in a broader sense. It may even become an independant undertaking, limiting itself only to basic principles of harmony and to avoiding unpleasant discord. A description of the musical Baroque may apply to the literary art of Tristan, and it may help us to understand the elusive qualities of a term which has change and movement as part of its definition and which allows ornamentation to go unchecked in its definition of the function of style.

Poetry flourished during this period of the late Renaissance and early Classicism. It was encouraged by royalty and by the aristocracy. For this reason we have chosen to study Tristan as representative of what is usually defined as Baroque. One cannot read his poetry even superficially without realizing that he was preoccupied with two ideas at once. A Pagan loyalty to Nature as the source of beauty and pleasure appealed to him, and along with this the endless capabilities of man to enjoy his world. But often, even in the same poem or play, he developed a second theme, a Christian rejection of Nature, a distrust of Renaissance optimism, and a conviction that man is weak and lost without God.

In presenting his two themes, Tristan used a style that is full of both Pagan and Christian images which have a life of their own and will not be subjugated to his themes. In tracing the Christian and Pagan elements on these two distinct levels, we may discover a final harmony of content and form which was imposed on the musician by the nature of his art. Freedom of invention in literature, however, is not so easily contained within the poet's materials. There are no bars to dictate rhythm and no keys to restrict range. The temptation to avoid a final resolution is much greater in poetry, and we may find that Tristan never allows us the comforting assurance that we know where he stands. To achieve a unity of content or form and a final blending of the two, he would have had to choose between his two themes for they are contradictory and cannot exist together in any

harmony. When he chose to develop one or the other, his images reflected this choice and we are confused about his purpose. Perhaps the poet who may be called Baroque did not feel the need to do even this. He may have felt free to contradict himself, to develop style and content independantly, and even to cultivate diversity and contradiction within each one. The final harmonious chord may not have been necessary to achieve a poetic beauty which satisfied the artist of this period. In any case, the themes of Christian and Pagan in both style and content do predominate in the work of Tristan. In studying their relationship to each other, we may find that characteristics of the Baroque do exist, and that it may be meaningful to identify him with this label.

Little work has been done on Tristan, much less than he deserves, and practically none of it on the problem of Christian and Pagan themes. Napoléon Bernardin wrote an exhaustive biography at the turn of the century claiming that Tristan was the forerunner of Racine. Amédée Carriat has written an éloge of the poet and provided a valuable bibliography of his work. Critical editions of five of Tristan's plays have been published by Jacques Madeleine who also edited the first collection of poetry, Les Plaintes d'Acante. In 1967, Catherine Grisé edited a critical edition of the Vers Héroïques. Claude Abraham has examined the psychology of Tristan's dramatic heroes in his monograph, The Strangers, and Daniela Dalla Valle has written an analysis of his theater.

Dissertations by Doris Guillumette and V. P. Minogue have treated Tristan in his attitudes toward free thought and in the context of his times, and Charles R. Mackey has pointed out his close connection with Précieux poetics. Two other dissertations have been written by Catherine Grisé and K. C. Wright. This study hopes to make Tristan's treatment of his two major themes an addition to the bibliography.

Such an investigation into Christian and Pagan elements in Tristan's work must begin by looking at the literary and philosophical interests of the first half of the seventeenth century. Attitudes at this time still bore the stamp of the Renaissance, and that legacy will be examined. A review of historical institutions and social groupings will help to clarify the poet's personal position and identify his audience. By thus establishing the setting, we may discover new facts about his work.

An evaluation of this work does not lend itself to a chronological presentation. Many of Tristan's poems, for example, cannot be dated with accuracy, and what we know of the events of his life is still incomplete despite the work of Bernardin and Carriat. This thesis has therefore been arranged according to genre. Such an arrangement of material will hopefully tell us more about the poet's attitude toward his two themes and their presentation, and thus lead to a better understanding of Tristan, his work, and his times.

I.

THE CONFLICT OF CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN IDEAS

The atmosphere in which Tristan lived was filled with questions--questions about man's nature, his place in an expanding universe, his relationship to the supernatural. Lay- and Churchmen, nourished on the philosophies of Antiquity, wondered about a human soul, the importance of man himself, and the possibility of a supreme being meting out reward and punishment. They found answers in the writings of Epicurus and Cicero, in Seneca and Epictetus. Groups were formed among like-minded men. The ideas were discussed and some answers to the questions were published, passing into the hands of a larger group.

The resulting clash was violent, for the Church of seventeenth century France was a powerful institution, both a social and an intellectual government. It controlled the conscience of the king, and what it feared most was a reawakening of Paganism in those men who had been taught the authority of ancient philosophers in Jesuit schools, and who threatened to apply their instruction in a battle against strict orthodoxy. The Church must surely have sensed the danger even as it was being encouraged in the colleges. "C'est le vieil ennemi, jamais mort, que, depuis Constantin, elle a forcé, peu à peu, de rentrer sous terre, mais qu'elle sent toujours là. . . ."[1]

Theological teachings were deeply ingrained alongside the philosophical ideas of Antiquity in the minds and hearts of these men who questioned orthodoxy, and what they suffered from most was not the disapproval of the powerful Church which came from without, but a struggle within themselves. Christian doctrine battled with Pagan ideas, and the exaltation of human possibilities clashed with a sense of man's failure and his need for God. A Jansenist idea that "l'histoire de l'humanité est l'histoire d'une longue déchéance"[2] was in direct opposition to Epicurus' insistance on the absence of sin and guilt in a creature of Nature. The conflict was between a supernatural system of values and one constructed from these human possibilities. The Greeks and Romans had exalted man and deified Nature; the Church attempted to impose the authority of one all-powerful God.

These two ideas are certainly in conflict with each other, yet man has often held opposing ideas and managed to achieve an equilibrium in spite of them. Why had this opposition become so acute in the period just before the relatively serene Age of Classicism? History had tipped the scales and so had science. It became harder and harder to ignore glaring discrepancies in Christian theology, a theology that was sometimes violent and bloody in practice, and in theory often based on contradiction.

The religious wars of the sixteenth century had been an example of faith, hope, and charity twisted into unbelievable

cruelty. "L'unité chrétienne est déchirée par cinquante années de disputes et de guerres fratricides."[3] Men who fought each other so bitterly in the name of Protestantism or Catholicism were often from the same family. It is no wonder that cynicism became the attitude of the day. "Perhaps at the outset men fought for their faith; very soon indeed they were fighting for the fun of it. . . . Fanaticism made assassination legitimate; banditry found its sanction in faith, for all men insisted they owed obedience to their consciences, which meant their fancies."[4]

This insanity and barbarism was to destroy the high optimism of the early Renaissance in France. No one believed with the same firmness that thinking man had only to read the wisdom of the great philosophers and to act upon it to make for himself a moral world. Man no longer trusted his fellow, he could not even trust human nature itself. And in the despair that followed this realization, he was tempted to give up the struggle to govern himself, and to accept an attitude and perhaps a faith of resignation. "C'est parmi les massacres, dans un monde où l'on pille et où l'on tue, dans un monde qui semble plonger dans le chaos, que le nouvel Augustinisme a pris naissance. . . . Si les hommes de ce temps n'attendent de salut que d'un rédempteur, c'est parce que la société semble abandonnée à l'injustice et à la violence, c'est que le grand espoir que l'humanisme avait éveillé a été trop cruellement déçu."[5]

Abandonment to the will of God and the Church was the reaction and refuge of some, but in these troubled times there

were others who fell victim to doubt. Their faith shaken in religion, these men became fascinated with the occult. They were not interested in serious philosophical responses to new problems. Belief in superstition and magic became widespread in the early part of the seventeenth century. Marcel Raymond explains this as a desire to live superficially and for the moment in uncertain times. "En cet âge d'instabilité, d'insécurité cosmique, l'homme sent la menace . . . le surnaturel l'attire, transcendant et immanent à la fois, mêlé à la nature."[6]

Between the years 1600 and 1623, reports of strange happenings abounded. A red cross was reported to have appeared in the sky, a grave was seen covered with blood. People accepted as truth the story that large yellow worms with heads like children had fallen like rain in Poitou, and a luminous crown was seen in the sky over Prague. Historians of the day mixed prophecies with facts, and Mezeray recorded that the death of Henry IV was announced by just as many frightening signs as had Caesar's according to Virgil's account.[7]

Demonology was widespread. "Les épidémies de possession démoniaque éclatent un peu partout, soit dans des provinces entières: l'affaire des Ursulines de Loudun (1634), celle des filles de Sainte Elisabeth de Louviers moins connue (1642-47) celle des Ursulines d'Auxonne (1658-1663)."[8] These dates are surprising for they show a century taken with the idea of reason given to most unreasonable practices.

Such credulity was reflected in the literature. There were scenes of magic and magicians, of alchemists with strange powers, of priests who mixed magic and sacrilege, of black masses. Writers such as Rotrou and even Corneille (L'Illusion Comique), not yet devoted to the subtlety and reserve of Classicism, dwelt with artistic delight on this aspect of seventeenth-century culture.

Astrology was another common occult belief which enjoyed a vogue, and many believed that under the apparent disorder of everyday events there lay an order and direction maintained by the stars which linked the heavens directly to events on the earth in "un système compliqué mais mathématique de relations et de concordances qui expliquent l'inexplicable et font arriver l'inévitable."[9] This theory, borrowed from books of magic, was popularized by the Italians Bonati, Pomponazzi, and Cardan. It reflected a feeling of helplessness in the face of events preordained by the indifferent stars. Such a willingness to believe almost anything reflects the uncertainty of a France which had lost the anchor of the Church and its own self-confidence. There was confusion and "affaiblissement de la délicatesse morale . . . de la vie morale."[10]

There was indeed a moral crisis. A strong desire for order mingled with a distrust of orderly answers. What the Church offered as rules for conduct were no longer so authoritative as they had been. The philosophy of Antiquity had also been weakened, for man was far from reasonable. The effect of

the religious wars permeated the life of France and it influenced the writers in their choice of subject, theme, and symbol.[11] A feeling of instability and loss haunted much of the writing of the period and it permeates the literary work of Tristan.

The religious conflict was appeased momentarily under the benign rule of Henry IV, and Protestants could move more freely. But the uneasy truce between a militant national religion and a Protestant sect was precarious and did not endure. Economic ruin added to the uncertainty of life itself, heightened by brutishness in men unable to find enough to eat. Finally, in 1610, Henry IV himself met a violent death at the hands of an assassin. Frenchmen were frightened that anarchy would once more take over. They were willing to give up their own freedom and responsibility if a strong king could restore and maintain order. It was peace at any price. There existed everywhere among the common people a longing for order and stability. They were terrified by the thought of another civil war.[12]

Although this was the general climate at the beginning of the century, a predictable reaction to the national insecurity, intelligent men did not give up their freedom of thought easily. There were important discoveries of science which must be investigated and evaluated. Absolutism, the price of peace, took the form of Church doctrine which insisted on the superiority of man and his immortal soul over other creatures of Nature.

But science had produced Copernicus and his theories, and to many serious thinkers it became clear that man was no longer at the center of his universe. The earth could not now be fixed and stable as it had been for Aristotle. Copernicus was placed on the Index in 1616 because he was a menace to the whole structure of dogma carefully erected on a questionable interpretation of Aristotle. Centuries of what now seemed misconception had to be reconsidered. In the meantime, doubt flourished. The theories of Copernicus directly contradicted Aristotle's description of man's world. "Au lieu d'un univers limité et fixe, dont le moindre commentateur de la Physique tenait la clef dans sa poche, on apercevait un monde sans bornes précises, ouvert sur un prodigieux inconnu. . . ."[13]

In addition to the Greek philosopher's claim that the earth did not move and was fixed in the center of the universe which turned around it, science attacked another of his conclusions--that man had only one nature and that the same rules would apply to everyone. Voyagers were returning from the New World with evidence of civilizations with different customs, beliefs, and morals which seemed to be linked to the climate. Aristotle's cataloguing of the minerals, plants, and animals proved to be far from complete since the explorers had seen new unknown species in their travels. Campanella, in the sixteenth century, facing the evidence brought back by the explorers, had called for a revamping of

philosophy along lines more in tune with empirical findings. By the early seventeenth century the logic of Aristotle, which had been used by the Church to arrive reasonably and demonstrably at a belief in God, was seriously undermined.

These historical events and scientific discoveries were greeted and interpreted according to temperament and intellectual interest, according to Pagan philosophy or Christian doctrine. The legacy of the Renaissance had been a wealth of humanistic thought revived by the study of original Greek and Latin works lost for so long to the western world. This legacy formed the basis for education, and scholars had a first-hand acquaintance with classical philosophy from their studies of Greek and Latin. But these ideas were revived hundreds of years after they had been written, and they had to be altered to fit the sixteenth-century mind. Modern man viewed philosophy through Christian eyes, and there were very few men who believed in a Paganism undiluted to some degree by Christianity. There were many who wanted to maintain what was good in the Ancients in spite of ever increasing pressure from a rigid orthodoxy on the part of the government and the Church.

An urgency to express ideas came from both sides. The Humanists felt keenly the stifling authority of the Church; they were frightened by the retreat of freedom of thought in the face of pressure from Churchmen. But, "lorsqu'il s'agit de fixer leur attitude en face de l'orthodoxie catholique et des principes chrétiens, la plus grande diversité apparaît."[14]

Despite this diversity, it is possible to separate four basic attitudes prevalent in Tristan's time which had their roots in Antiquity and which somehow had to be adapted to meet the challenge of science and Christian thought. First, there were the Stoics, stressing duty and reason and possibility in man. Next, there were the Gassendists, basically Epicurean in philosophy and doubting the usefulness of reason. Thirdly, there were those libertines, men of pleasure, most often of the nobility, who might be attached to the Gassendists or the Stoics in many of their attitudes, but who seem more akin to the Naturists of Italy. They merit separate scrutiny because of our interest in Tristan.

Finally, there were the Apologists of Catholic doctrine. They poured forth an enormous amount of literature to counteract the free-thinkers. Their arguments were felt everywhere. "L'apologétique religieuse . . . envahit les salons, elle s'étale jusque dans les romans, au théâtre et dans l'épopée."[15] If we find in the literature of that period certain basic Pagan attitudes, the Church must surely have challenged these writers at every turn. If the authors seem to be Christian in their outlook, credit must be accorded the Apologists for great persuasiveness. The influence of all four of these groups can hopefully be traced and isolated in the work of Tristan and may thus help to explain his mingling of Christian and Pagan ideas and his seemingly paradoxical position in regard to free will.

The idea of man controlling his own destiny is more implicit in the Stoic attitude than in any of the other three. The problem with the Stoics, however, was that their humanistic doctrine might find man able to accomplish anything through reason and thus leave God without a governing place in their philosophy. Did man really need God when he had a mind and a will which made him capable of heroic deeds? Two problems appear. Does God govern and direct the universe and the lives of men as the Church insists? What about the question of immortality? Does the soul continue to live after the body ceases to exist?

Most Stoics wanted a Christian response to these questions without renouncing their faith in human progress independant of a divine intervention. This progress would come from the development of that human potential, reason. In the beginning this optimism and faith in the human mind was not seen as a threat to religion. "Un tel sentiment, à l'origine, pouvait être imprudent, il n'était pas impie: il s'autorisait même d'une longue tradition d'optimisme catholique; il n'apportait qu'une note d'innocente allégresse dans le concert où se fondaient, avec des accents de grave enthousiasme, la sagesse des Anciens et la religion du Christ."[16]

Two men were especially important in the elaboration of a blend of Christianity and Stoicism which had great influence in the seventeenth century in France, Juste-Lipse, a Dutch professor at the University of Louvain, and Du Vair, a French statesman. Their purpose was to reinforce Christian

teachings by philosophical ideas and arguments of the Ancients. "Comme Coras et comme Rivaudeau, J.Lipse appelle les Pères de l'Eglise au secours de Zénon de Cléanthe, de Musonius et d'Epictète. Il confirme leurs paroles par celles de saint Ambroise, de saint Augustin, et de saint Clément."[17] This synthesis was greatly respected and for a while it "contribua à maintenir dans beaucoup d'âmes un sentiment d'harmonie et de sécurité."[18] The philosophy of Juste-Lipse was elaborated in the two works published in 1604, Manuductio ad philosophiam stoicam, and Physiologia stoicorum. The second part is a series of dialogues between Juste-Lipse and a student about Stoic theories on God, the soul of the world, providence, destiny, and the origin of evil. This Stoic reconciliation of Christian and Pagan ideas is based on a God of reason and intelligence whose wisdom is reflected in his creation, a universe of unchangeable natural laws arranged for our good. "Cette philosophie religieuse de Juste-Lipse est donc une philosophie de l'ordre. De l'ordre physique comme de l'ordre moral. Elle s'appuie sur la sagesse antique, sur Ciceron notamment, et sur la doctrine des Stoïques."[19] God was responsible for the perfection of this order, and human wisdom could lead to a deeper understanding of it.

A contemporary of Juste-Lipse, Du Vair, writing in France, attempted a like synthesis of Pagan and Christian thought. In 1588 appeared La Sainte Philosophie. The title Du Vair gave to his work reflects its theme, an intermingling of religion and philosophy supporting each other. "Le stoïcisme

n'élève donc pas église contre église. C'est une petite chapelle adossée à la cathédrale. La croix du clocher le protège et le signale."[20]

The Stoic doctrine of triumphant human will had captivated the writers and dramatists of the period. Will triumphing over life's vicissitudes was at the heart of the Cornelian heroic ideal. Very early, Du Vair conceived of this will as Stoicism in its highest form. He managed to weld this to a Christian idea of Divine Providence, a superior plan of God's, working toward the good of each individual. Detractors argued that the liberty of man was limited, that the goods of this world were unevenly distributed, and good men often suffer while evil goes unpunished. Du Vair opposed these injustices with a Stoic hero, one who accepts a divine challenge to rise to difficulty and thus to make himself heroic. This idea is implicit in Tristan's Mariane, when the heroine faces an unjust death sentence with unflinching courage and faith in God. From the fusion of Pagan Stoicism and Christianity, there emerged a new kind of faith, "inspirée par une volonté . . . faite pour les grandes âmes. Elle est intolérante, intransigéante, mais elle monte très haut. Elle brûle mais elle spiritualise. Elle christianise la virtù de la Renaissance."[21]

Henri Busson points out that during the Middle Ages, there was very little of personal aggrandizement, but rather a sublimation of heroism in the worship of saints. The churches of the Middle Ages attest to this; saints are everywhere glorified in the carvings and stained glass windows.

But with the resurgence of Stoicism in the sixteenth century came the idea of man himself as hero. "Etendre son être, se développer selon toutes ses possibilités, cultiver toutes ses facultés, avoir l'orgueil de vivre et de triompher: la gloire en un mot, celle des armes, celle des lettres, celle de la diplomatie ou de l'administration voilà le rêve de l'homme nouveau."[22]

According to Paul Bénichou, this "gloire" did not spring exclusively from the Neo-Stoicism of the times; it went back to those very Middle Ages which Busson discounts. And it took on very important social overtones as an ideal of the aristocracy, the chivalry of the Middle Ages with a more Pagan countenance adapted to the court of Louis XIII. It was "une affirmation plus audacieuse que jamais des valeurs aristocratiques modernisees, haussees au niveau d'une glorification de la puissance humaine a travers le type de l'aristocrate."[23] The feudal idea of heroism had been closely attached to Christianity and great deeds were done in the name of the Church. But when the idea became linked to the heroes of Antiquity, will and reason seemed to rejoin their Pagan sources and the Church began to realize how fragile the link had been between Stoicism and Christianity.

Although Bénichou insists that "le lien du Christianisme conciliant avec l'idéalisme aristocratique est partout visible dans la littérature du XVIIe siècle,"[24] he reveals elsewhere the fundamental problem posed by the heroic ideal,

"L'orgueil est pour le Christianisme la racine même du péché,"[25] and he calls this heroism "la religion de l'orgueil."[26] The problem of human pride presented a dilemma for the consciences of the times despite the efforts of some Apologists and Christian Humanists to reconcile it with the humility of Christian doctrine. Tristan himself was caught on the horns of this dilemma and both Pagan and Christian attitudes appeared in his work.

To the weight and importance of Christianized Stoicism, one must add the voice of pure reason as exemplified by Descartes. The term "raison" appears often in the work of Tristan and his contemporaries. The whole century seemed bewitched by the very word; "Amusette pour les beaux esprits auxquels elle donne l'occasion de déployer leur ingéniosité, enseigne que tout auteur accroche à sa boutique, livrée de quiconque veut passer pour un honnête homme."[27] Descartes was audacious enough to insist that the human mind was capable of reasoning its way to any answer, even to metaphysical questions. Armed with a genius for mathematics and unbounded faith in reason, he promised to define and prove God. He thought he had succeeded in a precise demonstration and he wrote to Mersenne in 1630: "'Au moins pensé-je avoir trouvé comment on peut démontrer les vérités métaphysiques d'une façon qui est plus évidente que les démonstrations de la Géométrie.'"[28]

This proof of God in no way resembled the syllogisms of the Scholasticism founded on Aristotle. Descartes, like most

of his contemporaries, rejected this argument as being completely out of date. He also rejected most of Classical learning, ancient languages, histories of past centuries full of legend and falsehood. But of one thing he was sure, that there existed a universal faculty of reason which could enable men to arrive at absolute laws governing both the physical universe and human conduct. This ability to reason, if applied to the metaphysical, would lead man to a belief in God.

The Méditations appeared in 1641, but as early as 1630 Descartes had announced that he had succeeded in finding a way to demonstrate metaphysical truths. But his proof of God, based on reason, was not satisfying to his contemporaries. Scientific methods applied to metaphysics did not lead to a convincing conclusion. Busson comments that "de son vivant même Descartes fut suspecté."[29] The publication of the Méditations "semble surtout avoir déçu les lecteurs à qui l'assurance de Descartes avait fait espérer qu'il allait renouveler la démonstration et clore cet éternel débat."[30] Tristan, exact contemporary of Descartes, was to see the failure of reason in one of its most audacious attempts to align itself with religion.

Fortunat Strowski insists that the influence of Stoicism was very great up until 1640. "Ainsi vers l'année 1640, en France, le plus grand écrivain en prose, Balzac, le plus grand philosophe, Descartes, le plus grand poète, Corneille, sont tous remplis de l'esprit stoïcien. L'esprit stoïcien s'est universellement insinué."[31]

Busson sees the flowering of Stoicism in the writings of the 1630s, and its decline before the 1650s, a Stoicism "qui donnait à la génération de 1630 ce grand air de raideur et d'austérité qui la distingue si fort de celle de 1650."[32] But René Pintard claims it was exhausted by the end of the sixteenth century. "Le XVIe siècle avait hérité du Moyen Age, a réajusté, le compromis de l'aristotélisme et du christianisme; il avait, par ses propres forces, organisé l'union de la sagesse antique et de la foi. . . . Le XVIIe siècle, au contraire, les recevait épuisées, inéfficaces, constamment remises en question par mille secousses et menacées de ruine par l'épanouissement d'un catholicisme rénové."[33]

Whether the Méditations appeared too late before a public already doubtful of the alliance of reason and faith or whether Descartes himself contributed to its decline by claiming more for reason in the realm of metaphysics than it could possibly supply is not certain. Strowski believes that the basic contradiction between Christianity and Stoicism was being recognized, and Pintard writes that a great number were forced to choose Christianity due to the pressure of the Church, but many did not do it willingly. "A des païens qui n'avaient de chrétien que le nom, on tentait d'arracher ce dernier lien avec le passé . . . chez les incertains, les partagés, les tentés, les occasions étaient nombreuses d'amer mécontentement."[34] Throughout the century this basic contradiction troubled those who wanted to believe that men could be heroes

and Christians at the same time. "Si la volonté a d'elle-même et sans la grâce assez de force pour atteindre la vertu et le bonheur; . . . alors la révélation et la grâce sont inutiles. Le stoïcisme c'est le rationalisme . . . c'est la morale indépendante . . . c'est la mort du christianisme proclamé inutile."[35]

Though the two philosophies seemed irreconcilable on this point, they had some basic ideas in common. The Stoics believed there was a soul and eternal truths that would serve to guide all men. If these rules seemed more acceptably elaborated by the Ancients than by the Church, then it is true that Church doctrine was undermined as a source of authority. But Stoicism and Christianity did share that confidence in a final truth and many Stoic thinkers were brought to believe it was a Christian God, arrived at by reason. Here they were in accord with some Church Apologists. If the scales tipped in favor of the Pagans, then Stoicism needed no metaphysical and supernatural religion; the virtue of a life well lived in relation to fellow men was enough.

But it is apparent that some sort of religion and belief in God could be held by a Stoic. Many accepted Divine Providence and immortality as "reasonable." There is no line to be drawn clearly marking off Christian from Pagan territory. This makes the attempt to isolate them in the work of Tristan more difficult. His wide reading of the Ancients,[36] and the influence of Descartes, must have encouraged him in attempting to weld Stoicism to Christianity, especially in his plays.

At this same time, there existed another group which was diametrically opposed to the exaltation of reason. This group was the Académie Puteane, made up of writers who gathered each week at the home of the Dupuy brothers in Paris. These Gassendists, as they were called after their most influential member, were worthy opponents for the Stoics. Opposed to rationalism, they pointed out all of the contradictions arrived at in its name. Where Descartes looked for certainty and proof by reasoning, the Gassendists insisted that everything was relative and that man was guided by his passions. Where Descartes saw absolute certitudes, they found only probability. This applied directly to human nature. "Le rationalisme vivait sur la chimère d'un homme idéal, doué de raison, identique à lui-même dans tous les temps et dans tous les lieux. Le gassendisme a pénétré la génération de 1630 de cette certitude que l'homme est au contraire un être essentiellement divers. Il a détourné les esprits de la recherche des principes et les a orientés décidément vers l'observation du multiple."[37]

Strowski sees Balzac, Descartes, and Corneille dominating the world of letters with their Christian Stoicism during these years, but Adam insists that the group of Gassendists also were enormously influential. "Le rayonnement de l'académie puteane durera jusqu'à la mort des frères, après 1650. Le monde des lettres a donc les yeux fixés sur ce cercle redoutable."[38] He continues to see the influence of this group in the attitude of "la génération qui accède à

la vie de l'esprit entre 1630 et 1640."[39] These men shared a sense of the variety of mankind, a loss of interest in abstractions, and the insistance on finding out about man by observing his customs and studying his history. "La base de la philosophie ce n'est pas l'autorité, mais ce qui est sensible. Il faut recourir à l'expérience, source de toutes les sciences."[40] Pascal joined Gassendi in the insistance that experimental science held the key to truth. When it contradicted the Bible, the Bible must be accepted as metaphor.

Abstraction and observation led in two different directions. Descartes was sure absolute rules could be found, those which governed Nature and those which governed men's minds. Gassendi and his followers were convinced that the soul or mind was inseparable from the body and that no set rules existed. Most important, the Gassendists reduced man from a heroic and successful position if he willed it, to a plaything of the powerful forces of Nature.

The source of Gassendi's thought was Epicurus whose writings had been revived along with Socrates' during the Renaissance. Pagan philosophy again brought into conflict Plato's world of innate ideas and the Naturalism of Epicurus. The new terrain was France, but the ideas in conflict in Tristan's time were basically the ideas at war with each other hundreds of years before Christ. The problem now was somehow to put these ideas to the service of Christianity, a religion unknown to the Pagan philosophers. Gassendi was a priest and to him this fusion was essential.

We have seen that the Stoics often thought they had been successful in this, "Juste-Lipse à coup sûr, et Grotius selon les plus sérieuses probabilités, croyaient sincèrement aux dogmes chrétiens."[41] Descartes had left room for the human soul, for Platonism and the mystical, and thus for the supernatural. But there was no such possibility in the Epicurean philosophy. Gonzague de Reynold rightly sees Epicureanism as the mortal enemy of Catholicism. "L'assimilation du platonisme et du stoïcisme par la pensée catholique et française va permettre à celle-ci de résister avec d'autant plus d'énergie et de succès à l'épicurisme. Car celui-ci, c'est l'adversaire avec lequel on ne compose jamais."[42]

In 1624, Gassendi published at Grenoble his Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos. He, like Descartes and most of their contemporaries, rejected Scholasticism completely. But he went even further. "Il niait toute métaphysique, toute certitude intellectuelle, toute justification rationnelle de la morale." He underlined the diversity of human nature, denied that a universal belief in a deity was true, and insisted "Qu'il n'existe pas une vérité sur laquelle les hommes se soient mis d'accord, pas un principe moral qu'ils aient en commun."[43]

These were natural conclusions stemming from the Epicurean theory that the world was composed of atoms joined in chance associations, that these combinations constantly change, and that movement beyond human comprehension governs the universe. Man has no control over this and logically there is no room

for intervention by God once everything is set in motion. "C'est que le hasard suffit à expliquer l'ordre apparent de l'univers, que le nombre des combinaisons possibles étant infini et celui des combinaisons viables étant très restreint, il est inévitable que toute combinaison viable finisse par se produire. Diderot n'en dira pas beaucoup plus lorsqu'il s'efforcera de prouver combien est vaine la preuve de l'existence de Dieu qui se tire de l'ordre de l'univers."[44]

It would seem then that since Nature is formed of chance associations of atoms, there can be no divine justice. But Gassendi was determined to alter or interpret Epicurus to the benefit of Christianity. Busson believes Gassendi began his study of Epicurus around 1630. In 1634, he published an Apologie d'Epicure; in 1641, the year of the publication of Descartes' Méditations, he began work on his De vita et moribus Epicuri. But in presenting the thought of Epicurus, he intended to remain a good priest and he wrote to L. de Valois: "Je n'ai pas besoin de te dire . . . avec quel soin je l'attaquerai si je trouve chez lui quelque proposition contraire à la religion (et cela est inévitable chez un philosophe). Je n'oublie pas que tu as remarqué la mise au point que j'ai faite pour défendre la Providence contre Epicure."[45] Thus Gassendi's atoms became Christianized. "S'ils sont ingénérables et incorruptibles aux forces naturelles, en fait, ils ont été créés et peuvent être anéantis par Dieu, et leur mouvement éternel chez Epicure, leur a été selon Gassendi, donné par Dieu."[46]

La Mothe le Vayer was also greatly influenced by Epicurus. Like Gassendi, he believed the theory of atoms explained the universe but unlike Gassendi, he did not try to reconcile this theory with Church doctrine. Skeptical of anything that man could not observe, "La Mothe le Vayer travaille à libérer l'esprit de toutes les métaphysiques, à ramener la science à l'observation des faits."[47] In De la Divinité, this observation of Nature leads him to refute order and perfection in a Nature created by God. "Or est-il que nous y remarquons des défauts infinis, mille monstres qui font honte à la nature, tant de fleuves qui gastent des pays ou tombent inutilement dans la mer, lesquels fertiliseroient heureusement des contrées désertes pour leur trop grande aridité . . . Or que la Fortune seule dispose de toutes choses à son plaisir, soit qu'elles dépendent du fortuit concours et rencontre des Atomes de Democrite, soit qu'elles viennent de la contingence et quelques autres causes purement casuelles."[48]

La Mothe le Vayer continued to show the profound skepticism in the seventeenth century that Montaigne and Charron had introduced in the sixteenth. Nature for him did not reflect order and reason, but was often as chaotic and unpredictable as man. If there was a reasonable God, he did not manifest himself in Nature. Man was a victim of passion and incapable of heroism. Like Montaigne, Le Vayer declared that ultimate truth about God was unknowable.

This skepticism about man's possibilities opposed directly the self-exaltation of Stoicism. Following the period

of Corneille's great popularity in the theater, those years when Stoicism was at its height, a change took place in man's idea of himself. "Vu avec des yeux nouveaux, l'homme devient la plus faible la plus inconstante, la plus infidèle des créatures. . . . C'est le jeu fortuit des circonstances, le hasard, qui le conduit plus qu'il ne se conduit lui-même."[49] Two giants of the period, Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, "débaptisent la gloire et l'appellent du nom même de l'égoisme, 'amour-propre', amour de soi."[50] Perhaps Bénichou is right in placing the fall of Stoicism after Corneille when he speaks of literature, but Le Vayer published Dialogues d'Oratius Tubero and Soliloques sceptiques in 1632 and 1633, almost contemporary with Tristan's Mariane (1634), and earlier than Le Cid (1636).

A probable link existed at this time between Tristan and the members of the Académie Putéane. This was Cyrano de Bergerac, friend of Tristan, who was also acquainted with La Mothe le Vayer, an avowed disciple of Gassendi and firm champion of the atomic theory. He probably discussed these ideas with Tristan for he praised him highly as "le seul Poète, le seul Philosophe et le seul homme libre que vous ayez."[51] Antoine Adam considers this proof of Tristan's atheism. "Pour qui connaît Cyrano, cela ne peut laisser aucun doute. Tristan est un athée, et Cyrano le loue dans les mêmes termes qu'il donnerait à Théophile si Théophile était vivant."[52] The term "Philosophe" had a special meaning and importance for the Dupuy brothers and their friends

according to Adam; it was "un mot qui désigne l'écrivain indépendant."[53] It is interesting that Cyrano applied it to Tristan.

These two philosophical ideas, Stoicism and Epicureanism, opposed each other very early in the century although Stoicism predominated for a time in the theater. Each had a Christian counterpart. The Jesuit doctrine of good works gave man wide latitude in the realm of free will and allowed him self-esteem and even heroism. Jansenism, on the other hand, reduced man to helplessness. "En réduisant l'homme à une sensibilité aveugle et dépendante, absolument inconciliable avec l'idée que nous avons de la liberté et de la raison, en le faisant rentrer tout entier dans la nature brute, dont sa vie, ses désirs et ses actes ne sont plus qu'un fragment lié à tous les autres, les moralistes jansénistes ou jansénisants aboutissent à une véritable dissolution de ce moi sur lequel on prétendait tout fonder et qui s'est dispersé lui-même au sein des choses."[54] We will see more of this fundamental division within the Church itself when we study the Apologies.

Another member of the Académie Putéane, Gabriel Naudé, attacked the institution of the Church and religion itself so completely that Adam says that he was Pagan. "Il est, dans sa manière de juger, dans sa conception de la moralité et de la politique, un païen et, comme l'on dit alors, un Machiavéliste."[55] Naudé insisted, with Machiavelli, that religion was an instrument of power for the state. In 1639, with the publication in Rome of his Considérations politiques

sur les coups d'estat, he attacked the monarchy directly, accusing all such governments of being founded on lies and false authority, and using religious beliefs to justify "une longue suite de barbaries et de cruautez."[56] Profoundly pessimistic about the power of reason to prevail over the passions, Naudé thought that the people would believe anything their leaders told them, and he compares populations to "une mer sujète à toutes sortes de vents et de tempestes."[57] He denounced Descartes' deductive reasoning and refused any place to the supernatural in the explanation of man's behavior. Absolute standards of truth and virtue simply did not exist for him, and in this he continues a tradition important among Italian thinkers for a century, that of reducing all explanations of man's motives to the useful. In Italy, Telesio had insisted that self-preservation governed all human activity. Bruno had defined virtue according to social usefulness, and Campanella reduced the Christian idea of immortality to a thirst for self-preservation. Machiavelli claimed religion was just a useful tool to the politician. The Christian supernatural did not exist for these men and absolute truth arrived at by reason was just as unthinkable. Nothing existed beyond man and Nature.

But there were those among the Naturists who found extraordinary powers stemming directly from Nature. Astrologers accorded the stars great power over human destiny, and alchemists sought magic powers in elements found in the earth. Both groups claimed that good and evil forces were at work within Nature

herself. Those who were beguiled by this kind of thinking were branded as heretical by the Church for the doctrine of Nature threatened to escape Christian restrictions. Apologists would try to subjugate it again, claiming Nature was an expression of God, but Naudé's independance and Cyrano's atheism were a result of some of its most daring propositions.

The idea of man as a product of Nature had its most vocal expression at the University of Padua in Italy. Naudé had studied there and had spent many years in Italy. It was not necessary, however, to go to Italy to feel the influence of the Naturists. In 1610 Vanini arrived in France. His reputation and theories had preceded him. Father Lessius had already announced that the most dangerous non-believers were those who denied Divine Providence and who followed Bruno and Machiavelli in their insistance that the world was governed by the blind force of destiny or by the position of the stars.[58] Vanini was such a man.

After touring France for five years, he arrived at the court proclaiming the supremacy of "la Nature reine et déesse des mortels."[59] The Italians were already well entrenched at the court of Louis XIII, thanks to Marie de Médicis and Concini. The priest André de Lizza, a member of the court, made fun of religious ceremonies and ridiculed the observance of Lent. The notorious Cosme Ruggieri, the Queen's doctor, was an astrologer and an atheist.

In this atmosphere Vanini was popular and much sought after. "Il . . . s'entoure de la jeunesse la plus brillante,

lui offre l'amusement de ses bouffonneries, de ses paradoxes, insinue tous les scepticismes, prêche l'incrédulité, donne le goût des blasphèmes . . . on le voit à la Cour, on le voit chez le nonce, chez le Chancelier, dans les Salons."[60] Vanini was sensational. He was known throughout France and his influence was enormous. Strowski underlines this fact, "Un personnage comme Vanini est extrêmement important: je ne veux pas dire que ses idées eussent quelque portée; c'est un mélange d'astrologie et de naturalisme assez grossier. . . . Vanini, c'est un de ces auteurs qui ont juste les idées que leur prête leur lecteur. Son importance ne dépend pas de la valeur de ses doctrines."[61] Théophile and his group of young libertine poets had just the rebellious temperament to which Vanini would appeal.

But Vanini did have a doctrine, or a philosophy he professed to follow, that of Averroës, an Arab living in Spain in the twelfth century, a doctor and a philosopher. A disciple of Aristotle, Averroës had modified the thought of his master into a cult of Nature. Interested in every aspect of Nature, Aristotle had been called the first biologist, but his follower was more of a mystic, drawing religious inferences from natural phenomena. There was, he claimed, a divine intelligence that sprang from Nature herself and which is the real soul of the world. By knowledge of this divine intelligence, which can come only through Nature, we arrive finally at a knowledge of God. "Des influences célestes, l'action des sphères supérieures, la conjonction des astres à notre

naissance déterminent la part plus ou moins grande de divin que nous recelons. . . . L'homme n'est plus le roi de la nature, il n'en est guère qu'un chainon."[62]

Vanini shared this doctrine of Naturism with most of the professors of the University of Padua. In the preceding century Pomponazzi had denied that miracles came from anything but natural causes, and that Christ was given any divine power except what was accorded him by the stars. The miracles attributed to him "tiennent à ce qu'au moment de sa naissance Saturne était dans la neuvième maison du ciel, sous le signe des Gémeaux."[63] His birth in a manger and his death on a cross were just as easily forecast by the stars. Cardan, another Italian who taught at the University of Paris, explained the prophecies by the presence of Jupiter and Venus in the ninth house. The Church was on guard against these theories of natural causes, especially astrology. Thomas Raynaud accused Pomponazzi of being an atheist because he tried to explain the religious miracles in this way.[64]

Giordano Bruno, after Pomponazzi, loudly and clearly proclaimed Nature as the cause of everything and dared substitute it for God. "La nature naturante n'est plus obscure et matérielle; elle devient loi de Dieu et raison universelle. Elle agit et conduit l'univers. . . . Peut-être est-elle Dieu même."[65] The faculty of medicine was also infected with the new philosophy, and Strowski calls this school of the University "un foyer d'impiété."[66]

In France, expression was more cautious. The ideas of the Italians had certainly infiltrated and influenced the country, but few Frenchmen would go so far as to link astrology to religion. Natural causes seemed a safer and more tenable idea. The miracles were questioned. They were not openly called hoaxes, but there were some who claimed that they were the result of occult powers in animals or plants. The Church Apologist, Yves de Paris, accused the libertines of believing that the miracles performed by Christ "provenoient de quelque secrète vertu de son corps, par un escoulement de qualitez semblables à celles qui causent les sympathies."[67] Another Apologist, Jean Boucher, in his Les Triomphes de la religion chrestienne, has the unbeliever attribute these miracles to herbs or to rocks, or springing from his own temperament.[68]

The prestige of these "natural sciences," astrology and alchemy, is not completely clear. Busson claims that astrology, at least, was losing its luster at the beginning of the century, and Pintard suggests that, in assimilating much of the thought of Italy, the independents eliminated the theory of microcosm and the influence of the stars. But Strowski speaks of an "école des astrologues" existing at the time of Pascal which was "en matière de science, les héritiers de Jordano Bruno, de Cardan, peut-être, et en tout cas de Vanini. En leur temps on ne les traitait pas sans respect; ils étaient nombreux, ils étaient écoutés."[69]

The alchemists, in their turn, were admired by the Church Apologist, Mersenne, who was the most anxious of all the Apologists to reconcile religion and science. He wanted to have colleges and offices of alchemists set up in each city for research. But even Mersenne drew the line when the alchemists wanted to explain the mysteries of the Church by natural causes. He objected to "la dangereuse tendance des alchimistes de vouloir transformer en phénomènes naturels les mystères et les miracles, même la résurrection du Christ."[70]

But when it came to Vanini, there could be no adjustments, no compromise. Wearing the robes of the Church, he shouted his unbelief from the pulpit, "Il se moque des sots et des crédules, il déniaise les gens; il leur enseigne à vivre selon la nature, à se gausser de la religion et à profiter d'elle."[71] In 1616, after his arrival in Paris, he published Les Secrets de la nature. Three years later he was burned at the stake at Toulouse insisting up to the last that "la nature était le seul Dieu, que la mort ouvrait le repos du néant."[72] Such blatant atheism could not be ignored and it shocked Balzac who could not believe that an atheist could die so courageously.

Strowski claims that the "libre-penseurs" who gave credence to Vanini's ideas were incapable of a rigorous intellectual attitude, and that a real philosophy was too much for them. Reynold describes them as habitués of taverns and unsavory places. But to dismiss the Naturists as pleasure-loving men is not altogether accurate. Cyrano de Bergerac

did not lack scientific rigorism. He was a follower of Gassendi, a believer in the system of Copernicus. Yet he, like Pomponazzi, explained apparent miracles by the power of the imagination and considered Nature "la puissance infinie, source de toute force et de toute féoondité, d'où l'univers est sorti et vers laquelle tendent les formes naturelles. Puissance aveugle et sourde, qui ne s'occupe pas des êtres éphémères, et que nos prières ne sauraient toucher."[73]

Cyrano was an avowed atheist, he criticized the idea of divine miracles, of a spiritual soul which was immortal. Everything sprang from Nature. "Toute forme tend vers une forme plus parfaite. Du végétal à l'animal, de l'animal à l'homme, il y a effort et ascension. Si l'immortalité au sens habituel est une illusion, Cyrano croit à un passage continu des êtres, d'une forme à une autre forme, et il l'appelle métempsychose."[74]

But it is quite possible that among more indulgent men the philosophy of Nature could become an excuse for whatever they wanted to do. If everything is natural, wherein lies the distinction between good and evil? Théophile adapted this philosophy to sanction the life he wanted to lead and felt free to indulge himself. "Voilà l'épicurisme de Théophile. Il dédaigne tout ce que recherche la société: la richesse, la gloire militaire, les vanités de la cour. Il se moque du point d'honneur. Dieu? Il l'ignore et le laisse paresseux dans son ciel. Le plaisir personnel, dans les douceurs de l'amour, tel est son unique souci."[75]

All of this Epicureanism and "laisser aller" did not come from Italy. Strowski, for instance, finds it in the late Montaigne who was enjoying a new popularity with the publication of an edition of the Essais in 1635. From the Stoic idea that happiness depends on a content and tranquil mind and a well-regulated spirit, Montaigne later moved to a purely Epicurean position of pleasure as the only worthwhile pursuit. He came very close to the Naturists when he insisted that "Notre nature est faite de nos habitudes, de nos instincts, de nos appétits; c'est notre manière d'être, individuelle irréductible, irraisonnée. . . . La bonne loi naturelle se réduit donc à nous laisser aller à notre penchant."[76] This attitude did not always lead to heresy. Montaigne was able to remain a good Catholic, and both he and Cyrano stoutly denied the possibility of demons and magic. They did not suffer the fate of Vanini who preferred the stars to Christianity.

The importance of Nature is paramount in the three groups we have studied, and it is extolled in all the Pagan philosophies. But it was to this last group of Utilitarians and Naturists that the Pagan occult beliefs were able to attach themselves. Vanini was possibly burned at the stake more for these occult practices than for his denial of God. He was the embodiment of an especially virulent libertinage, much more so than the general term would imply.

For most of the seventeenth century, the term "libertin" meant "ceux qui sont affranchis de l'enseignement dogmatique

ou de la pratique de la morale religieuse."[77] But Busson designates the real libertinage as "une survivance appauvrie du naturalisme du XVIe siècle."[78] He continues, "Au XVIIe siècle, le libertinage procède, comme au XVIe, d'abord du foyer de libre pensée entretenu depuis le moyen âge dans l'école de Padoue."[79]

To this basic belief that every event can be traced back to natural causes, a philosophy which leaves no room for a Christian God, the young nobles of the French court added their own brand of audacious atheism, defiance of all religious custom. Impiety and blasphemy and even debauchery were necessary for the prestige of these men. Such audacity among the nobles continued to be in vogue throughout the first half of the century. Defiance of religion gave the young cavalier "une sorte de lustre mondain."[80] Father Garasse, in 1623, accused the nobles of considering impiety the height of good taste and Pierre Bardin, another Church spokesman, confirms that the first quality of the Honnête Homme must be a contempt for religion. Says Pintard, "C'était marque de galanterie que de rien croire."[81]

Pintard's description of life at court is surprisingly similar to that given by Tristan in Le Page disgracié. "C'est à la Cour une explosion de licence. . . . Pénétrons au Louvre, dans ce 'sérail bigarré,' où se rencontrent 'des maîtresses, des bâtards, des chiennes et des fous et des folles de cour, Guillaume, Olyvette et Engoulevent, nains, culs-de-jatte, musiciens et poètes détraqués, admis à toutes

les licences par l'humeur caustique du bon Roi' . . . autant que la vertu, autant que l'honneur des femmes, la piété est malmenée: on jure, on renie Dieu; et même si l'on croit en lui, on vit comme si l'on ne voulait point le croire."[82]

One is reminded of Tristan's childhood at the court of Henry IV, in reading Derodon's Athéisme convaincu, in which the author accuses the court of introducing the "jeunes gens de bonne maison qui ayant esté mal nourris et élevez, se laissent emporter à l'athéisme par la fréquentation des Athées raffinez, et par les débauches du jeu, du cabaret et des femmes."[83]

Well into the reign of Louis XIV, the Church continued to see great danger in the number of atheists at the court. Even as late as 1658, Father Zacharie de Lisieux devoted an entire chapter of his Gyges Gallus to the invasion of atheism into both bourgeois and aristocratic company, and bemoaned the mania for cursing. In 1646, the danger seemed so great that a group of bishops felt it necessary to bring these sacrileges to the attention of the Queen. Even Churchmen who were attached to the court forgot themselves and were caught up in the fever. J. J. Dorat, priest of Saint Germain and personal agent of the Cardinal de Retz, is reported to have taken gambling very seriously, and to have sworn furiously when he lost. The young Louis XIV was taught by some of the court that swearing was the thing to do. "La reine sa mère le surprit à jurer et l'enferma pendant deux jours dans sa chambre."[84] Jean Boucher once more denounced the blasphemers and the court for accepting them. "Gombauld

constate qu'ils sont fort bien reçus chez les princes où on leur permet même 'd'attaquer la divinité'."[85]

Although sacrilegious nobles must have set the tone of the royal court for a long time, probably until the end of the 1650's, there was another influence that was to attract Tristan and other young aristocrats into a more literary milieu and one even more blatantly anti-religious than the court. He wanted to be a poet and so did many others. "Ils disent," says Father Garasse in his long indictment of the young libertines, "'je suis ni philosophe, ni théologien' et ils n'ajoutent pas: 'je suis poète,' mais ils veulent qu'on l'ajoute."[86]

They found a leader in Théophile de Viau. "Théophile de Viau fut, aux yeux de la jeune génération de 1620, pour ceux qui avaient alors entre vingt et trente ans le grand poète de la France. . . . La jeunesse de la cour recueillait ses propos 'comme oracles d'une divinité'."[87] They wanted everyone to know how courageously they taunted the powerful Church of France. Théophile boasted he was braver than his Christian friends for it took more courage to be an atheist.

In the churches these young nobles rose and made fun of inept priests in the middle of their sermons. They got together in the taverns to sing their blasphemous songs. Father Garasse, in his high-pitched attack, described them as those "qui ont l'impudence de proférer d'horribles blasphèmes contre Dieu; qui commettent des brutalitez abominables, qui publient par sonnets leurs exécrables forfaits; qui font de Paris une

Gomorrhe."[88] Their attitude was reflected in the intermingled themes of Nature and irreligion in the poetry of this period. "L'idée de destin et de nature, la manie de mêler Dieu aux plaisanteries et aux obscenités, ces deux traits apparaîtront dans la plupart des chansons libertines de Théophile et de ses amis."[89]

In 1623 the trial and condemnation of Théophile for writing blasphemous verses shocked and frightened the young nobles. Burned in effigy, he was sent into exile. His punishment warned Maynard, Sorel, and Saint-Amant that they had better tone down their writings. Their leader had been chastized for his audacity in an alarming way, and this action put an end to the revolt for the moemnt at least. Father Caussin, noting the non-believers among the poets taking cover, rejoiced at the progress being made toward a unified and Christian nation. But these men found one or two havens where, under the protection of lesser royalty, they could continue as libertines. "Gentilshommes débauchés et jureurs vont donc chercher asile auprès de Gaston d' Orléans dont la cour foisonne en impies de toutes sortes."[90]

Here, at the court of the king's brother, Tristan found a protector as did other libertine poets. Gaston was the only noble of importance to "autoriser autour de lui une extrême liberté de ton . . . société si parfaitement étrangère aux croyances de la nation."[91] (Years later, Tristan found the household of Condé to be still another group of notorious libertines, "le prince lui-même très

épris de philosophie très indépendant d'esprit et de doctrine."[92]) But there was a thoughtful side to life at Gaston's court and a real appreciation of literary excellence. Gaston surrounded himself with brilliant men who took their intellectual studies seriously. Rudolphe le Maistre translated many books of medicine and philosophy, and Le Comte de Moret wrote a treatise on Conclusiones ex universa philosophia de promptae.

Learned men and brilliant poets who gathered at the court of Gaston shared one important attitude, impiety. Formal religion was still observed, but superficially. "Chez Gaston, la religion est une cérémonie sans laquelle on ne rêve pas même de passer une journée, mais on n'y apporte que bien peu de sérieux."[93]

There is certainly very little that is serious in the verses that were authored by some of the nobles around Gaston. Poetry of the Baron de Blot circulated clandestinely but widely. These poems were too daring to be anything but underground literature, "car depuis le procès de Théophile les recueils gaillards à la manière du Parnasse Satyrique avaient complètement cessé de paraître."[94]

During Tristan's lifetime there appeared a "recueil de plusieurs pièces très plaisantes du sieur Théophile, avec d'autres pièces de différents autheurs, meslées de plusieurs chansons des plus à la mode." Adam says the similarity between these verses and those of Blot almost surely places

them as authored by the men around Gaston. Here is one of the most daring:

> Qu'on parle de Dieu le Père,
> De toute la Trinité,
> Qu'une Vierge soit la mère
> D'un Sauveur ressuscité,
> Et que l'esprit en colombe
> Descende comme une bombe,
> Je me fous de leurs destins
> Pourveu que j'aye du vin.[95]

This was indeed taunting the Church. The poets must have wanted some kind of angry response and they got it in the denunciations of Father Garasse. Pintard very aptly describes the struggle between the attitude of these nobles and of the Church, "Etrange et savoureuse complexité d'une époque comme celle qui va de l'Edit de Nantes à la mort de Mazarin. Le temps de la plus active Renaissance catholique est aussi celui du 'libertinage flamboyant'; le Siècle des Saints entendit proférer les pires blasphèmes."[96]

The irreverence of these libertines abated as they got older. Following the example of Gaston, who retired quietly to Blois and showed signs of becoming pious in his last years, most of them returned to the Church. Théophile, Saint Amant, and Tristan all died after receiving the sacraments. Most surprising of all, that announced and fearless atheist, Cyrano, accepted Christianity on his deathbed. Adam attributes the last-minute conversions to fear of what would be done to them in punishment after their death. "L'athée, même s'il échappe au supplice, doit toujours craindre que son corps ne soit, après sa mort, jeté à la voirie. Qu'il

refuse de recevoir les sacrements au moment de mourir, il n'échappera pas à l'outrage."[97]

We do not know how sincere these men were. There seems to have been a general retreat among libertine writers when they reached middle age. Saint-Amant embarked on the long Christian epic poem, Moyse sauvé, and Tristan wrote his Exercices Spirituels. Was this new piety due to increased pressure from the Church which, having instituted a successful reform, was dominating every sector of French life? Or was it just the slow guttering out of an excessive youthful flamboyance? Libertinage and impiety had managed to exist up until the defeat of the Fronde, "auprès de Gaston d'Orléans . . . du jeune prince de Condé, à l'armée, à la cour même."[98] But following the defeat of the nobles the absolute power of Louis XIV, seconded by the Church, dealt even this last remnant of libertinage a death blow. "On fera extérieurement profession de christianisme; on fréquentera les sacrements; on ira dans les paroisses, on s'abstiendra de jurer et, sans incliner le coeur, on pliera la machine. Sauver les dehors, quel 'honnête homme' le refuserait, fut-ce au prix de la duplicité. . . . Ainsi le libertinage cède le pas à l'hypocrisie: l'âge de Vanini est revolu, celui même de Roquelaure est passé, c'est celui de Tartuffe qui commence."[99]

It seems impossible not to agree with Reynold when he claims that in a century of such intense religious activity these libertine poets, denied the king's court and forced to find a place with a member of the aristocracy, were no match

for a renascent state Church. They were a group "sans chef, sans homme supérieur pour le conduire. . . . On trouve chez les libertins de la fantaisie, de l'imagination, voire du génie, mais ils demeurent gens de cabaret et de mauvais lieux que l'on ne saurait considérer. Ils ont de grands poètes: Mathurin, Théophile. Mais l'instruction leur manque; leur esprit est léger; ils se moquent autant de la science que de la foi; ils se mettent ainsi eux-mêmes en marge de leur temps."[100]

The danger of this freedom was seen in the inability of some men of genius to control their imaginations before they were led into extravagant acts. This was especially true of Théophile. He formed a "cabale," or secret society whose members included Maynard, Boisrobert, Saint-Amant and perhaps Tristan.[101] These societies were "des assemblées secrètes de libertins, où les attaques contre toute religion, les blasphèmes et les impiétées jointes au mystère de la réunion, composaient une atmosphère dantesque et orgiaque."[102] The order of the Brothers of the Red Cross "investissaient litteralement la France, jusqu'au jour de 1623 ou ils vinrent y prêcher, dans leur jargon teinté d'alchimie et de Cabale, un messianisme nouveau et une inquiétante théosophie: l'avènement de l'Hélie Artiste et la hiérarchie des Zéphirots."[103]

Secrecy and magic were potent attractions to the imagination of men who felt no religious restrictions. But the Church had powerful weapons with which to combat them. Perhaps the most powerful was its literature, an outpouring

of persuasive Apologies. This was accomplished in a remarkable resurgence of the Church after the crippling religious wars and in spite of the internal decay of its own institutions. Already, by the beginning of the century, just after the Edict of Nantes had brought religious peace to France, Catholicism had begun to reactivate itself. "Dans les cloîtres ruinés, derrière les grilles des couvents que l'indiscipline a souvent ouvertes, une obscure agitation commence. . . . Des ordres monastiques se raniment . . . chez les filles, ardeur égale."[104]

François de Sales in Savoy, Pierre Fourier and Didier of Lorraine worked diligently for a return to piety and obedience, and in 1613 Bérulle founded the Oratoire which was to reach into every sector of French life. Under its auspices forty-three colleges were founded; missions were organized. Seminaries were formed for the education of future priests, and there were lectures and retreats.

To the Oratoire, whose function was primarily to educate, the Church added, in 1630, the powerful association of the Compagnie du Saint Sacrement in Paris, with branches in all the provinces. Its members included judges, financial leaders, diplomats "prêchant, conseillant, secourant, surveillant, dénonçant, persécutant."[105] They worked ceaselessly to establish the domination of the Church among laymen.

A third association, the Compagnie de Jésus, occupied itself especially with the young. Along with the Oratoire,

it was responsible for the education of a future elite, an education which would include strict devotional discipline as well as a study of the humanities.

Neither Protestantism nor libertinage was a match for the new Catholic energy. A rebellious and often hostile Court bowed to the new order. "Quand Louis XIII meurt, en 1643, l'oeuvre semble presque achevée."[106] The Church had triumphed, it was the most important single influence of the day. But this influence was not enough unless it convinced everyone. Every heretic had to be brought into the fold and the Church accused any dissenter of being dangerous, even atheist. From the very beginning of the century it let fly accusations. After the Protestants had come the atheists "qui ne se sont pas contentés d'enlever des églises les statues des saints, mais par un horrible sacrilège tentent de détroner Dieu lui-même."[107]

The Apologists worried continually about the large number of non-believers, and Cotin noted, in 1629, that the libertines were talked about incessantly. Boucher, in 1630, was preaching not only against ordinary vices such as debauchery, ambition, and avarice, but against atheistic Epicureans, those men who poisoned the souls of others by their mania for questioning everything.[108] Father Garasse considered them a danger everywhere, and felt his own impotence in dealing with the threat. "Il sent autour de lui, 'formée d'un nombre infiny d'esprits enragez,' l'armée 'des Libertins, Epicuriens et Déistes' qui chemine dans

l'ombre et contre laquelle ses injures ni ses menaces ne peuvent rien."[109]

The hue and cry against the atheists reached a crescendo in 1635, when Boucher wrote, "O siècle misérable . . . siècle qu'on doit nommer infame. O moeurs dépravées! O libertinage en triomphe! Ce monstre infernal (Epicure) enseigne aujourd'huy ces athées de ce temps le service de Dieu! Car s'ils vont à l'Eglise, c'est seulement pour n'estre chassez des honnestes et honorables compagnies."[110]

Books of all kinds were written in an attempt to convert everyone to Christianity. There were philosophical and theological treatises. There also appeared a great deal of popular literature meant for a wide circulation, which tried to prove the existence of God. Poets and playwrights were preoccupied with theology. The theater too, especially after 1640, set about popularizing reasons for believing. They pitted Christian against Pagan. "Dans ces tragédies, le drame qui met aux prises la violence et la foi se double d'un tournoi philosophique entre les représentants du paganisme et ceux de la religion chrétienne."[111]

The Church was aiming directly at the "libre-penseurs," those men who still reflected the influence of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Naturism. There was an army of Apologists ready to combat them and even lay writers took their turn at writing defenses of the Christian religion against the non-believers. These arguments were presented in any literary form that was popular, for their purpose was to

put the attractions of literature at the service of religious persuasion. By using poetic and literary techniques designed to please the reader by their beauty, the Apologists were able to "séduire par l'agrément de l'exposé ceux qui ne se contenteraient plus de l'aride argumentation."[112] As we will see in studying aesthetic tastes during the period, an interpenetration of Pagan and Christian influences existed on many levels not only in secular literature, but also in the Apologies.

None of the philosophies of Antiquity was spared by these men. In 1624, Father Mersenne, in his Quaestiones celeberrimas in Genesim, attacked the Stoics who tended toward fatalism, the Epicureans who excluded the intervention of God in human affairs, the Sceptics who said that nothing was certain, and most of all the Paduans, who explained everything beyond human comprehension as the effect of the imagination or of natural forces. Mersenne, who worked tirelessly to reconcile science and religion, was especially harsh in his attacks on the occult practices of some Naturists. Boucher seconded him in denying any power at all to the body, to stars, to plants, or to rocks. Jean de Silhon, secretary to Richelieu and a man of considerable importance, composed an Apology against "l'astrologie judiciaire, contre Paracelse, Crellius, Pomponace et Vanini qui prétendent expliquer les miracles par la force de l'imagination . . . ."[113]

Boucher was only a little less militant against the Stoics. He attacked Cicero and especially Statius, that first student of Satan.[114] All of the Apologists reacted strongly against the philosophy of Epicurus, so popular at the time not only with Gassendi and those of scientific spirit, but with the aristocrats like Vauquelin des Yvesteaux, who tried to lead a life of sensual pleasure. All Pagan thought now seemed dangerous. The Stoics were only half-convinced of the superiority of Christianity over Pagan morality. The Epicureans were either too self-indulgent for the austerity of Church dogma or claimed too much for scientific discovery. All of them tended to return to Pagan thought.

The purpose of the Apologists was to discredit Pagan philosophy as the ultimate truth and to convince the people that Christianity was the only answer to metaphysical questions and that only the Church held the key to truth. Antique settings and styles would be accepted if they were used to illustrate Christian truths. "La culture antique n'était et ne devait être qu'un moyen au service de la vérité chrétienne."[115] The difficult work of making Christianity and Paganism reinforce each other, so important to Du Vair and Juste Lipse, was soon to be undone. Man's pride in himself made it hard for him to love God completely. "L'héroïsme d'âme d'un Brutus, la sévérité d'un Caton, la fidélité à sa parole d'un Regulus, tout cela a pour mobile la gloire personnelle ou nationale et non la vertu ni l'amour de Dieu."[116]

Balzac, although he was often called the Christian Socrates, finally refused to accept the alliance of Christianity with Antiquity. The Ancients still deserved esteem, but they could never again serve as models. "Le grand Pan est mort par la naissance du Fils de Dieu, ou plustot par celle de sa doctrine; il ne faut pas le ressusciter. Au lever de cette lumière, tous les phantosmes du paganisme s'en sont enfuis, il ne les faut pas faire revenir."[117]

These sweeping renunciations of the Pagans were followed by arguments on precise questions, the existence of God, his control over events, and about immortality. Taking into account the failure of Scholasticism, the Apologists resigned themselves to only partial proofs, aided by divine revelation.

But Mersenne, determined to hold reason and religion together, insisted that man's natural reasoning inclined him toward a belief in God. Camus affirmed that even the savages, living in remote corners of the world, believed in some kind of deity, and Father Coton asserted that every man who was neither a fool nor intentionally blinding himself to what he saw would have to recognize that there was a God.[118] Grotius, in 1629, insisted that a "lumière naturelle" led always to belief in God. He cited instances of voyagers who had returned from distant America to report that the savages worshiped a sovereign power dwelling in the sky. As late as 1640, he was propounding this argument in his Apologies.

One of the most troubling questions of the day was that of Divine Providence. The Apologists argued forcefully against the "Dieu oysif" of Epicurus, against destiny and fortune, and against the Paduans, in favor of an individual reward decided upon by a Christian God. "Bardin, de même . . . et Jean Boucher s'attaquent longuement à la Fortune, à la Fatalité, et à la Nature."[119]

Balzac championed Divine Providence throughout the Socrate Chrestien, and du Teil, Sorbière, and Lessius joined him. Father Cotin, in 1646, wrote Théoclée as an argument for providence against the chance of the Epicureans. He claimed the very regularity of Nature proved that it was governed by a supreme law, and according to a divine plan. If injustices seemed to abound, if a good man suffered while the evil one succeeded, the wicked would be punished by remorse. "Ainsi on conclut que pour estre bien, le monde doit estre ainsi qu'il est: et qu'il ne peut estre mieux, supposé l'ordre présent des choses."[120]

Nature as a manifestation of God's will at work seemed a most reasonable assumption. Many Apologists became lyrical. "Avant La Bruyère, Fénelon, Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre et Chateaubriand, les auteurs de ces petits manuels ont très largement, parfois avec des détails infinis, souvent avec lyrisme, exposé aux fidèles la beauté du monde sidéral et terrestre, la finalité merveilleuse qui guide l'instinct des animaux et la production des êtres."[121] But these proofs were not orthodox enough, and the Church

pressed for a more rigid interpretation. The beauty and order of Nature would point toward a divine plan, but the reward and punishment inherent in such a plan, as conceived by the Christian Church, had to be spelled out in religious dogma. Only the Church could supply instruction on sin and salvation. Final proof of such truths eluded the Apologists. Their moral arguments were already showing a turn away from attempts at physical proof toward psychological persuasion. They began to stress not a natural reasonableness but a feeling, a longing for God. Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin argued that "On prouve Dieu par ses Oeuvres, mais mieux on le goûte, comme du vin."[122]

Since man could never penetrate the mysteries of life, he must cease to try to explain the mysteries of God. His finite and feeble ability to grasp truth was all too evident when he presumed to prove God as Descartes had done. These truths of religion were far beyond his feeble comprehension. The natural step for the Apologists who arrived at this conclusion was to insist on the acceptance of religious truths as one of faith and not of reason. The Sceptics, Montaigne and Charron, once considered enemies of orthodoxy, now served as guides in the adaptation of Scepticism to Fideism. "Ainsi se formait, doublant le courant pyrrhonien, et souvent se mêlant à lui, un courant fidéiste."[123] The very man who had once seemed dangerous in professing doubt about human reason, offered an answer to the problem of religious indifference. If man's reason could be humbled, he would have to accept

answers arrived at by other means. To a simple and open heart the Church could supply answers. Reasoning was henceforth to be looked on with mistrust by the most influential Apologists.

For example, one finds in the Angélique of Polycarpe de la Rivère, "La Foy ne cherche pas la Raison. . . . Que nous cherchions Dieu avec simplicité de coeur, que nous adorions ses mystères avec soubmission d'esprit et sacrifions à l'autel de la Foy tous nos sens et nostre jugement. . . . Devant l'Evangile, il faut aneanter comme inutiles et dangereuses toutes les productions de l'intelligence."[124] Nicolas de Hauteville believed a Christian should be "sainctement et divinement ignorant."[125] "Quel plus agréable sacrifice à Dieu que celuy que l'homme luy fait de sa raison?"[126] wrote Balzac, and Senault, in 1644, insisted that reason depended on the senses and the passions, on sickness and on sleep, and therefore was blind.

The simple untaught heart became the only one able to receive divine truths. Faith was placed out of the reach of reason and divine mysteries were not explainable in scientific terms. Man at last was abject before a God who could choose to accept or reject him. Those faculties of reason and will, which had made him independant, were no longer to be trusted. Fortune had become Christianized.

This Christian scepticism of reason had existed much earlier and had been codified in the Théologie naturelle of Sebond, translated into French by Montaigne in 1569.

There cannot be a period isolated and marked off as optimistic, humanistic, rationalistic, without admitting that the coin has two sides--that the Renaissance in the sixteenth century, especially toward the end, was experiencing doubt about man's ability to be happy through his own efforts. At the height of humanistic self-confidence, Sebond was claiming that human nature was capable of very little without God. Free will had indeed led him to defy God and was the reason for his fall. "Il ne croit pas à une nature humaine, harmonieuse, équilibrée, en qui règnent les évidences de la raison et de la loi morale."[127]

The insistant attack made by the Apologists of the seventeenth century was aimed at sweeping away most of the last vestiges of the Pagan confidence in man himself. The Augustinian current, evident in the majority of the mid-century apologies, "humilie la sagesse des hommes que l'Antiquité avait définie, construite, exaltée."[128] Pascal was the most brilliant exponent of this religious return to faith. He was the most dangerous enemy of Pagan Humanism. "Pascal nous apparaît ainsi comme le penseur chrétien qui a le plus fortement réagi contre le rationalisme, la confiance dans la nature et le culte de l'homme, c'est-à-dire contre l'esprit de la Renaissance."[129] He did not deny reason a place in human development, it could find answers to scientific questions about the physical universe. But it did not help in man's search for God. Morality and metaphysics were understood only in the context of Christian

teaching. Faith could be arrived at by practicing these teachings diligently.

Pascal was worried about the libertines who were enjoying this life in good Pagan fashion without worrying about a future heaven or hell. One of the deadliest sins to him was "concupiscence," a concern with worldly things, position, money, physical pleasure, and he warned pleasure-loving friends that God did not enter an impure heart and that their passions and self-indulgence stood in the way of a divine revelation.

But warnings were not enough. To the earthly pleasures it was necessary to oppose an eternity which would be more attractive, available only to those who believed. Father Mersenne, in 1624, had insisted that the libertines would find more pleasure in one day of Christian living than in a thousand of debauchery and libertinage.[130] Boucher said those who indulged in the desires of the flesh could not taste the sweetness of God.[131] It is surprising to what lengths these Apologists went to make religion desirable and available. Steps could be taken to receive God and the implication was that God would respond. In the face of "probabilities" or "likelihood" that God did exist, the intelligence could be led to believe by a will to accept the probabilities. This will became stronger if it was not abused by senseless pleasure and bad inclination. "Aux coeurs purs, la vérité devient sensible."[132]

Silhon had said that whatever could not be definitely proved, if it were advantageous for man, could be accepted as true. He was speaking especially of the divinity of the soul. This attitude of offering religion as personal profit, took the form of the "pari" in several Apologies. Evidently the Church felt the gain of a soul was worth a gamble. How effective this persuasion was on men engaged in having a fine time within the confines of a mortal day is hard to say, but Apologists were leaving no path unexplored in their determination to convert men to Christianity, and their knowledge of human weaknesses probably made this persuasion all the more effective.

Ideas were in ferment during Tristan's time and the Catholic Church battled fiercely for domination. Reborn from the ashes of the religious wars, it insisted that man turn away from earthly pleasures and think of spiritual salvation. It ran headlong into the Epicurean ideas of pleasure and contentment on earth. It demanded that man humble himself before his maker and acknowledge his mortal weaknesses, and here Christian ideas locked horns with proud self-sufficient Stoicism. It was not an easy task to erase the influence of the Renaissance and its love of the beauty and wisdom of Antiquity. On the other hand, there were men who believed that pre-Christian thought could be adapted to the present without sacrificing either one. Even some of the Apologists hoped to save certain elements of Antiquity, but they finally abandoned their efforts in favor of a new

humility and an irrational faith. Henceforth, the influences of Antiquity would be looked upon with suspicion.

Aesthetic changes resulted from this idealogical struggle. Besides adjusting itself to the ebb and flow of ideas, the art of pleasing had to take into account the literary tastes of the day. Form, too, was going through a period of conflict. Many poets hoped to preserve Nature as a supreme ideal of beauty and with it the mythology of Antiquity, at least in a modified form. They wanted to indulge in the fatal adulterous passion of aristocratic love poems. But the Church did not like references to Pagan gods and they hoped to eliminate them altogether. They wanted to sublimate earthly love into a spiritual fire burning with a love of God. Form, as well as content, reflected this struggle between Christianity and Paganism.

NOTES

[1] Gonzague de Reynold, Le XVIIe siècle: le baroque et le classique (Montreal: Editions des Arbres, 1944), pp. 55-56.

[2] Antoine Adam, Sur le problème religieux dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle, The Zaharoff lecture for 1959 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 13.

[3] Henri Busson, La Pensée religieuse française de Charron à Pascal (Paris: Vrin, 1933), p. 14.

[4] André Maurois, History of France, trans. Henry L. Binsse and Gerard Hopkins (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 156.

[5] Adam, Le problème religieux, p. 14.

[6] Marcel Raymond, Baroque et renaissance poétique (Paris: Corti, 1964), p. 22.

[7] Busson, p. 312.

[8] Busson, p. 355.

[9] Busson, p. 322.

[10] Fortunat Strowski, Pascal et son temps, série Histoire du sentiment religieux en France au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Plon, 1922), II, 127.

[11] Raymond, Baroque et renaissance poétique, p. 24.

[12] Reynold, p. 22.

[13] René Pintard, Le Libertinage érudit (Paris: Boivin, 1943), I, 42.

[14] Antoine Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Domat, 1948), I, 301.

[15] Busson, p. 611.

[16] Pintard, p. 57.

[17] Strowski, I, 69.

[18] Pintard, p. 52.

[19] Adam, Le problème religieux, p. 6.

[20] Strowski, I, 81.

[21] Reynold, pp. 134-35.

[22] Busson, p. 381.

[23] Paul Bénichou, Morales du grand siècle (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 17.

[24] Ibid., p. 85.

[25] Ibid., p. 33.

[26] Ibid., p. 23.

[27] R. Michea, "Les Variations de la raison au XVIIe siècle: Essai sur la valeur du langage employé en histoire littéraire," in French Classicism, A Critical Miscellany, ed. Jules Brody (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 94.

[28] Adam, Histoire, I, 325.

[29] Busson, p. 440.

[30] Ibid, p. 435.

[31] Strowski, I, 123.

[32] Busson, p. 401.

[33] Pintard, p. 75.

[34] Loc. cit.

[35] Busson, p. 401.

[36] Amédée Carriat, Tristan ou l'éloge d'un poète (Limoges: La Rougerie, 1955), p. 25. In the home of his relative, Scèvole de Sainte Marthe, says Carriat, Tristan had access to an enormous library, "non seulement aux oeuvres des Anciens, mais à celles de la Renaissance et de ce dix-septième siècle commençant, à la physique, à l'histoire, à l'anatomie, et vraisemblablement à l'astronomie et la cosmographie, matières qu'il dira l'avoir toujours tenté."

[37] Adam, Histoire, I, 299.

[38] Ibid, p. 290.

[39] Loc. cit.

[40] Pierre Gassendi, Opera omnia (Lyon: Anisson et Devenet, 1658), VI, 345.

[41] Adam, Le Problème religieux, p. 16.

[42] Reynold, p. 63.

[43] Adam, Histoire, I, 313.

[44] Antoine Adam, Les Libertins au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Buchet Chastel, 1964), p. 16.

[45] Gassendi, Opéra, VI, 159-60.

[46] Busson, p. 421.

[47] Adam, Les Libertins, p. 123.

[48] Ibid, pp. 130-31.

[49] Bénichou, p. 99.

[50] Ibid, p. 101.

[51] Cyrano de Bergerac, Histoire des estats et empires du soleil (Paris: Sercy, 1662), p. 36.

[52] Antoine Adam, Théophile de Viau et la libre pensée française en 1620 (1936; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1965), p. 125.

[53] Adam, Histoire, I, 292.

[54] Bénichou, p. 100.

[55] Adam, Histoire, I, 304.

[56] Gabriel Naudé, Considérations politiques sur les coups d'estat (Rome: n.p., 1639), pp. 84-85.

[57] Ibid, p. 156.

[58] Strowski, I, p. 54.

[59] Busson, p. 394. (From a title of Vanini: De Admirandis Naturae Reginai Deaque mortalium Arcanis libri, published in Paris, 1616).

[60] Adam, Théophile, p. 135.

[61] Strowski, I, 157.

[62] Adam, Théophile, p. 136.

[63] Busson, p. 323.

[64] Ibid, p. 325.

[65] Strowski, I, 240.

[66] Ibid, I, 215.

[67] Busson, p. 320.

[68] Ibid, p. 321.

[69] Strowski, II, 27.

[70] Ibid, I, 218.

[71] Ibid, I, 143.

[72] Ibid, I, 156.

[73] Adam, Libertins, p. 162.

[74] Ibid, p. 161.

[75] Adam, Théophile, p. 141.

[76] Strowski, I, 244.

[77] Busson, p. 6.

[78] Ibid, p. 2.

[79] Ibid, p. 11.

[80] Pintard, p. 37.

[81] Ibid, p. 14.

[82] Ibid, p. 7.

[83] David Derodon, L'Athéisme convaincu: traité demonstrant par raisons naturelles qu'il y a un Dieu (Orange and Paris: Varennes, 1659), pp. 148-49.

[84] Pintard, p. 25.

[85] Busson, p. 25.

[86] R. P. François Garasse, La Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps ou pretendus tels (Paris: Chappelet, 1623), p. 61.

[87] Adam, Libertins, p. 51.

[88] Garasse, pp. 37-38.

[89] Adam, Théophile, p. 132.

[90] Pintard, p. 34.

[91] Adam, Libertins, p. 73.

[92] Busson, p. 464.

[93] Claude K. Abraham, Gaston d'Orléans et sa cour: étude littéraire (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 134.

[94] Adam, Libertins, p. 73.

[95] Ibid, p. 84.

[96] Pintard, p. 37.

[97] Adam, Théophile, pp. 127-28.

[98] Pintard, p. 35.

[99] Ibid, p. 37.

[100] Reynold, pp. 49-50.

[101] Adam, Théophile, p. 128.

[102] Busson, p. 481.

[103] Pintard, p. 48.

[104] Ibid, p. 3.

[105] Ibid, p. 4.

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[108] Pintard, p. 28.

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II.

THE AESTHETIC IDEAS

Following the religious wars and the decline of Renaissance erudition, a kind of anti-intellectualism set in at the court of Henry IV, and it continued to be felt into the reign of Louis XIII. Among the aristocrats, "il fallait avoir plutôt la réputation de brutal que celle d'homme qui avait la connaissance des belles lettres."[1] This turning away from serious thought on the part of those whose tastes were most important in shaping the artist's work held serious implications for both style and form in Tristan's day. The erudition, so highly prized during Ronsard's era, lost its value. "Le niveau de la culture baisse dans toute la France. . . . S'il veut subsister aux frais du gouvernement ou des puissants, il faut fuir toute apparence de pédantisme."[2]

Henry IV cared little for the arts and was noted for "une nature assez vulgaire et sans distinction."[3] His son, Louis XIII, was no more cultured than his father. "Il aima surtout les plaisirs actifs, solitaires, et peu intellectuels."[4] The court as a whole, following the example of the King, neglected the learning so prized by the sixteenth century, and rejected intellectual satisfaction for physical display and immediate pleasures. What a man knew did not interest the frivolous court, only how he looked.

Women vied with each other in clothes made of rare silks. They wore jewels and extravagant wigs, their faces covered with cosmetics. "Si une femme n'est pas fardée, elle n'a pas de grâce."[5] The men too were given to appearances and this ostentation was a mark of their nobility. "Un vrai noble . . . se reconnaît au parfum."[6] A preoccupation with appearance continued to grow under Louis XIII, and interest in spiritual and mental refinement was ignored. Quiet study was a useless pastime for a man who wanted to dazzle his contemporaries by the way he looked. It became almost a point of honor among the nobles to show how ignorant they were in matters of the mind. "L'étude, paisible et sans éclat, est réservée aux classes inférieures."[7]

The court found excitement in the uncertainty of gambling. This fever for the game infected even the clergy, and representatives of the Church sometimes set the example for the nobles by gaining or losing great sums of money. Many of these aristocrats, including Tristan, often had to live on what they made at the game. An aristocracy bent only on entertainment and easy diversion even as a livelihood had no time for a prolonged and sometimes painful search for ultimate truth in philosophy and perfection in art.

Almost up until the time of Louis XIV, the tragi-comédie reflected this attitude. "Au théâtre, la tragi-comédie n'exige aucune connaissance de l'histoire, car elle se déroule dans un monde fantaisiste; elle n'offre aucune étude de caractères, mais seulement une complication folle et puérile de déguise-

ments, d'erreurs de personnes, d'enlèvements, de détours imprévus, qui amuse et soutient l'attention par la succession incessante des péripéties et des coups de théâtre, mais ne demande aucune qualite d'intelligence, de pénétration, aucune maturité d'esprit."[8]

The spirit of the ballet de cour and the tragi-comédie was in its way just as Pagan as the earlier cult of gods and goddesses. It relied on magic and instability. A lack of religious values left heroes and heroines at the mercy of Nature's caprice, and an unpredictable and unfriendly destiny worked in strange ways. This kind of superstition was preferred to a sobering belief in Divine Providence by an aristocracy in search of the sensational.

A Baroque love of change and decor was at the heart of the ballet de cour, and it grew out of the desire of the court to be immediately pleased and entertained without any mental effort. The insistance on visual or pictoral presentation reflected a desire to paint everything for the eye, a painting continually in movement. "C'est la rencontre, à l'âge de baroque, de tant de motifs et de personnages pittoresques avec tout ce qu'ils offrent d'indéterminé, de changeant, de bizarre, d'ouvert aux métamorphoses."[9] Nymphs animated the woods and streams. Circe transformed humans into animals or trees or rocks, and Proteus changed himself into many forms. Apollo pursued Daphne through the woods and she suddenly became a laurel tree. Persius, armed with the head of Medusa, changed his

enemies into stone. Mythology lost its real importance as a literature of archetypes from which man could learn about his own nature, and became instead pure decoration or a source of useful figures who kept the landscape moving and furnished magic transformations.[10]

If one tired of the artificiality of the court, he could escape into the pastorale, "où le monde est pur, le coeur à nu, le destin d'accord avec l'amour."[11] But the conventions of the ballet de cour took over the countryside too. "Le magicien fait partie du personnel de la pastorale, avec ses scènes d'hallucination, ses philtres qui tuent sans tuer, ses coups de tonnerre et ses démons, sa baguette qui transforme le paysage, ses eaux miraculeuses qui changent les personnages les uns dans les autres, suscitent de faux visages, des morts-vivants, des revirements amoureux."[12]

Taste for the sensational in court entertainment reflected a frivolous society. Louis XIII was a pious king, but his courtiers as a whole paid no attention to their souls even though they did observe the propriety of going to church often just to be seen in new clothes. This excessive pleasure in worldly things did not go unnoticed by a pious faction of the bourgeoisie. In the eyes of these more serious men, the display of luxury by the nobles, even to gold and precious stones on their carriages, was scandalous and unchristian. They urged those around the king to give up worldly things which were passing, and to think of more eternal values.

But the aristocracy turned a deaf ear. "Il n'apparaît pas qu'au début du siècle, la religion ait été le frein capable de contenir les instincts, de modérer leur manifestations, d'adoucir les moeurs, de discipliner en un mot, l'indocilité foncière des tempéraments."[13] It was to be expected that the ballet de cour and the pastorale, meant only to entertain, would reflect this carefree attitude.

The tragi-comédie grew out of the court productions and Jean Rousset designates 1630 as the high point of its popularity. There was a new interest in the theater; two regular troupes were installed in Paris under the protection of certain aristocrats. A host of young dramatists appeared, Du Ryer, Rotrou, Mareschal, Scudéry, Mairet, Corneille, and Tristan among them. The love of décor and spectacle, derived from the ballet de cour, was typical of the new genre. There was a constant mix-up of identities among the characters. Each one pretended to be someone else and the fools, already present in the pastorale, invaded the new plays making wise pronouncements under a foolish appearance.[14] "On sait que ces grands égarements ne manquaient jamais de plaire et se faisaient souvent admirer à l'époque."[15] This "folie" allowed the world to be transformed into twisted visions thus becoming a way of changing and disguising it just as the masks and identity mixups disguised the characters. Since nothing was what it seemed, nothing was certain. This uncertainty did not lead to a Stoic self-reliance in the face of adversity from without, for it was his very self that man

could not be sure of. "Ce qu'il connaît en définitive, c'est sa confusion; ce qu'il apprend sur lui-même, c'est que son moi lui échappe."[16]

The disconcerting quality of this aesthetic of appearance as developed in the court entertainments was that there was no concern for real problems, either metaphysical or psychological. The Church could come to grips with serious men on the common ground of concern about human behavior, but the court spectacular and the tragi-comédie appealed only to the eyes and to very superficial emotions. It offered no intellectual anchoring in reason. There is little wonder that a man like Tristan should abandon himself to an unfriendly and unknown destiny. The preoccupation with superstition which showed itself during these years grew out of uncertainty, and court entertainment made no effort to answer questions or to formulate a stable system of values. This was a peculiarly seventeenth-century manifestation of Italian Naturism carried to extreme. If there were any answers to man's fate, they could be found in Nature, in the stars most of all. No divine justice presided at a distribution of rewards and punishments for good behavior.

At the same time, however, there was another kind of theater being formulated for a Parisian audience. It did not entertain by surprising scenic effects, but by a dramatic presentation of man's heroic attempt to overcome very real adversity. This drama resembled the plays of Antiquity in

its simplicity and unity. It was the Renaissance in Italy which had first produced Neo-Classicism, a sobering current running side by side with the lyricism of Nature and love, and its emphasis on the Stoic ideal of human courage was in marked contrast to the superficial tragi-comédie.

The theater in Italy had begun to look for rules, and it was by way of Italian translations that Aristotle's unities came to be accepted by dramatists in France. The Poetics was translated into Latin in 1498 by Georgius Valla, and its influence was very great. Later, in 1535, Dolce translated into Italian Horace's Art of Poetry. Through these translations and their widespread acceptance in Italy, "la doctrine classique est désormais constituée, et c'est à l'Italie qu'on la doit."[17]

Medieval or pre-Renaissance drama in France had been fragmentary and lacked a real aesthetic. Its purpose was to instruct in recreating the lives of saints or in recounting stories of miraculous interventions by the Virgin Mary to save the faithful in their hour of need. These dramatizations were reinforcements of Church teaching, and they were little more than lessons in piety and not a unified conscious work of dramatic art. Their didacticism was offset by farces produced only to make the simplest spectator hold his sides for as long as the play lasted. With the Renaissance a new concept of drama took hold and the idea of a unified presentation of a tragic situation, which would inspire a feeling of dread and horror, became an

aesthetic code for the tragedy as it had been for Aristotle and the Greeks.

The seventeenth century adapted French Renaissance tragedy more rigidly to Aristotle's unities. As early as 1553, Jodelle's Cléopâtre captive was presented in a theater with scenery and actors, and the drama as an independant genre in France was secured. Medieval dramatizations were replaced by a modern form of theater. "Peu à peu les pièces s'ajoutent aux pièces, et la tragédie va disputer la place dans toutes les provinces à l'ancien théâtre."[18] This was the theater of La Mariane and Le Cid. It was more than entertainment for bored nobles, and it was not directly tied to the court. Rather, it reflected the serious preoccupation with man's role and how he should play it, and its aims contrasted sharply with those of the ballet de cour and the later tragi-comédie. It required thoughtfulness and emotional involvement on the part of the audience and its style was adapted to better express "les mouvements cachés de la vie intérieure. Moins de vie, de mouvement, de réalité; mais plus d'art, plus de pensée, plus de poésie."[19]

Tragedy began to explore human passions in more depth and was not so insistant on the horror of bloody deeds performed onstage which had characterized earlier plays. Nor did it require the dazzling effects of the court plays. For its subjects, the tragedy drew heavily on Antiquity. "Pour la première fois en effet dans l'histoire de notre théâtre

l'histoire romaine fournit à elle seule plus de la moitié des sujets traités. . . . L'histoire grecque et celle de l'Orient classique occupent la deuxième place dans l'intérêt des auteurs."[20]

The Aristotelian simplicity and severity of the tragic theater was in sharp contrast to the extravagant entertainments, and Scudéry wrote as late as 1641 that audiences had welcomed his plays warmly because they did have an element of surprise and a brilliance of production.[21] Charles Sorel, author of Jugement du Cid, declared that he liked the bizarre and unusual, and that he would not be bound by strict rules.[22] But the followers of Aristotle were more numerous than his detractors, and the theater continued to move toward simplicity and form. "On pourrait soutenir qu'en 1632 Corneille était l'adversaire d'Aristote et qu'en 1637, suivant le courant, il s'était rangé sous la bannière du philosophe."[23]

Besides fathering the three unities, Aristotle represented the supremacy of reason, and this was to be the cornerstone of French Classicism.[24] Corneille joined reason and will in a Stoic hero who was always master of himself, and for a time this ideal replaced the uncertain hero "à la destinée capricieuse"[25] of the tragi-comédie. Bernardin dates the first perfecting of this Stoic "tragédie de caractère" as 1636, with Tristan's Mariane, and finds it succeeding "au milieu des tragi-comédies imitées de l'espagnol, où l'étude des charactères et des sentiments était toujours sacrifiée à la construction d'une intrigue compliquée et à la recherche

des situations extraordinaires."[26] Not only were the dramatists back on solid ground in eliminating frivolous and distracting decoration, but Christianity was often the main concern. In the tragi-comédie and in the pastorale, the setting was usually a natural one, and humans often carried on a dialogue with an inanimate object. But the more severe cadre of the tragedy lent itself to a reverent atmosphere and often the poetic dialogues "progressent à la manière de méditations religieuses ou de paraphrases de psaumes, accumulant les arguments en faveur du ciel et contre la vie terrestre."[27]

Corneille had said with Aristotle and Horace that his art had only entertainment as its aim and that he was in no way obligated to show only good actions on the stage for the edification of the audience. But Cornelian tragedy is concerned with human behavior, reason and will are in the service of a noble duty. The drama of heroism maintained a dignity of speech and action, and it did very often weight the arguments in favor of a higher good. It was possible for this kind of theater to be turned to the ends of Catholic persuasion if the higher good became Christian doctrine as it did in Polyeucte.

Paralleling these developments in the theater, poetry, too, adapted itself to change. The basic problem was the same for both genres, to adapt ideals of beauty held by Antiquity to the poetry and theater of a later time and a different civilization. The two favorite themes of poetry,

Nature and love, did not change with poetic taste but they were refined and made more artificial by a worldly and sophisticated aristocracy. The King's court was the milieu in which much of this poetry was written, but it later shifted to the salons and into the hands of more appreciative women. Poetry followed a double course just as drama did, but it was polished and refined, fitting itself to conventions and restrictions even as it diverged into different patterns. At the court, Malherbe introduced strict rules of form to set the pattern of Classicism in official poetry. The salon was just as insistant that the treatment of love in poetry fit the conventions of Précioslté, strictly limiting it to reflect the narrow tastes of a small group. "Précieux poetry gives us the lowest common denominator of the literary tastes in the most sophisticated circles in a given period,"[28] and for the seventeenth century this "common denominator" sharply restricted the poet in what he could say and how he would say it.

Nature had also been the favorite subject of Renaissance poetry and its most important source of metaphor. There was nothing more worthy of poetry than a woman who resembled a rose, nothing more brilliant than comparing her to the stars. Like all Renaissance ideas of what was beautiful, true, or good, this pleasure in Nature derived from the ideas of Antiquity. The kinship of man with Nature had been sung by Latin poets such as Ovid, and no other single poem influenced Tristan as much as the Metamorphoses.

Ronsard and the Pléiade poets had exalted Antiquity and restored mythology and the gods of Nature. They wove the legends of these gods into almost every poem and the divinities animated Nature and peopled the Renaissance forests. One could not be a poet or enjoy the beauty of sonnets and odes without a thorough acquaintance with their legends. The immortality of the poet's work, the beauties of a fleeting time on earth, the magnificence of that earth were all subjects for lyricism. Libertine and Naturist poets of the seventeenth century were indebted to these earlier lyricists, "l'art des Précieux et des Baroques trouve ses sources beaucoup plus loin dans notre littérature que d'Aubigné et que Garnier. Par l'abondance et la liberté de leur inspiration, le chatoiement de leurs images, la richesse somptueuse de leur style . . . les poètes de la Pléiade sont les véritables maîtres du baroque français."[29]

But, with the general tendency to discount thoughtful and scholarly aspects of the Renaissance and to appreciate a more superficial treatment of everything, Nature became more and more a source of sensual pleasure with little philosophical importance for the poet. In Italy, Marini and his followers were singing the delights of Nature as a feast for the eyes and as pleasure to the senses. The relationship between man and Nature was very close; trees wept in sympathy and streams murmured comfortingly to the unhappy poet. Nature throbbed and was alive. She had

supernatural powers; stars governed a man's fate and plants were endowed with magic healing powers. The earth's elements could combine in magic splendor. Baroque poets, who were masters of sensation and surprise, found their material in these combinations. They wrote a poetic counterpart to the ballet de cour and the tragi-comédie. One has only to contrast Saint-Amant's religious epic, Moyse Sauvé, with D'Aubigné's Tragiques to realize the extent to which Nature imposed herself on every theme, even a religious one. She turned out to be the heroine of libertine poetry no matter what the poet had as his original design. In Saint-Amant, we are continually distracted by weeping trees, sombre forests full of owls, and seas of wide-eyed fish. We cannot keep our minds on the religious subject. This seventeenth-century Baroque is different from that of D'Aubigné and the sixteenth-century religious poets. It is what Raymond calls "plein-baroque." "Elle engendre volontiers des formes capricieuses, tourbillonantes, ou grotesques. . . une détente, un abandon au multiple, à l'accident, au devenir, au 'change,' au 'passage' pour parler comme Montaigne."[30]

These poets are considered Baroque largely because much of their poetry cannot be neatly placed in the pre-Classicism of Malherbe or in the Précieux poetry of the salons. Superficially, they seem to refuse any poetic restriction and in this they are surely the descendants of the Pléiade. But their use of Nature is a common

denominator which links them all in a loose poetic agreement. Thierry Maulnier has accepted love of Nature as characteristic of both Précieux and Baroque poetry, but the Précieux concept was restrictive in its appreciation, and Nature usually provided only metaphors for physical beauty. The Baroque, on the other hand, was often an expression of the mood of the times and was more generally representative of the disappointment of the age in not finding the "cosmic unity" of Ronsard. Instead, this kind of poetry reflected the chaotic side of Nature.[31]

Tristan felt the pull of Préciosité more strongly than Théophile and Saint-Amant. When he wrote of Nature it was often adapted to a taste for the artificial, and movement and change were sometimes sacrificed. "Urbaine et composée la préciosité se porte d'instinct vers la pierre et le bijou; . . . le monde précieux est un monde pétrifié; or, argent, émail, pierreries, saphirs, rubis, rochers: voilà les matières dont Tristan construit sa bucolique 'Ode à M De Chaudebonne.'"[32]

Although Nature played its part in the poetry of the salons, it was not the major theme. The main preoccupation of the aristocrats was love, and they elaborated on it in following the Renaissance adaptation of the Platonic ideal as it had been elaborated by Marguerite de Navarre and later by Marguerite de Valois. Italian sonnets had set the pattern, love was unrequited, a cavalier pined for the unattainable idealized woman, an earthly incarnation of perfect

beauty. The tone of the salons was set by the Précieux love poems conceived along the lines of this Petrarchian ideal. "Vous devez adresser des protestations d'amour à une dame de qualité, qui ne vous aime pas et qu'il n'est pas nécessaire que, dans votre coeur, vous aimiez; elle ne vous accordera, au plus, que des sourires et des paroles aimables; et vous vous plaindrez de sa cruauté."[33] At the Hôtel de Retz and later at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, this theme was developed in "une poésie ingénieuse, flatteuse, simulant l'amour, une galanterie hyperbolique, un bel-esprit tout artificiel."[34]

The official poetry of Malherbe was in marked contrast to the excessiveness of salon style, and to libertine sensuality, and he dismissed the earlier poetic freedom inspired by Ronsard. During the Renaissance this freedom had led to a mixing of style and subject; "Sixteenth century writers of all kinds shared a vast fund of similitudes and figures, drawn chiefly from the literature and encyclopedias of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. . . . In such a context, poets could move freely from one register to another without insincerity or artistic dishonesty; they could exploit the description of nature with the language of the Psalms and the Franciscan meditation on the creatures."[35] But for a purist like Malherbe, this rich mixture led to a breakdown of form and the inevitable decay of poetry. He condemned the excessive use of mythology and restricted it to non-Christian poetry. He refused to lift passages directly from Antique

texts and modernized much of the original while still using it as a basic model. "Un grand pas est fait depuis l'idolatrie gréco-romaine de Ronsard; le classicisme s'est substitué à l'humanisme."[36] In poetry, mythology still supplied metaphors for Précieux poets and even for Malherbe, but it was pure decoration. Pre-Classical tendencies were being felt which limited the use of mythological allusions to material that was well known, and most poets shared the opinion that artists should not contaminate a Christian subject with Pagan episodes or "mêler faux et vrais dieux, d'invoquer Apollon ou les Muses, d'user même de métaphores purement païennes."[37] Bouhours later went so far as to question whether or not the figure of Fortune should appear in any form in a Christian work, and Théophile, in 1620, turned his back on the Pléiade in this respect. "Non seulement il se moque de la pratique, héritée des anciens, d'invoquer Apollon ou les Muses au seuil de toute entreprise poétique, mais il se détourne des 'contes facheux' de la 'sotte antiquité', et plus généralement il condamne toute la poésie imitée de l'antiquité."[38]

Malherbe not only insisted on a more restricted use of the treasures of Antiquity, but he rejected most of the Italian poets with their emphasis on movement and change, their images of Nature in constant transformation--fountains, streams, waterfalls, tempests, clouds. The new master of poetry, in the service of King and Church, had discarded all the excesses of Baroque style except the hyperbole which he

needed to praise the King. He wrote, instead, symmetrical poetry, perfect in form, and following the new taste for order and reason which suited the dignified poetry marking great events in the life of a nation. He was the first great Classicist and he considered himself in the limited position of good craftsman and not a lyrical genius; his poetry is solid and serious in tone and has an element of moralizing.

In opposition to ornate and unstable poetry, undisciplined in form and vocabulary, he chose to write about "le repos preféré à tout mouvement, la durée éternelle de ce qu'il écrit, la transcendance de Dieu et la pérennité de sa bonté par opposition à nos 'affections passagères' à notre malheureux goût de changement."[39] The court might be frivolous and worldly, but its official voice was dignified and pious. The use of exaggeration to praise royalty was permissible, but it seemed more a necessary insertion than a real part of the otherwise severe verse. Malherbe's voice was listened to although his rules were not often strictly followed. "En l'année 1627, Malherbe obtient enfin la première place dans la poésie française."[40] Despite the objections of Régnier, his influence permeated the literary world. "Toute cette fin du XVIe siècle va dans la direction de Malherbe, se précipite au devant de lui, abjure les audaces de la Pléiade à sa naissance."[41]

In addition to the influence of a burgeoning Classicism, seventeenth-century poets who wrote for the aristocracy were

subject to two other powerful influences, one social the other religious. The ideal of the Honnête Homme emerged during the Renaissance with the belief that man was capable of social perfection. Erasmus was attracted by the idea of a perfectly developed personality, capable of pleasing by his conversation, and in tune with his social world. Earlier than Montaigne, he had stated the Renaissance ideal of a noble who was both well-educated and religious. Well-educated meant a thorough knowledge of Greek and Latin culture, especially of the philosophers. The religious aspect was secondary. It was a part of Erasmus' and Montaigne's Honnête Homme but it was not the overriding concern. Montaigne was more interested in being a universal citizen, sophisticated in the highest sense, and not zealously devoted to one religion.

The importance of this ideal for literary taste lay in two things, the interest in exploring, controlling, and perfecting human behavior according to a social yardstick, and the implication which evolved--excess in any form was to be avoided. In literature the "juste milieu" became more beautiful to writers than the excesses of the Renaissance. Erasmus and Montaigne prepared a climate suitable for the ideal of the Honnête Homme in social as well as literary life. It was a climate in which the restrictive poetic rules of Malherbe could dominate literary production and in which the tragic theater could florish. This does not mean that a love of spectacle and movement did not exist in both Montaigne

and Malherbe, but the excess was incompatible with the ideal and the ideal triumphed.

The balance and restraint and love of order of the seventeenth-century ideal was first manifested in the court poetry of Malherbe and that of his admirers, Racan and Maynard, but it was in the salons that the code of behavior for the Honnête Homme was first elaborated. It developed side by side with Classicism in literature. The "bible" or source book for the code was L'Astrée of Honoré d'Urfé, which offered the prime example of platonic love in its heroes, Celadon and Astrée.

The ideal escaped the narrow confines of the salons to become a guiding social and artistic principle for an entire society. In the drama, the Honnête Homme is pure but strong-willed. He may only love a woman worthy of it, one chosen by reason. "C'est alors qu'intervient la volonté: elle nous porte vers la personne dont notre raison a distingué et établi le mérite."[42] Once the choice is made, the Honnête Homme remains faithful to it. It is suitable to the ideal that passion should not exist in a violent form in L'Astrée or in the theater. Reason and good manners are in control, and in these two qualities women were thought to excel. "L'offensive est générale contre la grossièreté des sentiments et la vulgarité des désirs."[43]

The ideal of the Honnête Homme was polished and refined in art and society almost to the end of the century. The aristocracy had come a long way from the first crude manifestations at the courts of Henry IV and Louis XIII.

These nobles who had loved the dazzling and the superficial in the Ballet de Cour, now admired a polished and refined ideal, a man who refused ostentation in both manner and dress. Mme de Rambouillet and Mlle de Scudéry brought the art of conversation to new perfection in their salons. The Honnête Homme became the ideal for a whole society and with him the perfect restraint of Classicism came to dominate the literary world of France. Though the idea of a "juste milieu" in behavior and in art had existed earlier, it was a French phenomenon in its final realization.

The other influence brought to bear on literature during this period was that of the Counter Reformation, a militant Catholicism rising from the destruction of the religious wars. The Church offered order and certainty after a time of chaos. It propagated doctrine in hundreds of Apologies written at the same time as the most Pagan court literature. It inevitably triumphed and imposed itself on the writing of the time because it dominated the aristocratic milieu; the king ruled as Christian and all-powerful, and the Jesuits directed the consciences of the nation. Wherever possible, the Church turned to its own use the poetry of the court, the literature of the salons, and the theater of Paris.

In the theater, the battle between Christian and profane raged hotly for a time. In 1623 Chapelain forbade the mixing of a Christian story with secular or profane imagery in poetry and three years later Balzac rejected any trace of other religions in dramas with a Christian subject. Toward

the end of the century, Racine pointed out in the preface to Esther, that he had scrupulously avoided mixing profane and sacred.

Christian influence dominated subject matter in the tragedies between 1641 and 1645. About a dozen appeared during these years, beginning with the Saül of Du Ryer. The Baroque mixture of mythology and Naturism in the comédie-ballet declined before the new emphasis on Christianity and unity of tone. The problem of transposing the Pagan literature of the Renaissance to the seventeenth century was being resolved in the theater in favor of the Church. "Rien n'est plus Chrétien, en effet, que la tragédie classique dans son essence, même lorsque les personnages sont des Grecs ou des Romains, qu'ils s'appellent Auguste ou Phèdre."[44]

Poetry at the beginning of the century was also showing the Christian influence. Desportes still wrote love poetry in the Petrarchian tradition, and he continued to imitate the Italians in their love of decoration, but other court poets like Bertaut and Du Perron wrote on religious subjects and insisted on prefacing collections of poetry with pious introductions. The launching of seventeenth-century poetry on this religious note marks the difference in direction "depuis l'explosion de paganisme qui avait, cinquante ans plus tôt, marqué les premières activités de la Pléiade." Literature in general became "l'expression de la Contre-Réforme française, avec tout ce que ce mot comporte de modération relative, mais aussi d'abdication

intellectuelle et de complaisance morale. D'hypocrisie peut-être aussi."[45] It is not surprising that poets under pressure from Church and King should proclaim, "Dieu dispose de toutes choses, nous sommes tous en sa main," and echo Malherbe's refrain, "vouloir ce que Dieu veut."[46]

However, there were rebellious poets who did not easily fall into line with the dictates of the Church. Théophile, Saint-Amant, and Tristan came to write religious poetry very late in their careers. Saint-Amant continued to write his poems about Nature and the pleasures of the tavern, but he turned finally to religious history to write Moyse Sauvé. Tristan wrote the Office de la Sainte Vierge and Exercices Spirituels only after exploring every kind of Naturist and Pagan possibility in his poetry. We do not know how much this change of heart was due to pressure from the Church and to a conformity to new literary tastes, but Raymond Picard finds that the poets did give up their liberty of expression. "Il semble que toute création littéraire, au sens traditionnel de ce terme, lui soit interdite; ce qu'on attend de lui ce sont des qualités d'attention, de soumission, de modestie: il doit se faire en quelque sorte l'instrument anonyme de la gloire de Dieu."[47] He finds an evolution from Pagan to Christian in many of the poets, but in others an unresolved mixture continuing to the end of their careers. "Certains poètes se consacrent uniquement et dès leurs premiers vers à la poésie chrétienne mais un bon nombre d'autres, et parmi les plus importants, en viennent au

lyrisme religieux après avoir pratiqué la poésie profane. . . . Il n'y a pas à proprement parler passage chez les poètes chez qui profane et sacré alternent ou coexistent, chez Malherbe, Tristan ou Sarasin par exemple."[48]

But as the century advanced, the poets had to choose, and they usually decided to give up profane poetry. "Le temps de cette retraite . . . se situe en général après la quarantaine. . . . Le poète se repent, s'impose le silence dans les genres profanes, décide de purifier sa plume et de racheter par des vers de piété le scandale de ses vers profanes ou simplement le temps perdu pour Dieu."[49] These conversions of maturity among the poets may have been due to uneasiness at approaching death, the real possibility of a heaven or hell, or the strong current of religious influence that dominated literary production.

A new treatment of death colored this religious poetry, and, despite the care taken by Malherbe to eradicate most of the Baroque excess, it crept into these poems. The new treatment was an about-face from the Renaissance which had emphasized life and limited death to "le rôle d'une complice subalterne et souriante dans le jeu de la vie."[50] In the first half of the century, it bore a more frightening face. Man was flesh draped on a skeleton, carrying death within him even from the moment of birth, and the poet shuddered before this spectacle in his sonnets of penitence.

The Exercices spirituels were growing in popularity as a preparation for death and after-life in a nation now turned firmly away from Pagan optimism and Epicureanism and submitting to an authoritarian Church which emphasized reward and punishment after death. This kind of religious literature laid heavy emphasis on the horror of death without a belief in salvation. "'Souvenez-vous, ô homme qui n'êtes qu'un peu de boue, qu'il viendra un matin dont vous ne verrez pas le soir. . . . Dites-vous quand vous allez dormir: il peut arriver que je ne m'éveilleray jamais. . . . La mort vous suit partout.'"[51] Obsession with death is apparent in descriptions of Christ on Calvary. "Le Christ qui se dresse sur ce mont d'épouvante, squelette difforme et repugnant, à l'opposé des Crucifiés de la Renaissance, rappellerait certains Christs de la fin du moyen âge où les bois polychromes des baroques espagnols. On est loin de la mort 'gracieuse' et des calmes endormis de la Renaissance."[52]

Love, too, was adapted to Church needs. The poetry of the salons, written in praise of earthly love, was fitted to religious subjects, especially to praise of the Virgin. Her name replaced that of the beloved, already idealized in the tradition of Petrarch. The same form could enclose a religious subject if this subject were a perfect woman. Whether in painting, sculpture, or literature, the artists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries tended to portray the love of God in

strongly human, almost erotic terms. This tendancy is marked in the poetry interested in reconciling religious appearance with a secular outlook. "De tout temps il a existé des échanges entre le langage de l'amour profane et celui de l'amour divin. Marguerite de Navarre a écrit sur des timbres de chansons profanes ses Chansons Spirituelles."[53]

This juxtaposing of human with Christian love was a literary heritage dating from much earlier times. It was not a creation of the salons, but the idealized woman, the heroine of Précieux poetry, offered an opportunity to substitute sacred for profane.[54] In a collection of songs called La Despouille, which appeared in 1619, and again in 1621, tunes of the court were transformed into songs to be used by the Church. This was done by substituting a sacred name, Christ, Seigneur, La Vierge, for the name of the loved one, Aminte or Clymène, and the rest could be fitted into a religious adaptation without much change. "Amour humain, amour divin: confusion d'origine néoplatonicienne par laquelle vocabulaire amoureux et vocabulaire mystique s'interpénètrent."[55] Here is an example of the transformation in two poems by Boisrobert, changed from a secular love poem to an "Air de Dévotion:"

> Consolez-vous divinités mortelles
> Qui voulez posséder tout l'empire d'amour
> Vos yeux vont être absolus à la Cour
> Aminthe va partir, vous serez les plus belles.

Transformed to the devotional air, it now becomes:

> Retirez-vous faibles beautés mortelles
> Qui voulez posséder tout l'empire d'amour
> Je vais ailleurs pour y faire ma cour
> Je n'aime que de Dieu les beautez éternelles.[56]

This kind of poetry was popular in the first half of the century, but it lost favor as a general trend to avoid mixing Christian and Pagan became more marked. However, as late as 1674, a collection of poems by Pinchesne was published with the title, Amours et poésies chrétiennes. "Jusque dans le frontispice, profane et sacré sont tranquillement juxtaposés: deux anges dans le registre supérieur, deux petits amours dans le registre inférieur; avec ces vers dont le balancement gauche est du moins explicite: ici sont des amours, ici sont des vertus, de mortelles ardeurs, et des ardeurs divines, etc."[57] The year 1674 is well into the age of Classicism and the reign of Louis XIV, but earthly love still mingled with the sacred as it had since the Renaissance, and Préciosité had nurtured a form of poetry suitable for religious subjects in the fundamental confusion of Christian and sensual love.

Not content to change love and death into religious themes in poetry, and to overlay Pagan drama with Christian morality, the Church also insisted on the importance of religion in worldly society. In his Honnête Homme, published in 1630, Nicolas Faret announced that all virtue must begin with religion. A noble, saved in battle, should immediately fall on his knees and thank God. Saint François de Sales, in Introduction à la vie dévote, in 1608, had written that all the virtues recommended in the New Testament should be those of the Honnête Homme because they made life sweet, innocent, and enjoyable. Father Camus continued to

spread the word among the worldly aristocrats and to the bourgeoisie where a more solid version of the social ideal, based on moral principles of behavior, had begun to flourish. (These middle-class men emphasized the virtuous side of the Honnête Homme while the aristocrats thought he should be eminently pleasant to be around.) Father Camus slyly reminded them of the reward and punishment which awaited them and offered a free kind of adaptable religion insisting it was a necessary ingredient for the perfect gentleman.

This kind of faith was the only one really compatible with the Honnête Homme ideal. Montaigne was the model for religious moderation for it could be said of him that "la pratique extérieure est exacte et décente."[58] Anything excessive in religious fervor was distasteful. Faret emphasized religion more than the aristocrat Méré, but always as a social grace. He was a member of the bourgeoisie and this may account somewhat for the difference in emphasis. The general evolution of the ideal ranged from individual morality mixed with some religious fervor, as encouraged by Faret and Bardin, to a more worldly morality in the conception of Méré. But the guiding principle for social decorum was always reason and thus moderation. "Pour la conversation en particulier, on évite ainsi le heurt violent des idées, les disputes âpres et passionées, tout ce qui fait dégénérer la causerie en querelles."[59] The loud and shocking voices of the libertines who prided themselves

on being atheists were just as unwelcome as the religious zealot.

With this outlook it is understandable that Jansenism, that austere Catholic counterpart of Calvinism, would not have much success with the Honnête Homme. It allowed no compromise with a worldly life and held as sinful a social code which excluded whatever was not agreable. Developing its doctrine of the "élu" alongside the indulgent Jesuit one of good works, Jansenism had a reverse effect on the worldly court. If certain ones were chosen arbitrarily by God to be saved, and man could do nothing about this choice, why worry about working for possible salvation?

The Jesuits, on the other hand, made religion less demanding in order not to discourage anyone or compromise their authority. "L'essentiel était d'accomplir les devoirs extérieurs de la religion, d'en porter les insignes, d'en pratiquer les rites."[60] They were more successful with the aristocrats because this kind of religion could be accepted by Méré and later by Saint-Evremond as an aid to happiness and peace of mind, advantages arrived at by being a true "habile homme."

The question of sincerity is an important one. Court poets were writing to please the king, and others, who wanted to earn a living by their poetry, had to find a nobleman who would pay them for it. Subjects for their poetry were thus already chosen. The king might want to

celebrate a victory in war, a noble might call for a love poem to present to a woman he was courting, and the poet must supply poems to meet the demand. It is not surprising that these poems lacked the feeling and lyricism of emotions felt at first hand. Adam points out that most of the poetry written around 1600 was in the service of the established Church and of a traditional monarchy. A little later, the indifference of the court to poetry forced the poets to find a patron among the aristocracy who rescued them from a miserable life "au prix de leur liberté."[61] They made poetry in accepted patterns for an aristocratic protector and employer who himself was likely to want only banal and overused forms which suited the average sentiments of the time. "Pour Ronsard la poésie est un sacerdoce, pour le XVIIe siècle, c'est un métier."[62] This aristocracy was sometimes more indifferent to religious demands than the court, as in the case of Gaston. Even so, innovations were not likely, and personal feelings of the poet were largely stifled in writing at the command of someone else.

How much the sincerity of the artist was compromised by this writing-to-order is a problem. We do know that the idea of a beautiful poem or play included both Pagan and Christian, Baroque and Classical decoration and subject. Does Tristan enjoy this mixture and find it beautiful without much discrimination, or does he finally

resolve it into a coherent philosophy of what is beautiful and what is true? The Church insisted that the underlying convictions of the artist be Christian. He could decorate with mythology if he must, or use an Antique setting for a Christian drama, but the outcome must suit a Christian orthodox interpretation of truth. Most poets tried to meet this demand and indulge the tastes of their mécène at the same time. It was a difficult role to fill.

The poet and the dramatist were joined by the novelist in searching for new forms to fit new tastes. D'Urfé had written L'Astrée following the pattern of the Spanish Diana of Montmayor, but the mixture of poetry and anecdote in this French pastoral was not cohesive enough to set the example for the later realistic novels of Sorel and Scarron. Tristan's one novel, Le Page disgracié, is in the tradition of these last two. The page is not from the lower classes and he is never really starving, but he must live by his wits and this novel shares the amoral tone of the Spanish picaresque. If the hero is virtuous, will he be rewarded? Not at all. Can he pray to a powerful God and be delivered? That never enters his mind. Is there a lesson to be drawn? Certainly not a moral one. This hero is left to look after himself in a world without rules.

Ideas of reading pleasure handed down from the previous century include this example of religious indifference. While the picaresque hero does not worship heathen gods, neither does he pay any attention to a Christian one. For

him, God may be somewhere off in heaven, but he does not govern destiny. Finally, this kind of novel makes no effort at moral instruction. It is worth including as a possible father to Tristan's more aristocratic interpretation of the homeless wanderer alone in a world where good and evil have little meaning.

Influences abroad in the literary world during Tristan's lifetime were often contradictory. A summing up would show this period as one of conflict between Renaissance Paganism and a militant seventeenth century Catholicism, between delight in excess and insistance on restraint. The theater evolved from the freedom of the ballet de cour, the pastorale, and the tragi-comédie, to the restrictions of Aristotle's unities in the tragedies. The earlier Baroque flavor of court entertainment and the later submission of this decoration to the subject of a tragedy came to France by way of Italy. There was some influence from Spain, the comedias of Lope de Vega in the theater and the picaresque tale as a very early short novel, but this influence was not nearly as important as that of the Renaissance flooding in from Italy. What was considered beautiful in literature was expressed by Malherbe, an early voice of Classicism. In court poetry, form must match the measured tone of poésie de circonstance written to exalt and celebrate Louis XIII. The lyricism of Ronsard, stemming from a fundamental enthusiasm for life, was muted as Malherbe denounced the decorative excesses of Pléiade poetry.

Tristan was to feel the impact of all these influences for he wrote in the three major genres--theater, poetry, prose. The Counter-Reformation was absorbed into various attitudes toward the Church, and Tristan probably reflected many of these since his literary work is so varied. It is important to remember that the poets, especially, living as they did in an authoritarian century and gaining a livelihood in the service of the king or the aristocracy, had to use forms and subjects which were popular. In this, Tristan was representative of his period. He used the standard decorations of mythology and the images of the Italian Naturists, neither of which was Christian imagery. Did he do this, as many of his contemporaries did, to suit the styles of the day in his dependance on the aristocracy for a livelihood? Or did he do it more than was necessary because of a personal preference for images which carried with them a surprising indifference to the warnings of the Church? In looking for answers in his work, we will be dealing with a poet who lived in a period when "on y changeait de maître, et de convictions, avec une désinvolture que nous avons aujourd'hui quelque peine à concevoir."[63]

NOTES

[1] Maurice Magendie, La Politesse mondaine et les théories de l'honnêteté en France, au XVIIe siècle, de 1600 à 1660 (Paris: Alcan, 1925), p. 53.

[2] Raymond Lebègue, Malherbe et son temps, Vol. II of La Poésie française de 1560 à 1630 (Paris: SEDES, 1951), p. 126.

[3] Magendie, p. 7.

[4] Ibid., p. 19.

[5] Ibid., p. 44.

[6] Ibid., p. 47.

[7] Ibid., p. 61.

[8] Ibid., p. 8.

[9] Raymond, Baroque et renaissance poétique, p. 53.

[10] This love of magic also existed in religious plays during the first part of the century. La Conversion du Saint, given at the Jesuit college of Pont-à-Mousson, presented the face of Saint Ignace changing into a tower from which flew fireworks. He descended from the sky in another episode and set ablaze more fireworks.

[11] Jean Rousset, La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France. Circé et le paon. 4th ed. (Paris: Corti, 1968), p. 33.

[12] Ibid., p. 34.

[13] Magendie, p. 119.

[14] These fools sometimes were spokesmen for the author who wanted to hide dangerous thoughts by putting them in the mouth of a person who would not be taken seriously.

[15] Rousset, p. 55.

[16] Ibid., p. 60

[17] René Bray, La Formation de la doctrine classique en France (1927, rpt. Paris: Nizet, 1951), p. 37.

[18] Gustave Lanson, "Esquisse d'une histoire de la tragédie française," Studies in Romance Philology and Literature, 27 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 10.

[19] Ibid., p. 12.

[20] Adam, Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIe siècle, I, 313.

[21] Rousset, La Littérature de l'âge baroque, p. 76.

[22] Bray, La Formation de la doctrine classique, p. 51.

[23] Ibid., p. 56.

[24] Ibid., p. 61.

[25] Rousset, p. 230.

[26] Napoléon-M. Bernardin, Un Précurseur de Racine; Tristan L'Hermite, Sieur du Solier (1601-1655), sa famille, sa vie, ses oeuvres (Paris: Picard, 1895), p. 339.

[27] Jacques Morel, "Les Stances dans la tragédie," XVIIe Siècle, 66-67 (1965), 53.

[28] Odette de Mourgues, Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 112.

[29] Thierry Maulnier, ed., Poètes précieux et baroques du XVIIe siècle (Angers: Petit, 1941), p. XV.

30 Raymond, Baroque et renaissance poétique, p. 58.

31 De Mourgues, p. 32.

32 Rousset, p. 148.

33 Lebègue, pp. 53-54.

34 Ibid., p. 127.

35 Terence C. Cave, Devotional Poetry in France c. 1570-1613 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 299.

36 Bray, p. 170.

37 Ibid., p. 299.

38 Ibid., p. 290.

39 Rousset, p. 200.

40 Lebègue, p. 73.

41 Adam, Histoire, I, 16.

42 Magendie, p. 197.

43 Ibid., p. 237.

44 Reynold, p. 51.

45 Adam, Histoire, I, 6-7.

46 Lebègue, p. 46.

47 Raymond Picard, "Aspects du lyrisme religieux au XVIIe siècle," XVIIe Siècle, 66-69 (1965), 66.

48 Ibid., p. 60.

[49] Ibid., p. 61.

[50] Rousset, p. 94.

[51] Ibid., p. 103.

[52] Ibid., p. 110.

[53] Raymond Lebègue, "Quelques thèmes de la poésie au XVIIe siècle," XVIIe Siècle, 66-69 (1965), 67.

[54] Lebègue also points out the importance of the theme of the repentant Mary Magdalene in the literature of the period which produced "une poésie ornée de tous les clinquants baroques et qui, malgré les pieuses intentions des auteurs, laisse une impression trouble." p. 12.

[55] L. Maurice-Amour, "Parodies pieuses d'airs profanes au XVIIe siècle," Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, 12 (May 1960), 19.

[56] Ibid., p. 24.

[57] Picard, p. 60.

[58] Magendie, p. 401.

[59] Ibid., p. 396.

[60] Ibid., p. 539.

[61] Adam, Histoire, I, 26.

[62] Bray, p. 25.

[63] Carriat, L'Eloge d'un poète, p. 71.

III.

THE POETRY

In the early 1620's, after spending some time in the presence of kings and princes at the royal court, Tristan began to frequent the world of poets and actors in Paris. Here he passed his time with men such as Théophile, Saint-Amant, and Hardy. His first poems were in praise of the dramatist and appeared as liminary verses at the beginning of two volumes of Hardy's Théâtre, published in 1625 and 1626. Admiration is expressed in Pagan terms; the "langage des dieux" is communicated to man by a poet whose art is sublime, "que les humains ne sauraient égaler."[1]

This poet is a mediator between the gods and man, and he is exceptional because of his many verses which spring from a source more inexhaustible than the eternally flowing stream. Tristan demands from other men not mere acceptance or admiration, but idolatry for Hardy and for all poets:

> C'est trop d'ingratitude à cet âge où nous sommes,
> Qu'on n'ait point éleué l'image en mille lieux
> D'un, qui parlant si bien le langage des Dieux,
> Le vint communiquer à la race des hommes.[2]

The poem continues to a climax in which the poet becomes divine in an almost Christian sense, replacing the statues of saints or of the Virgin as easily as Pagan ones:

> Toy, qui portes les yeux sur ce sacré Mystère
> Contemple avec respect vn si saint monument,
> Et scache ateint d'enuie ou bien d'étonement,
> Qu'il faut, à son aspect, adorer & se taire.[3]

Tristan's verses abound in words that imply or suggest a worship of poetry almost identical to the worship of God. On the surface his frame of reference is Pagan, he says that poetic inspiration comes from Apollo, and he refers to the gods and not to one supreme God. The poet as interpreter of divine truth or beauty is a Pagan concept expressing the idea that beauty is divine. But a Christian parallel keeps asserting itself. Christ as intercessor between God and sinful man is used again and again in the religious poetry of the period. Man's desire to escape death and find an ultimate immortality was imagined as an earth-heaven opposition by the Ancients long before Christianity, but the newer religion replaced the worship of beauty with duty to a Christian concept of God, an obedience to a higher will. The Pagan idea that man became immortal by the beauty he created--for the poet this was poetry-- and thus immortalized the object of his creation, was replaced by an immortality gained by Christian good works or by the grace or generosity of God toward a chosen few who must be Christian. There is no hint of such a theological concept of immortality in these two early poems of Tristan; they are purely Renaissance and Pagan. There is no concern with good or evil; the poet's value lies in his ability to create for us a divine experience of unequaled beauty, a beauty heretofore possessed only by the gods.

And yet the suggestion of a Christian orientation is there in the words the poet uses, words used often in seventeenth-century Catholic poetry--"divinement," "démon," "aveu éternel," "sacré mystère," "saint." The phrase "adorer et se taire" evokes the atmosphere of a church. In their attitude the poems are Pagan, but the expression of this attitude betrays a Christian influence.

The second of these two liminary poems, written in 1626, again exalts Hardy, "un des Dieux de vostre métier," but the influence of the Italian Naturist poet, Marino, seems more marked. To the image of the running stream of the first poem, which illustrates the poet's fecundity, is added that of the rocks, so charmed by the rhythm of the verses that they begin to move in time with it. From an adulation of the poet, Tristan now turns to the fascination of Nature, a living Nature, expressed in the sensual images of the Italian poets. The fame of the poet is compared to the light of the sun, "On ne saurait voir d'ombre en une renommée/ Aussy claire que le soleil."[4] In a recent study, Jean Rousset has pointed out that in the imagery of the religious poets of the time, the sun represented the pure brilliance of God. From Les Tragiques of D'Aubigné, he cites this passage:

> Dieu paraît, le nuage entre lui et nos yeux
> S'est tiré à l'écart, il est armé de feux . . .
> L'air n'est plus que rayons, tant il est semé d'anges.
> Tout l'air n'est qu'un soleil![5]

For Tristan, however, the sun is an image of immortal fame for the poet who creates a sublime beauty in his poetry.

He worships the beauty of Hardy's poetry with almost the same fervor that D'Aubigné gives to God. His attempt to put it in a Pagan framework and thus to be innocent of sacrilege. (or if it be sacrilege, at least one forgivable still for poets), does not entirely succeed. The images are now also a part of a Christian vocabulary. We are left with the puzzle of a strange mixture of tone that does not resolve itself either into Christian or Pagan poetry.

Tristan praised the poetic dramas of Hardy as "vers si doux & si puissans" and as having "mille charmes rauissans."[6] This lyricism was being championed by Régnier and Théophile, and there were others who disagreed with Malherbe's reduction of the poet's role to mere craftsmanship. But seldom at this time do we find expressed in poetry this adoration of the poet as a creator of divine beauty. Tristan places this beauty at the very top of any hierarchy of values. Gonzague de Reynold has pointed out that the purpose of the Counter-Reformation was to establish finally the domination of Christianity over a Pagan love of beauty. "Le principe du partage était excellent, au Christianisme la vérité, aux anciens la beauté."[7] In answer to this, Tristan was saying with the English romantic Keats that truth IS beauty and thus establishes the supremacy of the Pagan philosophy and aesthetic over a Christian one.

"Ode à M Chaudebonne," though it did not appear in print until later, was written at about the same time as these liminary verses, and it reflected Tristan's growing

belief that his destiny was going to be unhappy and unjust. It is an abrupt change from the optimistic mood of his poems in praise of Hardy. Chaudebonne, an important member of Gaston's entourage, was asked by the poet to do what he could to reinstate Tristan in the good graces of the Prince. The enthusiasm of the young poet has been dampened and he finds fate unfriendly. The heavens are angry, destiny is determined to harass him, and the powerful stars threaten his hopes:

> Si ces Astres dont l'influance
> Preside à mes prosperitez
> Raidissent leurs severitez
> Contre ma petite esperance . . .[8]

He will retire to the "vieilles tours" of the Château de Solier where he finds comfort for an exile he does not deserve. The Pagan personifications, Bacchus and Ceres, celebrate an ample harvest of grapes and wheat, and this bounty of Nature will comfort him, for it is Nature who heals the sadness of a fate decreed by cruel stars, and the memory of her beauty will later sustain him against every injustice his destiny can bring.

Mixed with the mythological allusions is the Précieux description of Nature as the gold of the sun, the silver of water, the "émail fleuri" of the countryside:

> L'Aurore avecques ses habits
> Dont les Saphirs et les Rubis
> Tenterent l'ame de Cephale,
> Et l'Iris offrant à mes yeux,
> Un Arc des couleurs de l'Opale
> M'offrent tous les thresors des Cieux.[9]

Tristan's colors are pleasure and decoration--a Nature of

physical beauty. Night is quiet, cool, refreshing in his pastoral retreat. In the woods are shepherds who "sous l'amoureux servage" come to be comforted by the music of a thousand birds and the sound of waterfalls. In praising Hardy, he was telling us about the immortality of poetry. In this poem he is finding a subject worthy of divine expression, the natural world, source of ultimate beauty for Antiquity and for the Pléiade poets as well as for the Naturists. His attitude reflects the indifference of Précieux society to the Christian emphasis on an unseen world of the spirit.

Thus we have two basic attitudes establishing themselves very early. First, Tristan believes that the poet is superior in his intuition of "le langage des dieux" He translates for others a higher beauty and is worthy of a superior place, perhaps even of worship. Secondly, the source and inspiration for this beauty is Nature herself. Healing in her beauty, Nature can also be destructive, for she is providence, and it is within the globe of the natural universe that one finds the destiny of all human life.

Tristan's allusion to the unfriendliness of the stars is not just a literary convention, it is bound up with the Pagan worship of Nature as prime source. These ideas could be thought of as anti-Christian, reflecting Stoicism in a pride in human accomplishment and Naturism in the enormous prestige of Nature and in Tristan's belief in an inescapable

human fate decided at birth by the position of the stars. As these attitudes accommodate themselves to the resurgent Catholic Church, we will see a body of work which is a mixture of Christian and Pagan influences. For the moment, however, Tristan is not thinking of compromise.

His next poem is "La Mer," published in 1627, and it is a hymn to the healing power of Nature in the face of death. He wrote it on his return from a battle against the Protestants in which his friend, Maricour, was killed. This poem expresses the importance of Nature in his work. He is indeed "un poète à part, quant à ses poèmes sur les beautés de la nature."[10] The sea is a living thing with human characteristics and magnified to describe a cosmic force that demands much more than a scientific explanation of its splendor. In Nature lay all the potential for life and movement. The poet found his imagery and metaphor in her beauty.

It was the task of the Church to replace this Pagan worship of Nature with a worship of the abstract concept of God. The ideal of beauty became suspect and was replaced by a set of Christian values. Goodness replaced beauty as expression of perfection. To accomplish this change of priority, the Church set about driving a wedge between man and the rest of Nature, setting him apart by proclaiming for him an immortal soul and by according ultimate power to a God who cared little for beauty and earthly accomplishment. Man was not Nature's child

but God's. He was to exchange enjoyment of tangible, earthly beauty for a desire for piety and goodness.

In this Christian philosophy, Nature and physical beauty seemed unimportant, even dangerous, to the austere task of preparing for an eternity which would endure long after immediate physical beauty had disappeared. Poets of the metaphysical did make a special poetic expression of this unseen God and heavenly paradise, but this is not the spirit of Tristan's early poetry.[11] Here the poet looks for beauty in the physical world around him, and, finding it, makes it immortal by his poetry. This outlook is as Pagan as is the exaltation of the poet, for it sees physical beauty and life on this earth as more important than a renunciation of immediate pleasure for a spiritual after-life and a forsaking of natural beauty for a mystical sorting out of good versus evil with a reward to come.

Nature was acceptable for the Church only as she was subordinated to God and reflected his power.[12] The elements could no longer act independently but only as an expression of Him. Yet the sea of Tristan's poetry is never a reflection of divine will, it is alive with a personality and power of its own. The waves "s'enflent d'orgueil" and "se viennent crever de rage."[13] The winds join the sea in its angry mood, "les vents séditieux,/ Pour éteindre les feux célestes/ Portent l'eau jusques dans les cieux," and as the sea calmes, the wind "qui

murmuroit si haut,/ Tient maintenant la bouche close/ De peur d'éveiller en sursaut/ La divinité qui repose" (p. 59). The poet does not see its beauty as a reflection of God's perfection. Instead, he has painted the sea with all the qualities of man, hiding in its moving, willful depths the gods of Antiquity.

His poetic conception of Nature is immediate--that is, it appeals to the senses, a painting to dazzle the eyes, of "gouffres" and "précipices," of "montagnes liquides,"[14] which are sometimes described as "longs plis de verre ou d'argent" (p. 61). Calm, the face of the sea changes in the light of the sun:

> Mais les flots de vert émaillez
> Qui semblent des jaspes taillez,
> S'entredérobent son visage,
> Et par de petits tremblements
> Font voir au lieu de son image
> Mille pointes de diamants. (p. 59).

Sounds of the sea are important for the description, "la mer fait un si grand bruit/ Qu'elle en assourdit tout le monde./ La foudre éclate incessament . . ." (p. 63).

This constant appeal to the senses is not in itself Pagan, but it is nowhere linked to a realization that God, unseen, lies beyond. The poem is not intellectual, it has no moral, and it has none of the metaphysical conflict between things seen and unseen. Its images are immediate and sensual and that is all. Nature's magnificence has a power to heal and comfort even the terrible loss of death. It is to Nature that Tristan goes for comfort after the death

of his friend Maricour, for she too feels sorrow, "La nature qui s'ennuye/ Se va quelque part décharger/ De sa tristesse avec la pluye" (p. 61).

In considering the death of sailors, Tristan suggests that something may lie beyond what we can see which di-r- rects the affairs of men, but this power is never named and cannot save or even comfort the men at the mercy of an immense and angry sea. The pilot of a ship, looking toward heaven, sees only a sky "tout tendu de dueil,/ Il croit voir des flambeaux funebres/ Allumez dessus son cercueil" (pp. 63-64). Nothing can save these men from "l'eau cruelle." Cries go unheeded and they drown. No power or authority imposes itself on the will of the sea.

Christian doctrine offered comfort in the face of death and promised that another world would follow this one. This certainty of immortality does not now interest Tristan nearly as much as the chaos created in the lives of men by the sea itself. Far from longing for assurance, he relishes the movement and instability of Nature. He likes disorder and uncertainty. This "universelle instabilité"[15] delighted the Baroque poets. The shudder was delicious when they wrote of cruel and capricious Nature.

"La Mer" is in every sense a Pagan poem. It exalts Nature, crowning her as creator of the sea, "N'est-ce pas un des beaux objets/ Qu'ait jamais formé la nature?" (p. 57). It exalts her beauty and finds in it a source of wonder and consolation.

In the same year, 1627, Tristan published one of his Vers du Balet.[16] Its insolent verses were enough to confirm the worst fears of Father Caussin about the self-indulgent libertines. Lines written for a "Ronge bon temps" show contempt for the King and the future of France:

> Il ne m'importe pas d'un double
> Quel bruit coure par la cité,
> Si l'estat doit avoir du trouble
> Ou bien de la necessité.
> Soit que nous ayons paix, ou guerre,
> Pourueu qu'on remplisse mon verre,
> Et que je despouille un jambon;
> En passant ainsi mes années,
> Je fais la nique aux destinées,
> Et trouve que le temps est bon. (p. 14)

Death is scoffed at in still other verses written for a "Monsieur de Bouteuile":

> Nay sous la planette de Mars,
> Ma valeur qui n'est pas commune,
> Se moque de tous les hasars,
> Et fait la moüe à la Fortune.
> . . . . . .
> Mon courage brave le Sort;
> Et fermant la bouche à l'enuie,
> Deffend aux cizeaux de la mort,
> De toucher au fil de ma vie. (pp. 14-15)

In these early poems, the young poet is either occupied in playing the carefree nobleman, or marveling at physical beauty and powerful Nature. At his most serious, Tristan praises the lasting qualities of poetic imagery. He is not concerned with his immortal soul as it is defined by the Church. But traces of Christian influence are already present in poetic expression, especially in the liminary verses praising Hardy.

Les Pleintes d'Acante et Autres Oeuvres du Sr de Tristan[17] were published in Antwerp in 1633, the first collection of Tristan's poetry. The title poem is based on Ovid's Metamorphoses, and in writing it Tristan linked Classical and Pagan literature to the seventeenth-century poetic conventions of Préciosité. The primary source was Ovid, but the poem shows the influence of the Italian poets of the late sixteenth century and of D'Urfé's L'Astrée, that elaborate manifesto for all of the century's literature. Carriat points out that even six years earlier, in "La Mer," Tristan was out of step with general trends in continuing to use the Classical pastoral setting and mythology so extensively. Unlike other poets, "Il ne s'est pas encore débarrassé d'encombrantes allusions mythologiques."[18]

Tristan's Acante is a shepherd in the tradition of both the Metamorphoses and L'Astrée. But while Celadon, D'Urfé's hero, has certain spiritual, even Christian, traits, Acante is frankly Pagan and suffers from a profane love. The setting is made up of Pagan elements, a forest of great natural beauty is the home for satyrs, nymphs, gods and goddesses, and Acante sits beside a brook deep in the woods when he makes his complaints against a heartless mistress.

Tristan embellished his long poem with annotations of myths of love among the gods largely from Ovid, but also from Virgil's Aeneid.[20] His version of love is sensual, and pleasure comes from seeing, hearing, and touching. Since Nature provides a visible and palpable setting, it can be used to create the sensual atmosphere in which love flowers.[21] We hear Nature: "Un iour que le Printemps rioit entre les fleurs" (p. 11); we feel the warmth of the season and of the sun as Acante speaks: "Tu dispenses par tout la chaleur & la vie" (p. 1), and later the breeze cools the flowers under "l'ardeur du soleil" (p. 2). Offering to his mistress all of the pleasures of Nature's feast, he reminds us that it is summer, the most fecund of seasons:

> Une table de marbre où ie vais me mirer
> Alors que ie n'ay pas le visage si blesme,
> Quand la chaleur seroit extresme,
> Si vous vouliez venir y manger de la cresme
> Et des fraises, que cherement
> Ie ne fais conserver que pour vous seulement. (p. 13)

We taste these delicious fruits of Nature, "La prune au ius r'afraischissant" and "le jaune arbricot au goût si ravissant" (p. 11). The odor of flowers is everywhere, "La, parmy des Iasmins dressez confusement,/ Et dont le doux esprit à toute heure s'exhale" (p. 11).

The poet now links these sensual delights of Nature to those of his mistress.[22] Her beauty is like Nature's and just as irresistible. She might well be mistaken by the bees for a flower:

Vous auriez les visage & le sein tous voilez,
Pour les considerer avec plus d'asseurance:
Car paroissans des lys à des roses meslez,
Les abeilles par inocence
Pourroient bien se tromper à cette ressemblance,
Et sans crainte de trop oser
Vous faire quelqu'iniure en venant vous baiser. (p. 18)

Sylvie's eyes, "deux soleils," create the same heat and radiance as the sun:

Vos yeux qui l'anceroient des feux de tous costez
Leur feroient aussi tost entre'ouvrir la paupiere;
Et voyant tout à coup luyre tant de clartez,
Cela leur donneroit matiere
De croire qu'en voulant gouverner la lumiere,
Quelqu'autre ieune audacieux
Dans le char du Soleil seroit tombé des Cieux. (p.20)

Her golden hair, praised in the sonnet "Les Cheveux blonds," radiates light and warmth:

Clairs rayons d'un Soleil, douce & subtile trame
Dont la molle estandue a des ondes de flame
Où l'Amour mille fois a noyé ma raison. (p. 64)

The flawless skin is a match for the pure white of milk:

Et vos yeux . . . . . .
Pourroient confronter à souhait
La blancheur de vos mains avec celle du lait! (p. 14)

This comparison of human beauties to natural ones leads to a mingling and a relationship of man and Nature of the closest kind; Nature infuses man and man becomes part of Nature. By a magical metamorphosis, they become one. Acante is like a rock in his sorrow, and lovers become flowers:

Ie vous pourrois monstrer si vous veniez un iour
En un parc qu'icy prez depuis peu i'ay fait clore,
Mille Amans transformez, qui des lois de l'Amour,
Sont passez sous celles de Flore:
Ils ont pour aliment les l'armes de l'Aurore.
Dieux! que ne suis-ie entre ces fleurs
Si vous devez un iour m'aroser de vos pleurs! (p. 9)

The metamorphosis is not so complete in reverse. Nature herself does not assume human form, but she does take on human qualities. Listening to Philomele sing the beauties of his Dame, "Les arbres les plus droicts se courbent pour l'entendre;/ Un Ruisseau qui l'escoute en areste son cours/ Et pres de luy se va répandre" (p. 16).[23] Acante goes into the woods to pour out his complaints against the coldness of Sylvie and to find comfort for his broken heart. Nature, like a very good friend, is capable of giving it:

> Aussi tout est sensible à mon affliction;
> Là-bas dedans ces prez l'herbe en est presque morte:
> Ces troncs ne sont sechez que de compassion
> Des desplaisirs que ie suporte.
> Les vents en sont muets, & d'une aymable sorte,
> Echo tasche à m'en consoler
> En chaque solitude où ie vay luy parler. (p. 28)

There are striking examples of this shared identity in "Le Promenoir des Deux Amans." A fawn is capable of love; a Nayad, half human, half fish, dreams in the waters of a stream; an old oak can suffer like a human:

> Ce vieux chesne a des marques saintes;
> Sans doute qui le couperoit,
> Le sang chaud en découleroit
> Et l'arbre pousseroit des plaintes. (p. 76)

For Tristan, man and Nature are inseparable. Each reflects itself in the other and both share the same sensual characteristics. This unity of creation has a single author, Nature herself, that divine goddess of Cyrano and the source of all life for Théophile:

> Dieux! le portrait d'Iris est si beau qu'on l'admire,
> Mais la Nature en elle a voulu surpasser
> Tout ce qu'on peut penser & tout ce qu'on peut dire.
> (n.p.)

It is Nature who creates the rare beauty of Iris, a beauty which shares the characteristics of the natural world, but which is more dazzling than any of Nature's other creations. This physical beauty surpasses even the most perfect flowers, even the brilliance of sun and stars:

> Tout ce qui peut plaire à nos yeux,
> L'Aurore, le Soleil, les Cieux;
> L'or, les Perles, les lys, les roses,
> L'email du Printemps le plus dous,
> Bref, toutes les plus belles choses,
> Ne sont point si belles que vous. (p. 129)

So close was this bond in many hearts that Nature became not only a source of beauty and delight, but a comforter in affliction. The poet, preferring to be alone with his sorrow, often found consolation in the solitude of the forest and not in the church. "Théophile va dans les bois nourrir sa mélancolie, bercer les rêves tristes qui ne le quittent pas. . . . Et d'autres noms viennent à la pensée, de Tristan jusqu'à La Fontaine. Tous des Libertins. Est-ce un hasard? Déjà Mersenne avait, dans le goût de la solitude, dénoncé une des marques certaines du libertin."[24]

In this adoration of Nature, Tristan was defying the absolute authority of the Church over man's priorities. To put physical beauties before spiritual ones was to deny the supreme importance of saving man's soul. It was to perpetuate and continue the harmful influence of the Renaissance. Sylvie herself reflects this heritage:

> Vous aviez sur la teste un chapeau retroussé
> Où deux roses pendoient avec leur tige verte;
> Vous teniez vers l'espaule un bras tout renversé,
> Vostre gorge estoit decouverte

Sur qui deux monts de neige animez pour ma perte,
Ne vous soufrent de respirer
Que par des mouvements qui me font soupirer. (p.30)

She inspires a consuming passion in Acante by her beautiful eyes, snow-white hands and breasts, long golden hair, and a complexion like roses.

Although Acante reacts wholeheartedly to these attractions, there is in him another element peculiarly suitable to Tristan's time. It is not Christian, but neither is it sensual. He points out to his mistress that he is not an unworthy suitor, he has qualities of spirit that make him desirable. He is not the son of a lowly shepherd but of a courageous father, famed for his skill at hunting, a warrior who had not only guarded his fields from wild animals, but "combatant pour sauver, avec nos pasturages/ La liberté de nos Autelz;/ Il acquit en mourant, des honneurs immortelz" (p. 4). Acante has followed in his father's footsteps "où la Gloire m'appelle" (p. 5), and he recognizes "l'honneur d'estre né genereux" (p. 8). "Gloire," "Honneur," and "Générosité" were words which represented a whole outlook on life in 1633. Their appearance in Tristan's poem is important; this is the vocabulary of Corneille and of Descartes. These words were often heard in the salons and at the court. Linked to Christian doctrine, they reflected religious ideals; interpreted in a secular sense, they still represented an

ideal of man removed from the pure enjoyment of the senses. Developing this Stoic tendency in another poem, "Inquietudes," Tristan makes a case for reason:

> Apres tant de vives douleurs,
> Apres tant de sang & de pleurs
> Que i'ay versez dessus ma flame;
> De livrer encore mon Ame
> Au pouvoir de ma passion?
>
> O prudent et forte Raison
> Qui m'as tiré d'une prison
> Où ie respendois tant de larmes:
> Ie n'ay recours qu'à ta bonté,
> Vueille encore prendre les armes
> Pour deffendre ma liberté. (p. 89)

In Tristan's time, Descartes proposed reason as a solution to all uncertainties and insisted that it was the very quality which separated man from the lower animals. Even more audaciously, he claimed that a reasonable man would automatically believe in God. Corneille, too, was convinced that by reason man could arrive at a knowledge of divine mysteries. While reason, for Tristan, seems to have been a philosophical and not a religious idea (the connection is never directly made between the two), it is a step away from the purely sensual Naturism of some of his work and it is perhaps an admission that the mind might discover Descartes' comforting absolutes and be free of the flux and uncertainty of passion.

Inserted in this first collection is only one sonnet in which Tristan faces directly the possibility of a supreme spiritual God who would replace Nature as comforter and who would succeed where reason had failed. This sonnet, "l'Amour Divin," follows soon after a madrigal, "Sur l'Incredulité de . . .," which reflects the same convention of

love as Les Plaintes d'Acante. But here Tristan cautions against this dangerous passion and wants to avoid it:

> Mon ame, esveille toy du dangereux sommeil
> Qui te pourroit conduire en des nuits eternelles:
> Et chassant la vapeur qui couure tes prunelles,
> Ne pren plus desormais l'ombre pour le Soleil. (p. 110)

The poet makes more precise his complaint against sensual pleasure and speaks of a higher beauty:

> Ne croy plus de tes sens le perfide Conseil,
> C'est assez adorer des obiets infidelles:
> Servons à l'avenir des beautez immortelles,
> Que l'on treuve tousiours en un estat pareil. (p. 110)

For the first time the poet seems to long for stability and order in his Baroque world of inconstancy and change:

> Aymons l'Autheur du monde, il est sans inconstance,
> Sa bonté pour nos voeux n'a point de resistance,
> Nous pouuons en secret luy parler nuit & jour. (p. 110)

Here is a clear contrast between an earthly physical love and a higher spiritual fidelity to God, constant in His goodness and always ready to hear our prayers:

> Il cognoist nostre ardeur & nostre inquietude,
> Et ne reçoit iamais de trais de nostre amour
> Pour les recompenser de trais d'ingratitude. (p. 110)

It is strange to find this one sonnet among so many praising "Les Cheveux blonds," "Les Tourmens agreables," and together in the same collection with the "Plaintes d'Acante." Is it an isolated example, written perhaps for someone who preferred a more serious kind of poetry? Not precisely Christian, it is nevertheless still further removed from the spiritual indifference of the other poems. It hints at a possible Christian acceptance of a supreme father who comforts his mortal children, hears their prayers, and promises them life instead of oblivion.

There are further contradictions when we consider "Consolation à Idalie," in which destiny is still the antique Parque, "suiette à la Fatalité,/ Ayant les yeux bandez et l'oreille fermée" (p. 73). The only immortality Idalie can know is to live eternally in the poetry of her lover. Finally, the poet rejects the reality of another spiritual world and echoes Ronsard in praise of this one:

> Le Temps qui sans repos, va d'un pas si leger,
> Emporte avecque luy toutes les belles choses:
> C'est pour nous avertir de le bien mesnager
> Et faire des bouquets en la saison des roses.
> (p. 74)

Tristan is still the poet divided between Renaissance emphasis on this world, its sensuality and pleasure, and the newer Christian emphasis on renunciation of immediate pleasure in preparing for an eternal spiritual life after death. There are traces of Cornelian honor, and praise of reason, but the poet is a young man whose inspiration is love, and who sees it through aristocratic eyes. Passion rules, but its domination is not yet uncontrollable and fatal; it is rather a continuation of the ideal of courtly love with the modifications rather typical of the period. Only in the mythology does Tristan seem to hang behind his contemporaries in accepting new conventions for poetry.

In 1638, Tristan published Les Amours.[25] For this new collection he enlarged on the poems of the Plaintes d'Acante, changed some of them slightly, and added to them a number of new poems, for the most part sonnets and all on the subject of love. In four years the confident tone of the young poet had altered. In his Prelude, he asks for more than the approval from fellow aristocrats which he sought in the preface to the Plaintes. Now he wants friendship instead of honor, pity for his sad plight rather than envy of his poetic gifts. Back in Paris, separated temporarily from Gaston who had retired to Blois, Tristan did not occupy the same position as he had at the court at Brussels. He had had time to experience the uncertainty of being attached to the King's brother who was often in trouble with the King himself or with Richelieu, and involved in forbidden romances and accused of lèse-majesté. This protector of libertines was never very generous with money, and Tristan as his poète à gages must have been aware of the discrepancies between the real Gaston and that brave warrior and "demi-dieu" whom he praised in his poetry.

Though disappointed in this aspect of his career, Tristan was nevertheless enjoying some success with Précieux society. "La comtesse de Maure, Mme du Vigean et ses filles, Mlle de Choiseul, Mlle de Vertus, Mlle de

Chemerault reçurent tour à tour l'hommage de ses vers. Il devint l'ami de Voiture, le protégé de la princesse de Condé et de Mlle de Bourbon, sa fille, la future duchesse de Longueville."[26] Here, in that closed society, "où le plus souvent dominent les femmes du monde,"[27] Tristan's Renaissance concept of Nature hardened into the more polished metaphors of the salons--pearls, rubies, diamonds. His treatment of love drew closer to the cruel game which aristocratic women often played with their lovers.

In the first poem of Les Amours, Tristan recalls the battle of Troy, a favorite battle of Antiquity for the poets, but he passes quickly to the subject of love for he does not want to write of great battles or of heroic deeds as so many others had, but only of his personal suffering, his sadness and his passion, his devotion to his mistress, and the death caused by the loved one's cruelty. This sadness is closer to despair than was Acante's:

> Les violences du mal-heur
> Ne m'ont point laissé de chaleur,
> Et m'ont rendu l'humeur si noire
> Que ie ne trouue en ma memoire
> Que des Images de douleur. (p. 77)

The poet no longer looks for consolation but only the resignation that despair brings:

> Desespoir ie t'inuoque au fort de mes malheurs,
> Par ton secours fatal vien maintenant m'apprendre
> Comment on doit guerir d'incurables douleurs. (p. 64)

Mythological allusions here are not so much to romantic affairs between gods and goddesses as to the cruel

torments of a Tantalus or of a Prometheus. Love is the torment too painful to be borne for which he curses the gods:

> Aussi, Grands Dieux, n'attendez point de moi
> D'Autels, d'Encens, de respect, ny de foy
> Et doucement excusez ma furie
> Lorsqu'il aduient que ie vous iniurie. (p. 84)

The languorous warmth of summer no longer expresses the poet's passion, it is like the phoenix burned to ashes by the heat of the sun, his mistress. Or it is like a cool stream turned into a torment of fire:

> Ie trouue dans ce bain mille pointes de fer,
> Et ce qui fut naguere un Ciel pour Roselie
> Dés que i'y suis entré n'est plus rien qu'un Enfer.
> (p. 40)

The poet offers his mistress verses as proof of his devotion and contrasting with the flame of his love is the crimson of his blood:

> Ces vers sont de ma flame une preuve evidente,
> Et tous ces traits de pourpre en font voir la grandeur:
> Cruelle, touche les pour en sentir l'ardeur,
> Ceste escriture fume, elle est encore ardante.
> (p. 24)

The blood spreads into a pool, and his devotion becomes a fire which destroys all reason and will:

> Voy nâger dans le sang mes esprits desolez;
> Pour appaiser ta haine ils se sont immolez
> D'une devotion qui n'eut iamais d'exemple. (p. 24)

This complete devotion was part of the earlier love poetry in Les Plaintes, and there are still echoes of the courtly lover singing the importance of love, the beauty of his mistress, and his fidelity to her without the emphasis on pain and death:

Que i'aime à soupirer pour vous,
Et que ie tiens à plus de gloire
De mourir devant vos beaux yeux
Que de vivre avecque les Dieux. (p. 105)

Here death is simply a poetic abstraction which expresses his adoration, but just as the pleasant warmth of summer and sun has become the consuming heat of fire, so love turns to poison in sensual excess:

Voila l'aimable tour de son beau sein d'yvoire,
Voila son poil, son teint, sa bouche & ses beaux yeux,
Ces yeux dont les regards sans dessein m'ont fait boire
Un poison preferable au doux nectar des Dieux. (p. 45)

Such a poisonous love is the result of pleasure in physical perfection, and it neglects too often any real merit. Sometimes evil lies just beneath the beauty, "Les Roses qu'on y void dont i'estois amoureux,/ Couurent de leur esclat une noire vipere" (p. 23).

This poetry of love has lost its light lyrical tone, and destruction and death now seem the inevitable effect of passion which will not listen to reason. Sometimes the poet embraces his slavery, for example when he insists that "cette captivité me plaist," and when he is willing to "brusler tousiours" if he can receive the slightest favor from his lady. So dependant is he on his mistress that he would welcome any apocalyptic punishment rather than lose her:

Que la Terre s'escroulle & s'ouvre sur mes pas,
Q'un grand embrasement avance mon trespas,
Qu'un fleuve débordé promptement m'engloutisse.

Mais ne permettez pas ô iustes immortels!
Que par un changement, Clorinde me trahisse,
Et perde le respect qu'on doit à vos Autels.
(p. 48)

When independence is lost, so also is any personal pride or honor. In several poems the poet counsels his "beauty" to be unfaithful to a jealous husband and to enjoy illicit love with him:

> De moy ie ne le puis celer,
> Soupirant soubs sa tyrannie,
> Vous ne sçauriez vous consoler
> De sa fascheuse compagnie,
> Qu'en prenant un Amant discret,
> Qui soit sage & secret. (p. 109)

In "Les Fascheux obstacles," he places his own happiness over any right a husband might have to a faithful wife:

> N'eussions nous nul tesmoin qu'Amour
> Au plus solitaire seiour
> Dont toute clarte fust bannie;
> L'ombre de ce Monstre d'honneur
> Avec assez de tyrannie
> S'opposeroit à mon bon-heur. (p. 118)

The theme of the jealous husband had existed in French poetry for a long time, at least from the early Provençal "amor de lonh," and it enjoyed a new vogue in the aristocratic circles of Tristan's day. Love was not to be denied or interfered with by what was considered middle class morality. There were no guides to loyalty or honor outside the lovers themselves who were bent on personal pleasure.[28]

But passion must finally be thwarted, and the poet looks for the lost love in dreams. In this unreal world of sleep, love can at last find fulfillment. All the difficulties which have stood between the poet and his mistress disappear, and for a while he can forget himself in illusion. He knows these frail reflections of his desires are

lies, but he accepts them as his only happiness and pays the sacrifice of reason and reality, slipping into the coldness and shadows of unconsciousness which may lead to death. Speaking to this "fresle demon, morne Prince des Songes," he begs him to "vien me former un bien d'une vapeur" (p. 61). Sleep and dreams may offer him a vision of his mistress in all her beauty, and if he is allowed just to kiss her hands, he will gladly accept death:

> Mais dans l'ardeur dont ie les baiseray,
> Dans le transport où ie me treuueray,
> Dans le plaisir qui saisira mon Ame,
> Acheve ensemble & mon songe & ma trame:
> Divin Sommeil, durant cette douceur,
> Livre ma vie au pouvoir de ta Soeur:
> Et sans regret apres ceste adventure,
> I'iray du lict dedans la sepulture. (p. 91)

The poet of passion begs his mistress to release him from his pain by killing him, "Prend ce poignard, Clorinde & par ta cruauté/ Donne de ta clemence une preuve nouvelle." But Clorinde refuses so that he might suffer even more cruelly by staying alive:

> O Dieux! l'ingrat Obiect pour qui ie meurs d'amour
> Me refuse une mort quand ie la luy demande
> Pour m'en faire souffrir plus de mille en un jour.
> (p. 41)

Tristan now finds that death is the inevitable end to a one-sided passion which could not control itself by reason and restraint or by loyalty to spiritual values, nor could the lover find consolation in Nature as an earlier and happier Tristan had done in linking himself with the Renaissance. Love means death and there has been no possible escape from the very beginning, for the woman has willed it:

O que l'esprit de Silvie
Est cruel & decevant!
Ie voy bien qu'en la servant
Il faudra perdre la vie.
Pour monstrer que sous ses loix
La mort m'est toute certaine,
Elle me donne une chaine
Qui finist par une croix. (p. 145)

Tristan here uses a Christian symbol, the cross, to represent death, but in another poem, "Les Tristes considerations," his imagination takes a Pagan form, and life beyond the tomb is mythologically conceived:

Mais, helas! ie crains bien qu'un souuenir si beau
Me persecute encore au delà du tombeau
Poursuiuant mon esprit sur les riuages sombres;

Et qu'un esloignement m'afflige desormais,
Car de vous penser voir en l'Empire des Ombres,
Les Astres comme vous n'y descendent iamais. (p. 32)

In this despair at separation, Tristan touches on the most important metaphysical question of his time. Does man dare hope that he is immortal? Can he be reunited with loved ones after death? What philosophy or religion could possible overcome the threat of extinction? What god was powerful enough to direct human destiny and satisfy man's spiritual longings?

There are times when Tristan seems certain that Nature is all powerful, and that she manifests her power over man by the stars or by elements and plants. He finds a secret order in her known only to poetic and non-Christian gods, a law of cause and effect and a series of steps, linked one to the other, in Nature's creation:

O Grands Esprits qui de toutes les choses
Sçavez si bien les effets & les causes,
Qui discernez les diuers mouuements

Par qui les Cieux meslent les Elemens,
Et connoissant la secrette enchaisneure
De tous les corps qui sont en la Nature,
Quand il vous plaist pouvez à vostre gré
Choisir un Astre en un certain degré
Dont la figure emprainte en une pierre,
Peut dissiper ou la peste, ou la guerre:
Soyez un peu touchez de ma douleur
Et par pitie dissipez mon mal-heur. (p. 87)

In all of Les Amours, this is the most direct explanation of the workings of the universe, but it does not satisfy the longing for immortality and the reluctance to leave a loved one behind. Allusions to the Christian cross do occur among poems praising Nature and others which insist that beautiful poetry has its own timelessness, a sufficient immortality to satisfy any man.

But this limited immortality could not satisfy the poet entirely. The collection closes with a philosophical sonnet which proclaims the vanity of this world, and Tristan makes it clear that the kind of love he has described is not enough:

Après servir long temps une ingratte Maistresse,
Qu'on ne peut acquérir, qu'on ne peut obliger;
Ou qui d'un naturel inconstant & léger,
Donne fort peu de ioye & beaucoup de tristesse.
(p. 213)

The world of noblemen for which he has written and which he has admired for so long seems unimportant as death approaches:

Cabaler dans la Cour; puis devenu grison,
Se retirant du bruit, attendre en sa maison
Ce qu'ont nos derniers ans de maux inévitables.
(p. 130)

Withdrawn, alone, he contemplates man's fate and finds it miserable:

C'est l'heureux sort de l'homme. O misérable sort!
Tous ces atachemens sont-ils considérables,
Pour aimer tant la vie, & craindre tant la mort?
(p. 130)

The fading of Renaissance optimism is pronounced in this new attitude toward love. Passion alone is not beautiful and the physical senses have not brought the joy they promised. Tristan has found himself in a cul-de-sac of pessimism from which he can find no escape. Sensuality, that immediate pleasure of earthly love, offers nothing but torment which can only be relieved by death.[30] The poet is brought at last to seriously question the Renaissance belief that Nature could satisfy man's need for beauty and could also be the answer to metaphysical questions.

It can be argued that Tristan is doubly Pagan in his Naturism and in his insistance on invoking gods and goddesses, comparing his own passions to theirs, but now he is no longer concerned with physical beauty alone. The poet has been disturbed by his own work and the philosopher is asking questions. If the Christian God is not yet in his heaven, there are nevertheless hints and allusions to Church symbols, and a certain dissatisfaction with Pagan explanations, especially of immortality.

Tristan's uncertainty about Pagan sensuality and Christian spirituality continued to affect his work and raised serious aesthetic questions as we shall see in examining his next collection of poetry. La Lyre[31] was published in 1641, three years after Les Amours. The title poem is the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, a suitable myth which Tristan dedicated to the King's musician, Berthod.

The story begins with a description of the sad lover seeking consolation from Nature. The beauty of his music casts a spell, and trees uproot themselves to draw near and listen. Birds stop their singing and the lion stands meekly beside the lamb, enchanted. Streams stop in midcourse, spellbound. A young bacchante, drawn by the music, sees Orpheus and falls immediately and hopelessly in love. She is a sensual delight, a marvel of Précieux clichés:

> Sa gorge estoit ouverte, où d'une force égale
> Deux petits Monts de lait s'enfloient par intervale.
> . . . . . .
> Sa bouche parcissoit comme un bouton de rose
> Petite, relevée, et n'estoit point si close
> Dans cette emotion qu'on ne vit au dedans
> Esclatter la blancheur des perles de ses dens.[32]
> (pp. 9-10)

But Orpheus is indifferent to her beauty and does not respond to her love. In anger she hurls pebbles at him but they fall harmless, enchanted by the music. Finally, despairing and frightened by the animals, she takes flight "en blasphemant le Ciel & le coeur inhumain,/ Qu'elle n'a peu blesser des yeux ny de la main" (p. 13).

The grieving Orpheus prepares to descend into hell in search of the dead Eurydice. Here the poem seems to assume a double viewpoint, for while the dark Pluto on his metal throne is a myth of Antiquity, there are hissing demons and sulphurous fires which recall Dante and cathedral gargoyles of the Middle Ages. Before his descent, Orpheus has carefully completed a Pagan ritual. He has called on the goddess Persephone to help him bring back his beloved from the underworld, and he sacrifices a black lamb to her. He has his magic lyre, but he may also need the help of the gods in his difficult mission. Once in the underworld, he talks to Plato about the inevitablity of death, and attributes it to "la loy des Destinées." His words have a ring of Church ritual about them nevertheless:

> Sans cesse les humains en tes Estats decendent,
> Par cent chemins divers à toute heure ils s'y rendent,
> Et nul homme vivant quoi qu'il puisse inventer,
> Ne s'en peut exempter. (p. 24)

But Eurydice does not believe that death can separate lovers, and she tells Orpheus that his looking back at her has brought only a temporary separation for,

> Le Ciel est equitable, il nous fera iustice;
> Tu te verras encore avec ton Euridice.
> Si l'enfer ne me rend, la Parque te prendra,
> L'Amour nous des-unist, la mort nous rejoindra.
> Il faudra que le Sort à la fin nous r'assemble
> Et nous aurons le bien d'estre à iamais ensemble.
> (p. 28)

Orpheus cannot believe in this future reunion which is the final reward for innocent lovers. The musician who charmed even the stones with his lyre and who could raise the dead

from their graves is now silent. The descent into hell and the appearance of Eurydice seem only a dream, and Orpheus, once irresistible in his power to charm, is plunged into despair. Hope and courage both desert him and his fate is to be alone forever.

There is a Christian lesson to be drawn from this treatment of the myth. Though the story is Pagan and the gods are multiple, the question of belief is raised. Whether it be "la Parque," "le ciel," or "les destinées," divine justice is championed by Eurydice, and the inevitability of death is discussed in an underworld which, though Pagan, suggests strongly the Church's idea of reward and punishment.

Orpheus' defeat comes from his lack of faith. Eurydice is certain of their eventual reunion by a divine justice which will see that they are reunited forever. The problem is that Orpheus does not believe in divine justice. Because he cannot believe in this spiritual reunion (a bodily one could hardly last forever), he loses everything, even his power to captivate and control destiny by the beauty of music. In the end, the beauty of the poet's verses, or in this case the musician's melody, is not enough to save him from that agonizing look at death and loss, nor does it really comfort him. The myth chosen to praise the court musician has instead turned into a pretext for posing the philosophical question, "Is music really enough?" or the even more pressing one, "Can beauty in this world make us forget about the next one?"

Beauty is snuffed out by death in a sonnet which follows the long narrative poem, and here destiny is unjust:

> Ne sçay-tu pas qu'ingrattement
> Le Sort Tyran des belles choses,
> Ne laisse durer qu'un moment
> Le vif éclat des Roses? (p. 144)

Tristan has many attitudes toward death, that spectre which rose to haunt his century and gave to the Church its most powerful weapon, a chance to escape in immortality. He is often tempted to ignore it as the Renaissance had, as he advises his friend on the death of a mistress:

> Pense donc à te consoler,
> Et venir presenter ton ame
> A cet Astre qui sçait brusler
> D'une divine flame:
> Et qui te promit l'autre jour
> D'estre sensible à ton amour. (p. 144)

Once again he reflects the Classical idea of the power of beautiful poetry to outlast time. In the first poem of the collection, to "M de Montauron," he seems to forget the music of Orpheus, stilled by death and despair, when he insists that,

> . . . Les vers du grand Homere,
> Sont encore glorieux,
> Malgré la Parque seuere
> Et les ans iniurieux. (p. 2)

He continues to enlarge on this theme in contrasting the erosion of Greek temples by time with the eternal freshness of great poetry:

> Le Temps a détruit de Rhodes
> Le grand Colosse d'airain:
> Mais non pas gasté les Odes
> de l'agreable Thebain. (p. 2)

As the poet possesses this power, he can make Montauron immortal by praising him:

> Mais si les sons de ma LYRE
> Sont heureusement goustez:
> Le Sort n'aura point d'empire
> Sur le nom que vous portez. (p. 4)

Is Tristan again convinced that immortality consists in leaving behind a work of great beauty, and is he content with this solution? At least once he grows impatient with it in the face of immediate poverty and speaks bitterly about Gaston:

> Depuis vingt ans entiers ie sers un fils de Frãce,
> Et bien qu'il soit illustre en rares qualitez,
> Ie ne suis reconnu d'aucune recompense. (p. 75)

He begins to doubt the value of poetry when it cannot even give him a livelihood. The promise of immortal fame cannot make up for his deprivation, and the promises of Apollo are of little comfort:

> Mais i'estime ce bruit autant qu'une fumée,
> Car si durant la vie on a si peu de bien
> Que sert apres la mort beaucoup de renommée? (p. 75)

There are poems in which Tristan is content with a Renaissance acceptance of immortality as a memory in the hearts of the generation of men yet to come. If a man did not leave a legacy of beautiful poetry, he could still be immortal in his influence on the lives of those around him. In writing on the death of the Infanta, Tristan admits that death is always a great loss, for nothing is left of the Infanta's "splendeur mortelle" except the name, Isabelle. But she is mourned by those who knew her, and they remember her in singing her praises:

> Elle en fait souspirer les coeurs les plus farouches,
> Lors que pleurant sa perte avecque ses cent yeux,
> Elle conte sa gloire avec autant de bouches. (p. 148)

However, the Infanta was a Catholic monarch, and in writing about her death Tristan mingled Christian ideas with Pagan ones. Her divine spirit is freed from a mortal body, and from the silent grave her spirit mounts to heaven, "montant dans le Ciel claire comme un Soleil,/ Son Ame n'a laissé qu'un Tronc dessus la terre" (p. 148).

Tristan wrote several poems on the death of the Infanta and in all of them he mingled Précieux images with a Christian "mythology." The Infanta goes to join the angels but she is still as brilliant as a Pagan sun. She is an "astre" which gives off an agreable odor as it is snuffed out. But this star "vit comme un Ange, & meurt come une Saincte." She is "le plus rare tresor" who will enrich the skies, half open to receive her. She is a "rare & digne Fleur, de Vertus composée!/ Et de grace divine en tout temps arosée" (p. 149).

It is on the level of ideas, however, that we find the most important and interesting mixture. Tristan is sure the Infanta will live on in the hearts of those who loved her, but she will also receive a Christian reward in heaven:

> Maintenant ses vertus l'ont mise au rang des Anges,
> Et Dieu qui la reçoit à chanter ses loüanges,
> La couronne de gloire & d'immortalité. (p. 152)

The multiple divinities of Antiquity are replaced by one

God, who welcomes into heaven the most virtuous of his children. More precisely yet, Tristan continues to see an after-life in Christian terms when he advises a grieving mother to accept the loss of her daughter:

> Mais si nostre Sauveur prit cette Fleur nouvelle
> Pour en parer les Cieux & la rendre immortelle,
> Quelle raison vous porte à verser tant de pleurs?
> C'est mal vous souvenir de ses bontez divines,
> Faut-il avoir regret s'il emporte nos fleurs,
> Il a bien pris le soin de porter nos espines?[33]
> (p. 158)

And what are we to make of the curious epitaph written for a child born blind when the poet finds him better off after death?

> A t'il à se plaindre du Sort?
> Il n'a rien veu durant sa vie
> Mais il void tout apres sa mort. (p. 160)

We do not know why Tristan arranged his collections of poetry the way he did, but we do know the poems about the Infanta and her death were written earlier and published in a very small collection in January, 1634. These poems, generally religious in tone, are interrupted by poems about death which are thoroughly Pagan. Between these last examples of Christian orientation is a poem written to a friend who had lost two of his children, and Tristan counsels acceptance of whatever fate decrees:

> Commence d'essuyer tes yeux,
> Et garde d'irriter les Cieux
> Leur faisant d'iniustes reproches. (p. 159)

A Stoic attitude of acceptance of the inevitable is counseled for the Comte de Mons on the death of his brother:

> Par la fermeté d'un courage constant
> Lors qu'on ne peut gauchir la mauvaise avanture,
> On la brave en la suportant.[34]
> (p. 141)

This fundamental preoccupation with death was shared by most of the poets of the time. The Renaissance had been able to embrace life fully and to enjoy Nature as its poetic expression with only a passing nod at death as a final ending to present beauty. Borrowing all the aesthetic ideas of his forerunners--mythology, Nature, sensual delight in love--Tristan was nevertheless influenced by the pessimism of a later time when man became dissatisfied with the limitations of a physical world which was not always beautiful and wanted a more personal immortality.

The ambiguous role of beauty in the myth of Orpheus is a good illustration of an uncertainty which prevailed in the early seventeenth century. The music and the musician are finally defeated by death, the lovers are never reunited. What, then, was the answer to this desire to survive the end and to have love and personality go on forever? Eurydice begs her lover to have faith in a final justice, an eventual reunion. But Orpheus has counted on his music's charm, and when it fails in the face of death, he has no other faith and he leaves her, his heart pierced by a mortal wound.

Still bound aesthetically to an earlier, more optimistic, more truly Classical century, Tristan nevertheless had to consider the new discouragement that beset France, and try to find some comfort. What better place to find it than in the teachings of the Catholic Church, which promised immortality for everyone who believed? If Tristan could

find an answer here, he had to find expression for it as a poet. His aesthetic preference for Pagan imagery made this expression seem contradictory. He must have been aware of this weakness, for Christianity had its own literary language as the Apologies attest, and if Tristan finally came to accept Christian immortality, it would be natural to express it in Christian terms. Perhaps his love of myth and his adoration of Nature would not allow him to do this.

During the Renaissance, the intoxication with Classical beauty had allowed the serious conflict of ideas inherent in the clash of Pagan beauty with Christian austerity to lie dormant. In Tristan's own century, Bernini was adorning Rome with magnificent bridges decorated with lovely, sensual angels holding in their plump hands the nails of the cross or smiling dreamily into the distance as they displayed the crown of thorns. Seeing these, one realizes that beauty in the arts did not always reconcile itself with the serious subject of the crucifixion. Bernini's fountains are topped by the Papal hat and the keys to a heavenly kingdom, but they are no less Pagan in their carefree spirit of aesthetic delight.

In France, a mondane society tried to do the same thing by translating Christian figures into sensual earthly beings. Mary and Christ, those two most important Christian figures, were depicted as lover and beloved by court poets in an attempt to make religious poetry out of what had been verses of love. But few Frenchmen felt comfortable with the easy

co-existence of Christian and Pagan that seemed possible in Italy, for the state Church was beginning to insist on the eventual elimination of all Pagan and sensual literature. The Renaissance and the new Catholicism in France were not coupled happily in beautiful statues, they were locked in a life and death struggle for control of the hearts and minds of a nation. Both elements can be seen thus far in Tristan's poetry, but no final resolution of the problem is evident, and this is what makes his work seem contradictory. For example, just as he seems to be evolving toward a more spiritual concept of love and discarding eroticism as a destructive passion, the following poem appears, treating the human soul as a kind of pawn in the game of love:

O Fille ingrate autant que belle,
Par quel sentiment inhumain
Oses tu repousser ma main,
Et la traiter en criminelle?

Sçache que sa temerité
Ne sçauroit avoir merité
Ny de châstiment ny de blâme,
Puis qu'elle n'avoit fait dessein
Que d'aller reprendre mon ame
Que tes yeux m'ont volée, et mise dans ton sein.
(pp. 57-58)

In a poem describing Marie de France, the poet paints her beauty with all the sensuality he dares, and then suddenly backtracks and ends by piously placing her among the angels:

Ce beau poil enflé mollement . . .
. . . . . .
Sa bouche est un coral vivant
Qui parfume l'air sur ses traces . . .
. . . . . .
L'albastre mouvant de son sein
Qui repousse au large sa robe . . .
. . . . . .
Chaste Objet, divine Beauté
Que l'on peut mettre au rang des Anges.
(pp. 123-24)

Why is this mixture so shocking, completely lacking in the harmony that an artistic synthesis of Christian and Pagan might bring about? One could almost accuse Tristan of bad taste in these last two poems, and yet no one would feel this way about Bernini's sexless angels even though they are far from Christian in their soft outlines. There is something unsettling and even displeasing in Tristan's attempt to marry the spirit and the flesh, his insistance on physical pleasure while seeking spiritual answers. The Baroque poet was often tempted by just such misalliances.

There is one long philosophical poem in this collection, "Les Miseres Humaines," which is a carefully thought out poetic treatment of man's frailty, and there is none of the disjointedness here which mars the poems in which Pagan and Christian thoughts clash with each other. Writing to his friend Saintot, Tristan first establishes man's miserable condition:

> Cher SAINTOT, que d'infirmitez,
> D'ennuis & de calamitez
> Troublent le cours de nos années!
> Que nous goustons peu de plaisirs,
> Et que les Loix des Destinées
> Respondent mal à nos desirs! (p. 113)

Blame for these troubles is not placed on God, but again at the feet of "les destinées." The next verse reflects the pessimism of Montaigne, for man is not as lucky or as well adapted to life as the animals. Fish are born knowing how to get along in their element for they can swim; the lion asserts his natural superiority in frightening off any

enemy; the eagle is taught to fly by his father and becomes monarch of the air, but man is born ill-equipped to survive:

> L'homme naist sans estre vestu,
> Sans conseil, force ny vertu,
> Priué de toutes cognoissances;
> Et n'a que des gemissemens
> Pour oposer aux inclemences
> Des Astres & des Elemens. (p. 115)

There is a moment in man's life when the light of reason offers hope of saving him, but it is not long before this light must give way to the flame of passion:

> Lorsqu'il arrive en la saison
> Où la clarté de la raison
> Commence à luire dans son ame;
> Il ne reçoit ce nouveau jour
> Que pour mieux ressentir la flâme
> Qu'alume le flambeau d'Amour. (p. 115)

The poem now enumerates the sad events of Tristan's own life as typical of the human condition. In love, "Il achette un moment de ioye/ Avec des siecles de tourmens." If he has any possessions, the family chateau for example, there will be more problems; "Peut-il moderer les accez/ Des Violences que luy donnent/ Les querelles, ou les procez?"

If man chooses to be a poet, things will turn out badly, "et des beaux Labeurs de sa vie/ Il n'a le fruit qu'apres sa mort" (p. 117). If he is a member of the treacherous court, be it that of Gaston or Louis XIII, "L'esprit jaloux de ses Riuaux/ Espanche sur tous ses travaux/ Le venim de sa medisance" (p. 117). If one could just have his friends, perhaps he could withstand all of these vicissitudes of life and find living bearable:

Mais la Parque aux severes loix,
Qui prend tout sans ordre & sans choix
Nous les ravist à nostre veue. (p. 118)

Even the most important of men have no power over death. Richelieu may shed tears for his brother but he cannot reverse the inevitable, the thread of his life will be cut just as surely as any man's. The most beautiful of women are taken, their beauty and youth are no protection. Nor does death spare the greatest poets:

Homere est mort, Pindare esteint
Les mesmes rigueurs on attaint
Les Virgiles & les Horaces . . .
. . . . . .
Malherbe qui fut sans pareil
A treuvé le dernier sommeil. (p. 120)

Up to this point, Tristan has said that life is full of disappointment and man finds it miserable; that he is the most inadequate of Nature's creatures not only in physical makeup but because he is the victim of an unfriendly destiny and of the wickedness of his fellow men. Now the poet wants to give up the society of men and live apart, a pessimistic old man. His pleasures are gone, love is a hoax, death strips him of friends, reason loses to passion and man is helpless to change his sad destiny. Finding life so unbearable, what is there left to do but reject it?

SAINTOT ne prenons point d'amour
Pour ce miserable sejour
Puisque ce n'est rien qu'un passage.
L'insensé suit la vanité. (p. 121)

This theme of man's self-seeking and the ultimate insignificance of his goals was the traditional theme of Vanitas

Vanitatum, and it was ideal for raising the question of what is to follow earthly existence with its deceptions and its ultimate unworthiness. Orpheus has said that all men must eventually visit the realm of death and Tristan admits that poets too are mortal. But when he speaks of life as a "séjour" and a "passage," he is opening the door to Christian philosophy for he concludes, "Mais il faut que l'esprit du Sage/ Butte droit à l'ETERNITÉ" (p. 121). The shift of emphasis is important to Tristan's position, for the Renaissance concept would emphasize this world. It would ignore the after-life of the spirit in favor of getting the most out of a visible and palpable life on earth before death puts an end to it. Nature must be accepted as ultimately generous and harmonious.

Here, however, we have a pessimistic poet who sees not harmony but discord around him, who finds man in no position to dominate or to receive very much from a world in which he is the feeblest of Nature's creatures, and who rejects beauty, love, and poetry because they are finally useless in the face of death. In short, he opts for a better life after death has put an end to this one, a perfect state of mind for accepting the Church's reward of immortality in exchange for the renunciation of earthly pleasures. Tristan's position as non-Christian is threatened, too, by the fact that these pleasures no longer make him happy. He is tormented by passion and unaided by reason. The Church stands ready to offer divine help.

However, in this poem to Saintot, Tristan is unusually philosophical, and his ideas are not always in accord with the artist and his passion. Tristan the poet was irresistibly drawn to sensual description and to the possibilities of Nature and the beauty of mythology. He was encouraged in this by the life he lived at Gaston's court and the freedom he enjoyed there among fellow libertines. Gaston exemplified by his own behavior this independance from the widely accepted social rules of his day. Adam gives this lively description of the Prince:

> Il n'a pas l'orgueil de son rang. Il va les mains aux poches, le chapeau 'en gloriot', et sifflotant. Le soir, il ne lui deplaît pas de courir les brelans. Avec ses intimes, il est d'une familiarité qui, même de nos jours, semble invraisemblable et pour tout dire, nous choque. Mais tous ses traits, les bons et les mauvais, nous rappellent des idées chères aux libertins. N'ont-ils pas placé la culture de l'esprit, les plaisirs, la liberté, au-dessus des exigences sociales, au-dessus de l'ambition, de la gloire, du désir de posséder? Gaston représente, n'en doutons pas, pour eux, le type parfait du prince, et les esprits affranchis abondent dans son entourage, Tristan, Besançon, Blot, Bautru, d'autres sans doute encore.[35]

Liberty, pleasure, love of the culture of Antiquity influenced Tristan to reject the formal religious ideas and teachings of the Church, but at the same time he realized the destructiveness of passion, the ineffectiveness of reason, and the limitations of Nature. Although he sometimes created a harmonious equilibrium, suiting form to content in his poetry, there were many times when he did not, especially when he tried to write as a Christian. Perhaps the society

in which he lived was too conscious of the Church's demands for loyalty to accept Christian and Pagan together.

Les Plaintes, Les Amours, and most of La Lyre, reflect the Précieux poet writing about women and love, but, in Les Vers héroïques, we see another side of Tristan. This new collection is largely made up of poems written to praise specific people on definite occasions. In 1648, the year of its publication, the "culte de la gloire" was in vogue among the aristocrats, and it lent itself perfectly to poems of praise. A taste for personal glory was well suited to the poet's job of flattering his protector, and magnificent men accomplishing noble deeds became the theme "par excellence."

Tristan proclaimed in one of his poems that the aim of the poet was to celebrate his protector by "l'éclat de vostre espée et celuy de nos vers" (117). The choice for the poet was how best to praise the brilliant warrior, the wise statesman, or a royal princess, and in this praise he did not need to be realistic or truthful, for exaggeration was the rule of the day. Tristan rashly compared men and women to the greatest warriors and the most beautiful goddesses, and unstintingly gave them the most admirable qualities. He offered to make them famous by his praise, and he expected their protection in return. In this way,

as Catherine Grisé has so accurately pointed out, "La poésie peu à peu se transformait en outil de propagande."[36] Tristan often indulged in this propaganda, throwing off all restraint and praising his protectors in the most lavish terms. To the Count of Saint-Aignan he wrote the following lines, hoping that he would receive money from the nobleman:

> Vous vous estes conduit au temple de la Gloire avec tant de pompe qu'il est difficile à ceux qui travaillent pour l'immortalité de vous y pouvoir élever des statues assez magnifiques. (p. 31)

No one as worldly and pessimistic about human nature as Tristan could have believed in such perfection. It was a form of personal advertisement bought and hopefully paid for by the noble who wanted to be flattered in verse.

The question which interests us, however, is not the sincerity of Tristan's feelings, but how he chose to praise these men and women who were potential patrons. He had two important traditional ideas of a hero to choose from, that of Antiquity and the chivalric ideal of the Middle Ages, the first Pagan, the second Christian. Although both ideals were centered on the brave warrior, the Classical hero fought solely for his own glory, the Christian one fought in the service of King and Church, and this allegiance took priority over personal glory. In addressing the Mareschal de Schomberg, Tristan stresses faith and duty to the king as ingredients of the all-important personal glory:

Mais pour courir à la victoire,
Tu ne consultas que ta foy,
Et ne gardas en ta memoire
Que le seul objet de la gloire,
Et le soin de servir ton roy. (pp. 120-21)

But this chivalric interpretation is quickly followed by a description of the Marshal as an ideal warrior of Antiquity. Compare this last with the enthusiasm of another passage from the same long poem:

Je veux imiter le tonnerre
Qu'on a veu partir de tes mains;
Un noble orgueil enfle mon ame,
Qui de sang, de fer et de flame
Doit enricher tout ce discours;
N'entens-je pas déjà Bellonne
Qui t'apelle à nostre secours?
J'oy déjà le canon qui tonne,
Et toute la coste resonne
De trompettes et de tambours. (p. 120)

Schomberg may be a servant of the King and a Christian, but there is more drama in describing him as a hero equal to the gods and called by them to extraordinary and superhuman accomplishments. The servant of the King, blessed in the service of religion, is still a mortal.

Tristan wrote for royalty and the royal court. His poetry honors two kings, Louis XIII and XIV; a prince, Gaston, brother of Louis XIII; two cardinal-ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin; the chancellor, Pierre Séguier, who was in charge of the Académie after the death of Richelieu; Le Tellier, a secretary of state. To this august company, he added his aristocratic protectors, the Duc de Guise, the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and the Comte de Saint-Aignan. His

praise had to suit its subject. For example, Le Tellier was not a soldier but a diplomat and he was praised for oratory and rhetoric, "Ou tes lettres, ou tes discours/ Eclatans d'art et de lumiere" (p. 137). The Comte de Saint-Aignan was "un protecteur si connoissant et si genereux" (p. 33). Gaston was a "Prince victorieux que la Gloire conduit,"[37] and the Duc de Guise was a "chevalier amy de la Gloire." Louis XIV was part of an illustrious family, "Digne sang de tant de rois/ Dont le nom remplit l'histoire" (p. 130). But for each of these men of high birth, the overriding concern of the poet was to celebrate his "gloire," to praise "le vif éclat de sa lumiere," which "se fait voir à tout l'univers" (p. 76). These men are superior in three things: War (their greatest claim to glory), love, and affairs of state. The qualities they possess are part of the Pagan heroic ideal, they are praised for bravery and charm. Tristan speaks of the Duc de Guise as "la gloire de nostre age" and describes this glory:

> Ornement du siecle où nous sommes,
> Prince brave à l'égal des dieux
> Et charmant au delà des hommes. (p. 200)

Bravery and charm are not strictly Christian virtues and neither are the other qualities with which Tristan endows his heroes. The warriors are praised for valor, wisdom, and prudence; statesmen like Le Tellier are just, faithful and diligent; kings are virtuous and just. Piety is seldom mentioned. Tristan compares these admirable men to

Pagan gods or to the heroes of Greece and Rome. To him, celebrating greatness is drawing parallels between his time and the "age d'or" of Antiquity. A hero must be "le dieu de la guerre," and compared to the sun and the eagle. Indeed, he is no less than those gods who watch over him. The poet tells the Marshal de Schombert that his horse "paroist superbe/ D'estre chargé d'un nouveau Mars" (p. 123), and he continues to treat the soldier as a divinity in his accomplishments on the battlefield. Le Tellier, if not a god himself, is on a footing with them for he is worthy by his eloquence to serve as the organ for the thoughts of Minerva and Jupiter. Mars is like another fellow soldier to Saint-Aignan, victim of an accident, for the god suffered much the same misfortune in myth. Circene, that sea nymph who tries to outdo her sister in praising the royal couple of England, boasts that Vulcan makes armor for one grander than Mars, Charles I. Gaston, that "astre de Mars" exceeds even Achilles, "le plus vaillant des Grecs et le plus redouté" (p. 72), for it took Achilles ten years to take Troy and Gaston has taken Gravelines in six weeks.

Pagan gods mingled with mortals and sometimes produced offspring with exceptional qualities, and Tristan compares his heroes to these immortals and to the greatest men of Antiquity, no less glorious in their accomplishments than their immortal fathers. The young king, Louis XIV, is a "jeune Alcide gaulois." Although Achilles was the favorite hero of battle, nearly all of Tristan's protectors were

compared to Alexander in later poems, and the Duc de Guise, in his voyage to Naples to free the city from the Spanish, is compared to Jason.[38] There are times when Tristan finds his heroes superior to Classical ones. The Duc de Guise is placed above all the heroes of Greece or Rome, and his beloved Elise is a thousand times more desirable than Helen of Troy.

For the Spanish Infanta, Princess Isabelle, Tristan restrained his impulse to paint all women as sensually desirable, and contented himself with describing her innocence, honor, virtue, and wisdom. He finds in her "jeune beauté,/ Une honneste severité" (p. 97).

Henriette, Queen of England, is not treated with the same restraint. "Eglogue Maritime" was written at about the same time as the poems to the Infanta (1634-35), but it is a purely Pagan hymn to royalty. Two sea-nymphs, Circene and Leucothoe, try to outdo each other in praise of the young monarchs while Protée listens. Henriette is a Précieux beauty, a "miracle," an "astre ravissant," "adorable," and,

> . . . le nectar sembla couler
> Des roses de sa belle bouche
> Aussi tost qu'elle sceut parler. (p. 43)

Not even the beauty of the sea, made of "mille et mille perles liquides" (p. 41), can equal hers; the goddesses of Antiquity must bow before her wisdom and generosity, for Amour tells Minerve that "Cette isle fleurit sous un roy/ Dont l'epouse est cent fois plus sage/ Et plus genereuse que toy" (p. 42).

She is the sister of that lovely mistress of the "Maison d'Astrée," whom Tristan had praised in much the same way some years earlier. They are both pagan goddesses, beautiful above all else. But Henriette, because she is a queen, also excells in honor and discretion:

> L'Honneur la choisit pour son temple,
> Et la Prudence pour se voir,
> Depuis qu'elle a son bel exemple
> Ne veut plus porter de miroir. (p. 49)

Isabelle is more subdued, a serious queen, wise enough to advise her father, the King of Spain, and saddened by a husband's death. Tristan stresses her innocence, a virtue which he does not always consider important. She wears a grey nun's robe and advises her father to overcome infidel kings and raise the cross "sur le debris de leurs idoles" (p. 99). But Albert, her dead husband, seems to look down from a heaven where he is among the immortals, "comblé de delices," and hopefully mediating between those he has left behind and the gods who receive their tears and their sacrifices "là-haut" (p. 101).

The world which monarchs inhabit is as perfect as the world of Antiquity. Under Charles and Henriette, the English enjoy such a society:

> Aussi comme en cet age d'or
> Où les coeurs se treuvoient sans vice,
> La gloire et le bon-heur encor
> Y regnent avec la justice. (p. 48)

And under the care and appreciation of the Queen, the arts blossom:

Les arts sous sa protection
Reprenent leur éclat antique,
Et son ame avec passion
Aime les vers et la musique. (p. 49)

Nature offers them her treasures, sea-nymphs bring the young King pearls, coral, and rare fish. For Henriette, Diane scatters violets along wooded paths (p. 51).

The Infanta has been lucky too, for she was born in the pastoral province of Segovia, and grew up in the woods enjoying the flowers and being taught to hunt by Diane. Her innocence is not due to a childhood in a Christian convent, but to this association with Nature in a natural paradise:

C'est ainsi que vos jeunes ans,
Loin du crime et de la licence,
En vos esbas les plus plaisans,
S'accompagnoient de l'innocence. (pp. 96-97)

Nature is here not only beautiful but innocent. It is not as frankly Pagan as in the "Eglogue," and only Diane dares put in an appearance, but this is a strange way of picturing a Catholic queen, out of step with the pious tone of other circumstantial poetry of the period. For Tristan has not discarded the natural setting as unsuitable, he has only tamed and adapted the Pagan approach to suit a new subject.

Suzanne de Pons, the mistress of the Duc de Guise, is less than a queen, and Tristan praises her beauty unabashedly. She is the Pagan goddess, the subject of Précieux images. Giving off "rayons de la gloire,"

. . . Elize passa dans un char qui brilloit
De la seule splendeur de sa beauté divine
. . . . . .
. . . Couronnez d'une grace immortelle. (p. 197)

The poet wrote love poems for his protector to give to Suzanne, and they are erotic and full of mythological images, following the same pattern as his earlier love poems. She is decorated with all the beauties of Nature and surrounded by nymphs and shepherds, fanned by Zéphyr and entertained by Diane (p. 215).

If Tristan preferred to liken his heroes to Pagan heroes and gods, then he must surely have had a non-Christian outlook on the source of their marvelous qualities. It would be hard to accommodate the ideas of the Church and the concept of a Christian God to Frenchmen who were acting like Greeks and Romans. In this the poet is consistent, and he has destiny and fortune direct their lives. Sometimes the gods descend to help them, especially that "mortelle divinité," the Infanta:

> Le bien-faire est vostre element,
> Et c'est si legitimement
> Que vostre vie est admirée,
> Qu'alors qu'un sort malicieux
> Menaçoit son fil precieux,
> Les habitans de l'empirée
> Pour en prolonger la durée
> Sont parfois descendus des cieux. (p. 101)

Such divine intervention by Pagan gods in the affairs of men was outdated by 1635, and frowned upon by the Church and many fellow poets. But Tristan does not stop at this, he proclaims the absolute sovereignty of destiny in creating kings and directing their lives. To the "Destins au pouvoir souverain," Circene accords absolute power, "N'avez vous pas entre vos dois/ La fortune des plus grands rois . . ."

To Nature goes credit for the original magnificent creation, and Leucothoe declares, "Sage Nature dont les mains/ Forment les plus grands des humains" (p. 40). Nature, Fortune, and the gods share responsibility in Tristan's poetic world. There is no conflict between them for they are all part of a non-Christian concept of the universe, and their power to create and sustain heroes is interchangeable.

Not only is Nature responsible for creating these marvelous humans, but she and her gods also look after them. The sea is calmed for Henriette's passage to England, and Prothée knows the reign of Charles will be crowned with victories. Fortune promises that one day the young King will possess "Plus de la moitié des tiares/ Qui pendent autour de mon bras" (p. 45). The Duc de Guise is no less favored:

> Le Ciel qui se montre propice
> Au sang qui demande justice
> Fait reussir tous ses efforts.
> La Fortune qui l'accompagne
> Le fait passer à la campagne
> Dessus des montagnes de morts,
> Et brûler les flotes d'Espagne
> Dans ses havres et dans ses ports. (p. 218)

The Comte de Saint-Aignan has robust Nature to thank for his recovery from illness:

> La Nature en vous invincible
> A vaincu cette humeur nuisible
> Dont chacun fut épouvanté. (pp. 232-33)

Seldom in these poems of praise have we seen the Christian God at work. Great men and women in Tristan's poetry are children of Pagan deities, chosen to do miraculous deeds.

But they must be careful to ask for help from the divinities, and praying is important in order to sustain this superior position. The poet first addresses a prayer to Venus on behalf of his protector:

> Venus, fille de l'Onde et mere de l'Amour,
> Si jamais ta faveur servit au navigage
> D'un heros invincible avance le voyage,
> Puis qu'Elize soupire atendant son retour. (p. 202)

Even such illustrious and god-like men as Gaston and Louis XIV are reminded that without their faithful women, all of their glory might be swept away. It is thanks to the prayers of Marguerite that Gaston is saved from harm and that his efforts are successful. "La pieté des voeux que forme un si beau coeur/ Vous fait éviter le mal-heur." All of her tears begging the gods for fame and fortune for him: "Font tomber les palmes des Cieux" (p. 73).

The young king has a pious mother whom he must imitate if he hopes to be successful in battle, for "Depuis tes plus jeunes ans/ Toujours ses devotes larmes/ Rendent tes lys florissans," and she knows certain "divins secrets" which cause the sky to favor him (p. 131).

One of Tristan's longer poems in this collection is a supplication to the stars and then to Minerva on behalf of his unfortunate benefactress, the Duchesse de Chaulnes. "Prosopopée de la Fontaine de . . ." was written around 1645, a direct prayer to Nature for deliverance:

> Clairs ornemens du ciel, astres, brillantes causes
> Qui donnez l'ordre à toutes choses,
> Et qui troublez par fois l'estat des demy-dieux,

Si toujours l'équité conduit vostre puissance,
De grâce ouvrez icy les yeux
Pour le maintien de l'innocence,
Et faites cesser l'influence
Dont vous persecutez la nymphe de ces lieux. (p. 164)

In the same long complaint the poet addresses Minerva:

Minerve de nos jours, vous qui prenez le titre
De grande et souveraine arbitre
De tous nos demy-dieux et de tous nos heros,
Ayez pitié des pleurs que répand cette belle,
Apaisez les vents et les flots
De cette tempête cruelle,
Vostre gloire soufre avec elle,
Vous estes obligée à causer son repos.
(pp. 165-66)

Such a supplication is the Pagan version of Church liturgy which was directed either to God himself, or his earthly representative, Christ.

Thus far the poems celebrating glory and beauty seem thoroughly Pagan in both spirit and expression. The word "pious" is unusual in describing women who are praying to more than one god, and there are those two Christian allusions already mentioned in the poem to the Infanta, but they do nothing to alter the impression that Tristan is writing his Vers Héroïques under the influence of the Renaissance love of Classical poetry and myth.

In several poems about death, Christian and non-Christian ideas blur, though earlier attitudes toward immortality appear again. Some poems insist on the eternity of a man's "gloire" and its triumph over death. Writing on the death of the Marquis de Pisani, the poet insists: "Encore que ton corps soit dans le monument,/ Ta gloire

avec tes os n'est point ensevelie," and he enlarges on this theme to give a special place in history to great men:

> Je meurs; mais c'est pour vivre à jamais dans l'histoire,
> Puis que l'on ne m'a veu tomber au lit d'honneur,
> Qu'apres mon arivée au temple de la Gloire. (p. 275)

But writing about the death of Louis XIII, Tristan has the King admit, "Mon nom éclate dans l'histoire,/ Mais la mort m'a reduit en poudre" (p. 268).

There are times when death takes on the frightening aspect of some of the Christian Exercices spirituels, "la Mort au pâle teint, ce monstre inexorable" (p. 272). Although Tristan begins another poem by echoing Ronsard on the passage of time, "Toutes choses sont passageres,/ Et le Temps aux ailes legeres/ Les precipite vers leur fin" (p. 234), the ending has a different twist. Where the Pléiade poets turned these observations toward an appreciation of earthly life which is so quickly gone, Tristan adds three more lines which suggest that there is something to come after the end:

> Nous voyons des mortels les tristes destinées
> Et sçavons que le soir des plus belles journées
> Est pres de leur matin. (p. 234)

This is not the Elysean Fields or Pluto's dark realm to which Tristan alludes. A preparation for the next life is necessary, and there must be a renunciation of the frivolity of this world:

> Il faut éteindre en nous tous frivoles desirs,
> Il faut nous détacher des terrestres plaisirs
> Où sans discretion nostre apetit nous plonge.
> (p. 328)

This renunciation of the world deserves its own laurels. Tristan's last poem in this collection is written to a friend

who had decided to join the Oratoire to follow a more spiritual life in the service of the Christian God, "Dieu qui t'inspire et qui t'appelle,/ Sur la mesure de ton front/ Fait une couronne immortelle" (p. 329). This is the last of one hundred and thirty poems, and it is the only frankly Christian one.

What, then, is Tristan's position as a poet? It is clear that he prefers to write about aristocrats and kings in the language of Antiquity. This is not out of keeping with poetic tradition although Tristan does use it more than most of his contemporaries, but it is that part of the tradition which the Church wanted eliminated. His preference is consistent, and there are few hints of any intrusion of Christian images and figures to spoil the harmony. He does close on a Christian note, as he has in his other collections, but this is not enough to alter the Pagan tone of these poems.

Do the poems give us any hints about Tristan himself? Does he believe in a personal "culte de la gloire," and does he consider himself as favored by the gods, destined to do great things? In a period of bitter personal disappointment in Gaston, he realized how far he was from that noble race of heroes who could count on fortune to look after them or who could bend it according to reason and will. He bitterly protested his lot: "Possible l'estoile inhumaine/ Dont j'épreuve la hayne,/ S'oposera toujours au bon-heur que j'atens" (p. 156). He hated his position of having to

write poetry of flattery in hopes that a wealthy aristocrat would find it worth buying with money or protection:

> L'image de la Servitude
> Errant dans mon étude,
> Y promeine l'horreur qui reside aux enfers:
> J'oy déja qu'on m'enrôle au nombre des esclaves.
> (p. 157)

Tristan was an aristocrat and he was very sensitive to the aristocratic ideal of "gloire," that adaptation of Stoic heroism which fascinated Corneille and which became a model for the Honnête Homme. This was a demanding role, hard to fill, and Tristan felt perhaps that he had failed. He had joined the company of aristocratic libertines at the court of Gaston, and had been influenced by them in his belief in various kinds of determinism--an evil star, an angry destiny, a defect in physical makeup. He often agreed with those libertines who had resigned themselves to whatever fate offered. But the ideal still existed for him as we see in these lines:

> O ma raison! dans ces alarmes
> Que ne prens-tu les armes
> Pour t'oposer aux loix de la captivité?
> . . . . . .
> Il faut avoir part à la gloire
> Qu'ont aquise en l'histoire
> Tant d'illustres heros qui braverent le Sort.
> (p. 158)

The idea of reason is essentially Pagan or non-Christian unless it is directly linked to the idea of a reasonable God, acting in predictable ways under laws made to direct the universe. Tristan's idea of this reason showed no such link. Instead, it offered a philosophical

not a Christian haven from the uncertainties of life. The artistic slavery Tristan so despised was a part of court life and he longed for detachment from all of its pettiness and compromise in the study of ancient philosophers:

> Qui treuve un bon-heur extreme
> A se posseder soy-mesme
> Et regler ses passions
> En lisant les actions
> De tous ces sages antiques
> Qui vivent dans les croniques. (p. 22)

The poems about heroes and heroic actions are part of Tristan's admiration for those superb ancestors, remote in time, still shimmering in a mirage of perfection from the Renaissance. It is not inconsistent that he added a few final poems about the renunciation of the world, for the spirit of detachment and contemplation was strong in Pagan philosophers as well as in Christian ones, and it is to these that he is finally faithful. Despite his insistance in the "Avertissement" to the Vers héroïques that he is Christian and uses profane names for God only "pour l'ornement de la poësie, à la façon des ecrivains passez" (p. 35), he is not convincing, for the heroic ideal in these poems is consistently illustrated by Pagan examples and rooted in ideals of Antiquity. There remains as a possible Christian counterpoint only that wistful suggestion that death will not take all glory with it, leaving only the pale story of great men for others to tell.

The collection of Vers héroïques was published in 1648, but we do not know when every poem was written. Tristan has

included some known to have been written between 1625 and 1630, "La Mer" and "La Maison d'Astrée," for example. Others were composed much closer to the publication date of this last collection. In 1649, there appeared a collection, Triomphe de Louis le Juste, XIIIe du nom, avec des vers de MM. Beys et de Corneille, in which we find a poem of Tristan's praising the funeral monument of the great monarch:

> Superbes Monumens d'un des plus grand Monarques
> Qui jamais triompha sur la Terre & sur l'Eau,
> Chefs-d'oeuvres d'un Burin qui du Temps & des Parques
> Depite noblement la Faux & le Cyseau.

After reminding us that time has reduced to cinders the great names of Lysippius and Alexander, we have the surprising last verse:

> Mais en cette sculpture à nulle autre seconde,
> Le nom du Grand LOUIS & celuy de Valdor
> Ne craindront que le feu qui perdra tout le Monde.[40]

A final judgment day will impose the authority of a Christian God on fate's scissors. The poet is still mixing Pagan and Christian images and philosophy, but here Christianity has the last word.

It is not so with poems of praise written several years later. In 1654, appeared "La Renommée à Son Altesse de Guise,"[41] and the influence of Antiquity seems stronger than ever. Henry is the "heros charmant and glorieux" of the Pagan ideal, "l'honneur d'une illustre Tige" (p. 5). His "glorieux ancêtres" include François and Charles. Thus far his magnificent efforts as a warrior have been thwarted by destiny; those "mauvaises influences" have kept him from

winning. But now all his hopes will be fulfilled:

> Les feux brillans, qui de leurs Spheres
> Se regardoient d'aspects contraires,
> Se sont tous reconciliez.
> . . . . . .
> Marche donc, Prince sans pareil,
> Et traverse l'onde salée
> Avant le mois où le soleil
> Visite la Vierge étoilée.
> Sous cette constellation
> Il faut qu'une haute action
> Te donne des Palmes nouvelles.[42]

The poet has not changed very much since he praised Henriette and Charles in "Eglogue Maritime," for Nature's divinities are still all around us, and heroes are still Pagan:

> Vertes Divinités des eaux,
> Et vous nymphes qui dans la ville
> Formez tant d'aimables ruisseaux
> Qui semblent d'un cristal mobile
> Vous observâtes tous ses pas.[43]

Even the theme of death in some of his last poems shows no influence at all of the Christian poet. Guez de Balzac died in 1654, and the Exercices spirituels of Tristan was published a year later. But in mourning the loss of his great contemporary, Tristan reverts back to a Pagan version of death. The Christian in Tristan has not, after all, succeeded in blotting out the Pagan; there has been no resolution or synthesis of the two.

It is surprising that Tristan should have described Balzac as "rien qu'une ombre . . . sur le triste et sombre rivage,"[44] for Balzac, though an admirer of Antiquity, had been a firm Christian, and he would have been more suitably mourned in Christian images. Instead, in Tristan's poem, we have a hundred nymphs tearing their hair at the unjust fate of so great a man:

La trame d'un esprit si beau
A ce fatal coup de ciseau
Devait-elle être assujettie? (p. 72)
. . . . . .
O rigueur sans comparaison!
Cet homme, avec tout l'avantage
Des lumières de la raison,
Est passé comme un feu volage.
Mais quoi! c'est un ordre du sort
Que jamais la faux de la Mort
Ne respecte les belles choses;
Et, dans les premières chaleurs,
On voit toujours passer les roses
Plus vite que les moindres fleurs. (p. 75)

The Renaissance of Ronsard is still very much alive in the poetry of Tristan a century later and at the height of the Counter-Reformation.

Another poem in this collection, "Imitation d'une Ode d'Horace," is more somber, and death is not the fading of a rose, but frightening figures "Qui changent nostre poil, nous ameinent des rides, et creusent nostre monument" (p. 179). Those who have tasted the pleasures of Nature are in the end devoured by her. "A quiconque a gousté des presens de la terre,/ Est à la fin mangé des vers" (p. 179). Virtue is no defense against the passing of time, "Helas! Comme nos ans s'escoulent promptement;/ Il n'est point de vertu qui puisse un seul moment/ Retarder leurs cours rapides . . ." (p. 179). A Pagan eternal repose follows death:

Tu quitteras le jour avecque tes tresors,
Pour descendre là-bas dessus de sombres bords:
Dans ces plaines si reculées;
Où sous des Mirthes verds, en d'ombreuses valées,
Reposent les illustres Morts. (p. 180)

But even this final tranquility is dearly bought, for the embittered poet sees unloving children hypocritically pretending

to mourn dead parents but thinking only of the money they have left behind:

> Ton heureux heritier te voyant expiré,
> En long habit de deuil, apres avoir pleuré,
> Laissera sa feinte tristesse;
> Et respandra par tout d'une aveugle largesse,
> Tout l'or que tu tiens resserré. (p. 181)

Death is Pagan, but it is also ugly and to be feared. Virtue offers no escape nor, one might add, do Christian good works. Nature devours her own creature and mourning the dead often masks self-seeking. Eternity is repose perhaps, but not a Christian reward for a life of goodness.

In a collection of 1658, Les Muses illustres,[45] Tristan once again shows real admiration for the courage and self-sufficiency of Stoicism. "A Monsieur Le Comte de Saint-Aignan" first makes death fearful:

> C'est pour vous dire que le sage,
> Qui pense à ce triste passage
> Nomme la mort entre les maux,
> L'horreur de tous les animaux. (pp. 353-54)

How should Saint-Aignan accept this most crushing blow of fate? Not with Christian prayer asking God for courage and strength, but in a Stoic spirit of acceptance which defies even death to overcome will:

> Cher Comte que les destinées,
> Puissent conduire vos Années,
> Sans douleur, crainte, ny soucy
> Au delà de ce siécle icy;
> Et quand vous serez à ce terme,
> Puissiez vous d'une Ame aussi ferme,
> Que vostre coeur est genereux,
> Passer avec les bien-heureux. (p. 354)

In trying to assess Tristan's poetry, it must be remembered that most of these poems were dedicated to noble

men and women in the hope that they would please them, and that these men and women would continue to protect and support the poet. This necessity dictated both the form and content of the poems. The position was a difficult one for the artist. He wrote for another man's pleasure about the most personal emotions and he was limited by narrow poetic tastes and conventions. Sincerity was possible, but spontaneity nearly always suffered. The images were stereotyped and used again and again by poets who vigorously restricted their originality to the conventions of a genre that had become as banal as verses on a greeting card.[46]

Tristan used this Précieux language with a delicate sense of its limited possibilities for beauty and he often attained a perfection which outlasted artificial form. In content, he was faithful to the aristocratic taste for a lover who was the victim of hopeless physical passion, but he emphasized in much of his work the destructiveness of such an obsession. Just as he had exacted beauty from outworn phrases, he demanded a more long-range look at his exhausted subject matter. A description of hopeless passion was not enough. He was concerned with its effect on human personality and what it did to the human spirit, and he was led inevitably to see it as a serious predicament, an obstacle to self-perfection and peace of mind. More than most of his fellow poets, he sought to come to terms with a philosophical part of his nature which responded to the metaphysical questions of his day--man's dual nature, divine

justice, and immortality. His personal life played an important part, the years with Gaston, exposure to the ideas of men who were hopeful about the power of reason and will, and his own weaknesses and bad luck.

The sensuality, the uncertainty about man's destiny, and the predilection for Pagan heroes are three elements of his poetry which combine to create a non-Christian tone. They are aspects of what Lebègue defines as the Baroque in literature, a "goût de la liberté en art, donc refus des règles, des bienséances et de la mesure; tendances irrationelles, jeux d'esprit, amour de la Nature, du mystère, du surnaturel."[47] But it is not altogether accurate to accuse Tristan of refusing all rules, for he is a poet of that Baroque restriction, Préciosité, which has definite rules and limitations of subject and style. This part of the definition of Baroque seems unsuitable when we examine his plays which foreshadow the Classical ideal in their psychological "vraisemblance." Characters are carefully developed and with them arguments which show how important this poète à gages thought it was to find answers to the big questions of his day.

NOTES

[1] Alexandre Hardy, Le Théâtre (Paris: Quesnel, 1626).

[2] Ibid, I, 28.

[3] Loc. cit.

[4] Ibid, III, 11.

[5] Jean Rousset, L'Intérieur et l'extérieur. Essais sur la poésie et théâtre au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Corti, 1968), p. 47.

[6] Ibid, p. 12.

[7] Reynold, p. 71.

[8] La Lyre (Paris: Courbé, 1641), p. 68.

[9] Ibid, p. 70.

[10] Claude K. Abraham, "Un poète de la nature au XVIIe siècle, Tristan L'Hermite," French Review, 34 (1960), 51.

[11] Thierry Maulnier, Poètes précieux & baroques du XVIIe siècle (Angers: Petit, 1941). Maulnier finds this metaphysical poetry widespread and artistically developed in Tristan's time: "La fin du XVIe siècle & la première moitié du XVIIe nous ont donné des poèmes religieux qui sont sans doute les plus beaux de notre littérature" (p. XXXIX). He cites Du Perron and Sponde as immediate forerunners of such Précieux poets as Malleville and Godeau. Tristan seems indifferent to this current of metaphysical poetry, at least at this time.

[12] Antoine Godeau, Tristan's contemporary, was careful, in describing the power of the sea, to put it under God's dominion:

Fameux Théâtre des naufrages,
. . . . . .

Creux et vaste Empire du vent
. . . . . .
Champ de la paix et de la guerre,
Mer, fais bénir ton maître à tes flots redoutés.
(p. 230, Maulnier)

13 Les Vers héroïques, ed. Catherine M. Grisé (Geneva: Droz, 1967), p. 62.

14 The visualization of poetry into "peintures" is non-Malherbian, according to Claude Abraham in Enfin Malherbe (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971). He regards it as one more example of Tristan's independance from the great rule-maker of his day. "If one thinks in terms of Tristan the painter, then Malherbe cannot come to mind" (p. 166).

15 Rousset, L'Intérieur et l'extérieur, p. 130.

16 Vers du balet de Monseigneur Frere Du Roy, 1627.

17 Les Plaintes d'Acante et autres oeuvres (Antwerp: Aertssens, 1633). All references are to this edition.

18 Carriat, Tristan ou l'éloge d'un poète, p. 109.

19 He may have been encouraged by the fact that there were several collections of Classical myths very much in vogue at the time. A translation of many of these was made by Jean de Montlyard and published in Paris in 1627.

20 The annotations show Tristan's debt to other Classical writers, Pindar, Seneca, and Socrates on love; Pliny's Historia Naturalis for a short dissertation on thyme, fruit of the bees, and also Vecker's Livre de secrets and du Laurans' Traité des maladies hypocondriaques, for his references to the secrets of Nature.

21 Eugénie Droz, in her study, Le Manuscrit des Plaintes D'Acante de Tristan L'Hermite (Paris: Droz, 1937), has confirmed that earlier conclusions about the identity of Acante and Sylvie were erroneous. While at the court at Brussels, Tristan wrote poetry for the Duc de Bouillon who was in love with the much younger Mlle de Bergh, and these two served as models for the two lovers of the poem. Tristan found a perfect setting in the beautiful Parc of the Brussels palace. Here, ladies and gentlemen of the court passed their time. Marie de Medicis, during her long visits, could look out of her window of the royal palace on "les vignes, les

prés, les vallées, les montagnes, les ruisseaux et les fontaines . . . ," and Tristan "avait été frappé par la beauté de ce lieu. . . ." (p. 19).

22 Rousset points out Tristan's tendency to see this connection between Nature and feminine beauty, and contrasts it with the attitude of a contemporary: "La neige est pour Boussières un tourbillon, une danse de papillons et de fantômes volants, elle est pour Tristan le grain d'une peau, la glace d'un coeur, la blancheur d'une main" (La Littérature de l'âge baroque, p. 242).

23 This personification of Nature exists also in the poetry of other Baroques. Saint-Amant saw Nature's seasons as having human aspects in his sonnets, "L'Hiver" and "L'Eté." René Bray, in La Préciosité et les précieux (Paris: Michel, 1948), writes of a special type of salon poetry, the Métamorphose: "Voiture a écrit la métamorphose de Julie en diamant, celle de Lucine en rose, celle de Léonide en perle, celle d'Icas en perroquet" (p. 188).

24 Adam, Théophile, p. 235

25 Les Amours (Paris: Billaine et Courbé, 1638). All references are to this edition.

26 Tristan L'Hermite, Les Amours et autres poésies choisies, ed. Pierre Camo (Paris: Garnier, 1925), p. xv.

27 Rousset, La Littérature de l'âge baroque, p. 241.

28 Tristan emphasizes a physical enjoyment between the lover and his mistress, but Bray claims that Précieux society insisted on a spiritual relationship. The husband could possess his wife as a piece of property, but her soul would belong to the beloved (La Préciosité et les précieux, p. 57).

29 It was a commonplace among the poets to criticize the court and its politics, but in this poem it is one of an enumeration of the vanities of life which lead to the final important conclusion of the sonnet--a turning away from worldly pursuits.

30 The Précieux poets were careful not to come to grips with this disturbing problem. They preferred an urbane flattery of a woman's beauty. The question of sensuality was avoided, and women of the salons insisted

on elimination of any terms that seemed obscene or suggestive (Bray, La Préciosité et les précieux, p. 171).

[31] La Lyre. All references are to the Courbé edition (See note 8).

[32] Though Précieux cliches abound in La Lyre, it has been noted that such sensuality as one finds in these verses was out of step with the Précieux code. "L'amour sensuel ou passionné ne permet pas la paisible conduite des propos mondains; il n'a pas sa place dans la ruelle" (Bray, La Préciosité et les précieux, p. 152).

[33] It is interesting to note the different contexts in which Tristan uses this metaphor of the rose. It is usually love that resembles the flower, but it brings with it the pain of thorns. Here, the metaphor is religious, and the thorns are Christ's crown at the moment of the crucifixion.

[34] Other poets wrote Consolations in this stoic vein. One is reminded of Malherbe's "Consolation à Monsieur du Perier sur la mort de sa fille." But in Malherbe's poem, God's will decrees the death and one should accept it with Christian humility. Tristan, on the other hand, blames the loss on blind fate, and urges acceptance so as not to arouse the anger of the gods.

[35] Adam, Théophile, p. 411.

[36] Vers héroïques. All references are to the Grisé edition (See note 13).

[37] Gaston was not always crowned with success as Tristan would have us believe. When the poet praises his master so highly for his leadership against the Huguenots at La Rochelle, the first attack was "si mal dirigée que le roi ordonna à Gaston de cesser la campagne jusqu'à son arrivée. C'est pendant cette période de repos forcé que Tristan composa "La Mer'" (Note, p. 12 Vers héroïques).

[38] The Duc de Guise also suffered defeats and, after gloriously defeating the Spanish at Naples, he was later captured and thrown into prison, thus ending what Tristan writes of as a glorious expedition.

[39] This poem, along with three others on an illness of the Count's, were written around 1637, says Grisé, and they

underline the difficulty of a chronological assessment of Tristan's philosophical and artistic development. Les Vers héroïques include poems written as early as 1626, but not published before January, 1648.

40 Triomphe de Louis le Juste XIIIe du nom, avec des vers de MM Beys et de Corneille (Paris: Estienne, 1649), n.p.

41 La Renommée à Son Altesse de Guise (Paris: Luyne, 1654), pp. 11-12.

42 Loc. cit.

43 Ibid, p. 10.

44 Receuil de Conrart t. XIX, p. 71.

45 Les Muses illustres (Paris: Chamhoudry, 1658).

46 Even in his lengthy defense of Préciosité, Bray admits that "de la distinction on tombe parfois dans l'affectation" (p. 105). It was only a step from affectation to excess, and to imitation and sterility.

47 Lebègue, La Poésie française, p. 31

IV.
THE PLAYS

La Mariane, Tristan's first play, was produced in Paris at the Théâtre du Marais in the spring of 1636. In his introduction to the play, Jacques Madeleine describes the poet at that time: "Tristan, sur ses trente-cinq ans . . . était un gentilhomme de la maison de Monsieur qui avait fait des vers, des vers d'amour chantant les belles et gracieuses dames qu'il fréquentait, des vers 'héroïques' c'est-à-dire exaltant la grandeur ou les hauts faits des princes et des seigneurs dont il approchait."[1] There was nothing in these poems or in Tristan's position to suggest that he would abruptly turn to writing a play for Parisian audiences, a play that was one of the first to adapt itself to the rigid rules of Classicism.

Tristan must have been drawn to the theater by his own interest in make-believe. As a child, he had entertained others at the royal court with dramatic stories, and had been fascinated by acting troupes who had come to entertain. At Gaston's court, he had written and staged several ballets de cour meant to entertain the libertines. However, these were not in any sense true drama; they were long poems, audacious in their irreverence.

Probably most directly responsible for Tristan's new

interest were the men and women of the theatrical world who were his friends. In Paris, he had always sought them out. It is not surprising that Hardy, the greatest dramatist of the period, should have had an enormous influence on him. Both Tristan and Théophile had praised him as the greatest poet of his age in the liminary poems which prefaced the first collection of Hardy's plays in 1625.

A decade later, Tristan wrote La Mariane, and it turned out to be the greatest popular success of his life. This was the era of tragi-comédie, that big protective tent of a drama under which outlandish plots and unbelievable scenic effects could be crowded together pell-mell, with no restrictions on the artist except a demand that everything turn out well in the end. Tristan rejected its temptations in favor of the exploration of a theme.

In writing poetry, Tristan had refused a strict adherence to Malherbe's rules and he leaned heavily on Renaissance theme and form, lagging behind other poets who were suppressing mythological and Pagan elements of their work not readily understandable to their public. But when he wrote La Mariane, Tristan was one of the first to participate in that "reconstruction raisonnée, solide, par de grands artisans, de la prose et du théâtre; la formation de la doctrine classique."[2] This "reconstruction" had begun as early as 1628 in France, when Mairet brought back from Italy the dramatic idea of Aristotle's unities. Richelieu and Chapelain agreed that these unities of time, place, and

action should be the basis for a national return to Classical simplicity in the theater. La Mariane was constructed according to the new Neo-Classicism and the extravagance of the court poet was suppressed. Tristan sacrificed Nature and her miracles of metamorphosis in order to present the human struggle between Hérode and Mariane. He decided that the action must spring from this clash of wills and not from an exterior, visual sleight of hand attributed to the powers of Nature. Human passion, will, love, and death would be the sources of action and conflict.

If these unseen forces were dramatically presented by producing action, it would solve the problem of how to satisfy the public's taste for movement, and at the same time remain faithful to the rigorous unities of the Greek theater. "La solution préparée par Hardy et Tristan, fut trouvée par Corneille: placer les évènements hors du temps et de l'espace dans le coeur humain."[3] Actually, Tristan had found the solution itself in La Mariane, but critical attention was focused on Le Cid, and overlooked the fact that Tristan, not Corneille, was the first dramatist to take this major step toward a Classical drama.

Tristan's two favorite themes, love and death, were explored in the personal conflict between Hérode and Mariane, but this time without a hint of the pastoral love theme, so unsuitable to real tragedy in its artificial mythological landscape. How a man met death was the ultimate test of his courage, the occasion for noble Stoic acceptance of the

inevitable and final injustice, "le défi que lui lance le destin."[4] Tristan is still the Précieux poet when he explores the second theme of his play, a love that can never be fulfilled and is ultimately impossible for a great warrior and king. Earthly love is passion and therefore destructive to reason and will. Hérode's passion for Mariane is a disease that destroys a man who might otherwise have been a hero.

The history of the Jewish queen was in keeping with the new Classical spirit of royal heroes, and it was also a story about love and religious faith. Hardy himself had dramatized the story in his Mariamne, around 1620. Apparently, it had been hastily done, burdened by unsuitable mythological allusions. Between 1624 and 1635, Father Caussin told the story again in several versions of La Cour sainte, a collection of story and history with much Christian moralizing. In his account, Mariane becomes "une sainte catholique" (p. XIX), and Herod a villain of the blackest kind.

"La tâche de Tristan consistait à adopter une juste mesure, juste par rapport aux convenances dramatiques, entre ces conceptions opposées."[5] For his prime source, Tristan went back to the histories of Flavius Josephus, Antiquités Judaïques and La Guerre des Juifs, in which Herod is depicted as a great king in spite of his violence, and Mariamne has some serious faults. Tristan's rulers are a mixture of the

two interpretations. Mariane is certainly religious but not by any means a Catholic. In addition, she is dangerously proud. Hérode destroys himself with jealousy, but not before his remorse has touched the audience.

An important change took place when the manuscript of La Mariane was published in 1637. "Vraisemblance" had evidently become very important to Tristan, for he suppressed in the first printed edition mythological allusions that had appeared in the manuscript. Speaking of the disorders that love can cause, Hérode no longer points to the Pagan Alcide and Omphale as examples, but replaces them with the names of Biblical men who suffered from love, Samson and David. References to Anthony's passion for Cleopatra were "plus vraisemblables dans la bouche d'un monarque juif et d'un contemporain de la conquête romaine."[6] Madeleine has found other suppressions in favor of suitability. Medea is not mentioned in the second version, and, instead of alluding to the feast of Atreus and Thyeste and calling on the gods, Tristan limits himself to a prefunctory call to "les Cieux." But, admits Madeleine, he does let slip a comparison between the Jewish Mariane and a queen of the Amazons, and calls her at one place "une Danaïde." This attention to the idea of "vraisemblance" is important for it is basic to the new doctrine of Classicism. "Ce souci de ne point introduire dans un milieu judaïque des souvenirs de la Fable grecque prouve un scrupule d'art totalement insoupçonné d'Alexandre Hardy qui ne jurait que par

l'Amphitryoniade, que par Egisthe ou Ixion, par Charon, Cloton et Alecton."[7] Thus, by freeing himself from Hardy's influence in many ways, Tristan wrote a play largely stripped of outmoded Pagan references and more historically reliable than his model. He was at last able to resist decoration in order to probe more seriously into man's own nature.

The interpretations of Mariamne's story by the Jewish historian, Flavius, and the Catholic priest, Caussin, were not the clear dramatic statements about death and courage which Tristan wanted. One was the history of a people and the other was propaganda for the Church. Tristan's play is more than either of these, for in his characterization of Mariane reason and will have been added to religious faith and belief in immortality.

On the surface, Mariane can qualify as a Stoic heroine. She is a queen and she is beautiful. She is facing bravely an unfair destiny, and she has a fierce integrity and pride which will not allow her to compromise with this destiny.[8] Her hatred of Hérode springs from his murder of her brother, Aristobule, and of her father. For this there is no forgiveness. She is descended from a proud race of Jewish leaders and she never forgets it. When her maid suggests that she soften this hatred and pretend to love Hérode, at least for the sake of her children, the queen replies:

> Moi? que ie me contraigne? estant d'une naissance,
> Qui peut impunément prendre toute licence,
> Et qui sans abuser de ceste authorité,
> Ne reigle mes desirs que par l'honnestete? (II.i)

Then she continues haughtily, "Je laisse la contrainte aux serviles personnes/ On me verra tousiours vivre & mourir en Reine" (II.iv). What she detests most about Herode is that he has made her an object of pity by his cruel treatment, "Et moy qu'il a rendué un objet de pitié,/ I'abhorre tout de luy; iusqu'à son amitié" (II.ii). Completely convinced of her own innocence and merit, she bursts out with a self-righteous tirade against the page who accuses her before the King of plotting his death, "Monstre issu de l'Enfer pour nuire à l'innocence,/ Oses-tu bien mentir avec tant d'asseurance?" (III.ii). Her position is intolerable. She is a queen, one of a noble race of rulers, incapable of acting basely. The accusations against her innocence are impertinent and even more hateful because they are made by the king who controls her every action:

> Pour augmenter l'affront que l'iniuste licence
> A fait à l'innocence,
> Un absolu pouvoir rend mon corps prisonnier.
> . . . . . .
> Il est temps desormais que le Ciel me separe,
> D'avecque ce barbare. (IV.ii)

Death will be a sweet revenge against the murderer of her brother and her father, and against the king who dared love her.

This pride of Mariane's is unbearable to Salomé, the king's sister, and she constantly brings it to Hérode's attention. Not only does Mariane speak to members of the Court as if they were her valets, but, adds Salomé, "Elle

parle de vous avec une insolence,/ Que sans beaucoup d'horreur on ne peut reveler" (I.iii). As a Pagan, Salomé can call Mariane all the worst names of mythology, "ceste Furie," "Ceste Erynne infernalle," and she turns this majestic but excessive pride of Mariane's against her:

> C'est vn monstre d'orgueil & de meconnoissance
> A qui vostre bonté donne trop de licence:
> Si la faveur du Ciel ne destourne ses coups
> Sa malice à la fin se deffera de vous. (II.v)

She convinces Hérode that his wife, anxious for revenge, is trying to kill him.

It is inevitable that Mariane should die. Although Hérode tries several times to avoid sending her to the scaffold, she finally must face that supreme test of her courage. She is supported by her knowledge that she is morally pure, that she has not plotted against the king nor been unfaithful to him, an assurance enhanced by the knowledge that her innocence will be rewarded after death when she becomes a heavenly queen. Hearing from Hérode that she will die, her words are full of this assurance; "ie dois benir l'excez de ta seuerité,/ Car ie vay de la mort à l'immortalité" (III.ii). She will have a heavenly crown that he cannot take away by treachery:

> Ma teste bondissant du Coup que tu luy donnes,
> S'en va dedans le Ciel se charger de Couronnes,
> Dont les riches brillans n'ont point de pesanteur
> Et que ne peut ravir un lasche usurpateur. (III.ii)

Mariane knows that it is her soul which is immortal and that it will leave her body behind when it ascends gloriously to heaven:

> L'aueugle cruauté dont tu me fais la guerre,
> Va destruire de moy ce qui n'est rien que terre:
> Mais mon ame immortelle & mon nom glorieux,
> Malgré les mouuemens de ton coeur furieux,
> Et toute ta Maison contre moy coniurée,
> Obtiendront un esclat d'éternelle durée. (IV.v)

This faith in her own immortality puts Mariane out of the reach of Hérode's jealousy, for what he kills is only the outer shell. The soul can finally overcome whatever happens to the body. This attitude has been accepted as Christian by some critics. David Westgate has noted that such an attitude is "within the scope of Christian ethics."[9] Mariane is a Jewish queen and her only inconsistency with the Judaism of her time is a belief in immortality, an immortality promised by Christ to his disciples. Her vision of heaven is a land covered with flowers where the faithful and saintly walk together forever.

At times, she conceives of God himself in a very general way. In one of her prayers, she addresses the "Autheur de l'Univers, souveraine puissance," and continues, "Qui depuis ma naissance,/ M'as tousiours envoyé des matieres de pleurs,/ Mon amen'a recours qu'à tes bontez divines" (IV.ii). But in her final prayer for her children, God becomes the heavenly father:

> Que tu leur seruiras de suport & de Pere,
> Et que pour les conduire en ce temps dangereux,
> Ta haute prouidence ouvrira l'oeil sur eux. (IV.v)

This is an attitude which Christianity and Judaism held in common, but it could not be a part of a belief in many gods. Such a heavenly father bears no resemblance to the multiple

powers of Antiquity, nor to those powerful gods invoqued by Henriette and Queen Anne to guard their heroes from harm in Tristan's Vers héroïques. He is the God of Tristan's Christian sonnet, "L'Amour Divin" which we found in the Plaintes. Mariane is not asking for worldly success for her children, but instead, a spiritual way of life, "Imprime dans leurs coeurs ton amour et ta crainte/ Fay qu'ils bruslent tousiours d'une ardeur toute sainte" (IV.v). If it is at last necessary for them to die for their beliefs, let them do it as bravely as she does, having lived a life "sans reproche." The prayer can certainly be interpreted as Christian. Mariane faces death with admirable courage because she knows God will reward her with immortality. To Tristan, perhaps this was what Christianity was all about.

Alexandra, Mariane's mother, is a religious woman, but she is not as courageous as her daughter and not nearly so sure of herself. Frightened by the thought that she too might be murdered, she denounces Mariane:

> Femme sans pieté, nouvelle Danaïde
> Inhumaine, traistresse, assassine perfide,
> . . . . . .
> Ie ne te connois point . . ."

She calls down on Mariane a horrible revenge of crucifixion, "Il faloit que la flame expiast ton peché,/ Ou que sur une croix ton corps fust attaché" (IV.vi), and she cries that it is for evil women like her daughter that God has made a hell. Tristan must have written the scene between the terrified mother and the steadfast daughter to underline the

courage of Mariane, for this is the portrait of a royal spirit, willing to endure anything for the sake of principle with "la certitude de l'existence d'un monde de valeurs."[10]

But what are these values? Personal honor? Mariane has been Hérode's wife for many years since the murders took place, and they have children. Her revolt is triggered by the fact that Hérode has left orders for her to be killed if he himself dies in battle. It is his terrible jealousy that she cannot bear. When it drives him to accuse her of being unfaithful, and of plotting his death, she scornfully proclaims her innocence. She knows that Hérode is damned by his Pagan life and his hopeless passion for her. He cannot follow her into that heaven reserved for the righteous. The cruel mistress of Tristan's Précieux love poems is not so different from the chaste but vengeful Mariane.

If Mariane's bravery in the face of a cruel death is a desire for revenge, it is not heroic. Nor is it heroic if she considers it only the necessary passage to a better life in a realm far more desirable than Judea. For Mariane's idea of heaven is glorious according to earthly standards--fields of flowers, crowns of jewels, and recognition of her superiority, all a little bigger and better than it has been on earth. A Stoic hero was willing to give up all he had in a magnificent show of ideological or physical bravery, but Tristan's heroine knows better things are to come after

death. She hesitates a moment about leaving her children, then reminds herself that she will also be revenging herself on Hérode. This is not Christian charity, nor is her death a real sacrifice; she prefers the glory of heaven to what she has had on earth.

Hérode is a great king brought low by his own violence and passion, and he knows that no heavenly reward waits for him after death. He has been a great leader, so great that his brother-in-law compares him to Caesar:

> Vos belles actions se treuuent sans pareilles,
> Iules, quoy que l'on die, avec plus de merueilles,
> Et par moins de combats & de trauaux diuers,
> S'estoit fait apeler Maistre de l'Univers.
> Vous avez surmonté mille fascheux obstacles,
> Et toute vostre vie est pleine de miracles. (I.iii)

The king himself sees the Pagan richness and fertility of Nature as a fitting metaphor for his glory in battle:

> Dans vn champ spacieux, quand le fruit de Cerés
> De ses tuyaux dorez enrichist les guerés,
> On ne voit gueres plus de iauelles pressées,
> Que i'ay veu contre moy de picques herissées,
> Qui voloient en esclats par tout ou ie donnois,
> Dans la bruslante ardeur dont ie les moissonnois.
> (I.iii)

We are here in the tradition of Tristan's heroes, those superb protectors he praises so lavishly in the Vers héroïques. As befits a Pagan hero, Hérode is watched over by the supernatural, but here there is a break with the old heroic form. His celestial guardian is not a favorite god, but "vn Demon diligent qui sans cesse regarde,/ Les deposts que le Ciel a commis à sa garde," and who "veille pour mon salut" (IV.1). He is a "ministre celeste" who inspires the king, preserves him and his crown, and wraps the warrior in his protecting

wing in the midst of battle. Some Medieval or early Christian idea of the supernatural seems to have intruded on Tristan's clear vision of the Pagan world.

For the most part, these conquerors of Judea think as Pagans. Love is a spell cast on Hérode, and it threatens his success. Phérore warns him of this danger in his passion for Mariane, "Vostre esprit est contraint par un charme effroyable," he says, and even a friendly destiny cannot protect the king from his wife's revenge if he continues to ignore its warnings. "Sçachez que bien souuent ses auis negligez,/ Lui font abandonner ceux qu'il a protegez" (IV.i).

This hero is torn between his real valor as a king and warrior and his helplessness before his passion for Mariane:

> O bon-heur imparfait! ô rigueur importune,
> I'ay pour mes compagnons l'Amour & la Fortune;
> Ils ne me quittent point, ils suiuent tous mes pas:
> Mais l'vn m'est favorable, & l'autre ne l'est pas.
> (I.iii)

He would gladly give up some of the glory for Mariane's love, "Aueugles Deïtez, esgalez mieux les choses,/ Meslez moins de lauriers avecque plus de roses" (I.iii). Hérode's passion is as fatal as that of the courtly lover. Salomé calls it an "enchantement," a "foiblesse indicible," and declares that her brother is "ensorselé." Bernardin describes it as "une de ces passions qui prennent l'homme tout entier, qui énervent son âme et aveuglent sa raison, une de ces passions que les anciens croyaient l'effet d'un philtre magique ou de la vengeance d'un dieu."[11] Hérode longs to be rid of it. He is a violent king, used to ruling, and he hates his weakness:

> Dans ma condition, ie serois trop heureux,
> Si ie n'estois pressé d'un tourment amoureux;
> D'un feu continuel, d'une ardeur sans mesure. (I.iii)

He has seen and heard much of what love can do to the strongest men, and here Tristan is careful to choose a biblical example for Hérode, powerful King David who murdered to have the woman he wanted, "Ce petit Berger qui devint un grand Roy,/ Fut en ses derniers iours plus insensé que moy" (I.iii). The king sees the danger of his own jealousy, that "serpent couvert de fleurs," that "vautour insatiable, horrible Ialousie" (V.i), and he is frightened at the thought that it might drive him to kill Mariane, the only thing in life he finds desirable and beautiful.[12]

Drawing back from the prospect of her death, he believes he would gladly give up glory and fame if he could only know she was faithful to him:

> Ie voudrois que mon nom fust encore inconnu,
> Ne me voir point au rang où ie suis parvenu,
> Estre encore à monter au Temple de la Gloire,
> Estre encore à gagner la premiere victoire;
> Me trouver en l'estat où i'estoit en naissant,
> Et que ce coeur ingrat se trouuast innocent. (V.i)

But his heroic and king-like qualities are eaten away by the suspicion that Mariane has deceived him with Soesme, his friend. Soesme cannot believe the transformation that has taken place in Hérode:

> O Prince! la merueille & l'honneur de nos iours,
> Peut-on croire qu'une ame & si noble & si belle,
> Conçoive des soupçons qui sont indignes d'elle;
> Et qu'un Roy dont l'esprit agit si sagement,
> Pour troubler son repos trompe son iugement?
> (III.iii)

When Mariane is finally executed because of his jealousy, Hérode realizes with a terrible lucidity what his jealousy has brought about. Receiving the news that she has been beheaded, he goes mad and curses all of Judea for not rising up in revenge of their dead Queen:

> Cieux qui voyez le tort que souffre l'innocence,
> Versez sur ce climat un mal-heur infiny.
> . . . . . .
> Qu'ils flottent dans le sang, qu'ils nagent dans les larmes,
> . . . . . .
> Faites pleuuoir sur eux de la flame & du souffre,
> De tout Ierusalem ne faites rien qu'vn gouffre.
> (V.ii)

Hérode's attitude toward his wife is generous. Though the "Parque" has swept her away, her virtues have made her immortal and she lives in the sky among Pagan gods to be worshiped by mortals:

> Il faut que l'on construise vn Temple à ceste Belle,
> Qui soit de son merite vne marque eternelle,
> Un Temple qui paroisse un ouurage immortel,
> Et que sa belle image y soit sur vn Autel:
> Ouy, ie veux que sa feste en ces lieux s'establisse,
> Et qu'on la solemnize, ou bien que l'on perisse.
> (V.iii)

He sees her in heaven, more beautiful than ever, and begs her to forgive him. Throughout the play, he has praised her beauty--a mouth of red rubies, eyes as brilliant as diamonds. He has excused her stiff pride as a result of her chastity, and her haughty attitude is a reflection of her goodness. After all, he says sadly, "on ne voit rarement des roses sans espines" (I.iii). When she speaks tenderly of their children, he is all too ready to forgive her everything; "Vueille essuyer tes yeux, Objet rare & charmant./ La qualité de Roy cede à celle d'Amant" (III.ii).

But Mariane does not feel the same way about Hérode. He is "un Monstre abominable, un Barbare, un Scythe." He is the murderer of her family, "un parricide, un scelerat, un traistre," who is full of tricks and deceptions. It is possible that she once loved him, but that affection has long since disappeared.

In his "Advertissement" to the play, Tristan wrote that he wanted to show "les violences d'Herode, qui furent fatales aux Innocens, et particulierement à cette Illustre Mariane, dont il avoit vsurpé le lict & la liberté, avec la couronne de Iudée" (p. 9). Hérode has shown himself to be a "prince sanguinaire" of a "cruauté sans exemple." But tyrant though he is, Hérode somehow manages to emerge a hero as Racine's Phèdre will later be a heroine. Consumed and destroyed by his own violence and passion, and finally causing the death of the one he loves, Hérode nevertheless looks at himself with honesty and, unable to bear what he sees, goes insane with remorse. It is a strange kind of humility, Pagan of course, without hope of reward or forgiveness from either Mariane or a heavenly Father. But it is more in the spirit of Bérulle and Pascal than Mariane's pride in being chosen to wear a crown for her virtue. (Christians of the times admitted that philosophers often knew God, but accused them of turning what should have been love for Him into self-esteem).[13] Tristan must have sensed a secret sympathy with the fallen hero, for a little later he says, "I'ay seulement voulu descrire avec un peu de bien-seance, les diuers sentimens d'vn Tyran courageux & spirituel" (p. 10).

Within Hérode himself lay the problem that fascinated audiences up until the end of the century, a hero-king, tormented and finally destroyed by his passion for a woman who does not love him. Did religion have the answer to passion? Mariane offers one; her faith resists all temptation and she remains innocent of any compromise. She is calm in the face of death, confident of her right to a place in heaven. In her we see the power of reason and faith to keep the spirit intact until it can at last be free of the mortal body to enter an eternal paradise. But she is not a Stoic heroine because she prefers heaven to earth, and death is just a bad moment to get over. Her pride is not that generous and self-sacrificing "gloire" that Corneille so admired, it is rigid, unbending, and finally selfish.

Tristan saw clearly that Mariane had triumphed and Hérode had failed. He does not side-step the issue when he has Narbal close the play with these lines, spoken over the dead body of the king:

> O Prince pitoyable en tes grandes douleurs!
> Toy-mesme és l'Artisan de tes propres mal-heurs.
> (V.iii)

Passion is indeed the villain and Mariane did well to have nothing to do with it, holding fast to her faith in God. But the story reminds us of the parable of the lost sheep who was more important to the shepherd than the ninety-nine others safely in the fold. Tristan is more interested in what happens to Hérode, led astray by a taste for the world, that he is in Mariane who is already saved. Though Tristan

set out to create an admirable heroine, Mariane lacks even the capacity to be tempted, and reason and religion claim a hollow victory. Perhaps she is Tristan's idea of purity which will later develop into the women saints or the Virgin of his religious works. Hérode is possibly that man, all too corruptible, that he knows himself to be, seen in many different versions among the nobles at Gaston's court.

Humility and simplicity were necessary conditions for the heart to be warmed by Christianity. It was part of Hérode's acceptance of guilt but it was missing in Mariane. Tristan had tried to combine a proud Stoic heroine with a belief in God and immortality, but they canceled each other out. Mariane, so sure of salvation, is finally left neglected in heaven while we grieve over the ruins of a great king, neither Stoic nor Christian.

Panthée was written to give "une soeur à Mariane," and was published in 1639.[14] Tristan's first play was dedicated to Gaston and the second to Prince Henry of Lorraine, "Archevesque & Duc de Reims." The hero of this new play, King Cirus of Persia, was to represent the Archbishop, a prince of the Church. "Veritablement, Monseigneur," says Tristan pointedly in the dedicatory letter, "Vous estes sẽblable à Cirus pour beaucoup de Vertus esclatantes." As a monarch of the Church, this hero cannot lead men onto a battlefield and then exhibit a physical bravery that poets may sing about, for,

explains Tristan, "Vous estes dans une condition dont la tranquilité ne s'accorde guere avec le tumulte des armes, & dont la saincteté ne se dispense pas d'espandre du sang." But if he were called on to do battle for the holy cause he espouses, this Christian prince would be victorious over infidel nations just as his ancestors had been when they led men to do battle for Christianity in the Crusades, and his bravery would astonish no one; "ce ne seroient que des succés qu'on auroit attendus de vous," for the Archbishop is no less a ruler than King Cirus, though his bravery and authority over other men does not show itself in wars.

Tristan tries hard to imagine the glory of the Church as comparable to that of the dramatic clash of armies, but his preference for a glorious warrior like the classical heroes of old, is evident when he tells Prince Henry that his virtuous life will be appreciated too. "Ie suis bien asseuré qu'elle sera pleine de merveilles si peu que la Fortune veuille favoriser vostre vertu." The poet will make him a hero in the character of King Cirus . Though the battles in Panthée are not the Crusades, and Cirus himself is Pagan, it is easy to imagine that Tristan was thinking of a holy war when he wrote of Cirus' "juste cause."

Like the Archbishop, Cirus is an exceptional man, superior to his contemporaries by his tremendous skill as warrior and leader of men, in his mercy toward his captives, and in his realization that a divine hand guides him. Unlike Hérode, he has a strong grip on himself and is not a victim but a victor in every respect.

As a military leader, his fame is widespread and he has no equal. After successfully routing the armies of Assyria and capturing their beautiful princess, Panthée, one of his generals, Chrisanthe, voices his admiration: "L'on peut dire avecque verité,/ Qu'on en doit tout l'honneur à vostre maiesté" (I.i). Another general, Hidaspe, describes the loyalty Cirus has aroused in his men: "Ils yront dans la flame, ils yront dans la glace,/ Et iusques aux enfers leur valeur passera/ Quand vostre maiesté me le commandera" (IV.ii).

It is not by blind chance or by personal bravery and magnetism that Cirus leads his men to victory, but because his cause is just. Chrysanthe, discussing their victory in the first scene of the play, knows the gods fight on their side, "Les Dieux que ce desordre auoit mis en courroux,/ Ont monstré clairemẽt qu'ils cõbattent pour nous" (I.i). Cirus, in the last act, is still sure that the gods have chosen him to do battle for them. "Ie me servirois mal de la faveur des Dieux/ Si ie ne me rendois le maistre de ces lieux" (V.iv). This feeling of responsibility to a mission is more than just national honor, and it is more than personal pride, for Cirus knows his success comes from faithfully serving the gods, by being a good king, one who controls his own desires in order to lead others:

> Vn Roy doit s'appliquer à de meilleurs objets,
> Gouuerner son esprit ainsi que ses sujets;
> Et meslant la iustice à des bontez extremes,
> En commandant autruy, se commãder soy-mesmes. (I.ii)

But even great kings and righteous crusades are sometimes unsuccessful, and Chrisante warns Cirus that perhaps

he had better not push the gods too far in pursuing the battle which has thus far gone so well for the Persians. Divine causes and just kings can sometimes be thwarted by fortune:

> Cette aveugle Deesse est tousiours infidelle,
> On est souuent trompé quand on s'asseure en elle;
> Elle a l'esprit leger & le goust depravé,
> Et laisse choir souvent ce qu'elle a relevé. (I.i)

Cirus does not believe in blind fate and is confident that the gods will look after him because he has been faithful to them, "Ie sers trop bien les Dieux pour craindre ces disgraces;/ I'imite leurs bontez, ie marche sur leurs traces" (I.i). He can count on their guidance in his righteous battles, "C'est leur secret cõseil qui me fait mettre aux chãs,/ Pour conseruer les bons & perdre les meschans" (I.i). Sure that the fate of every man is decided by these just gods and not by chance, he tells Chrisante, "La Fortune en son cours suit leur sainte ordonnance," and each man's happiness and success depend on his own life of generosity and justice:

> Il est bien mal-aisé qu'on ne soit pas heureux
> Quand on fait des desseins iuste & genereux:
> Cars lors qu'à nos souhaits le Ciel n'est pas propice,
> Cet obstacle ne vient que de nostre iniustice. (I.i)

Cirus firmly believes in this reward for goodness and he says so many times. He is expressing a very important part of Christian doctrine even though he talks in terms of Pagan gods.

As he prepares to go into battle again, he calls for Calcas, priest of the sun, to pray and prepare the altars.

He knows this outward sign of worship must spring from a pure heart or the gods will refuse to hear the prayers:

> Il ne faut pas penser que nous les apaisons
> Par des vazes fumans & des effusions.
> Detestans en leurs coeurs la noirceur de nos vices,
> Ils destournent leurs yeux de tous nos sacrifices,
> Ont l'encens en horreur & sont plus irritez,
> Plus nostre hypocrisie invoque leurs bontez. (IV.iv)

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Cirus is sincere, just, generous, and superior to other mortals--a better general, a finer king. He has aroused such admiration in the captured Panthée that she sends for her husband, Abradate, asking him to abandon his own leader, an inferior and jealous king, and join Cirus, "le plus grand Roy que le Ciel ait fait naistre . . . image des Dieux . . . le plus grand des humains." There is something almost unearthly in this perfection, "Seigneur, vos sentimens de mesme que vos gestes,/ A nostre iugement sont des choses celestes" (IV.iv).

When Abradate arrives, he hears Panthée continually praising Cirus, and he becomes jealous of the king. His wife assures him that such a man as Cirus would be incapable of sinning even if he were sorely tempted:

> Cirus m'a fait faveur, mais ie luy rends iustice,
> Quand i'atteste qu'il est inaccessible au vice,
> Et qu'on peut l'eslever entre les immortels,
> Si les grandes vertus meritent des Autels. (IV.i)

But if his virtuous life made the King indifferent to Panthée's charm, the young Araspe is not so lucky in resisting the lovely captive who has been put in his charge, and he is soon driven to despair by his illegitimate passion for a married woman. Although he is at first determined to keep

this love secret and unfulfilled, "une saincte ardeur . . . qui ne sera iamais nuisible qu'à moy-mesme," he has no faith in any divine justice and soon gives up his good intentions because "Un destin tout-puissant, une inuincible Estoile/ Aux yeux de ma Raison attache un sombre voile" (I.iv). Love has led him on to dangerous ground among precipices, "d'où iamais ma raison ne peût la retirer" (II.i). Panthée, to him, is that cruel mistress, "une ingrate beauté" whose eyes are "lumieres fatales" (II.i). We are again in the presence of the Précieux lover, another Acante who goes into the beautiful woods to find consolation from Nature:

> Hostes du silence & de l'ombre,
> Où l'air est si frais & si sombre:
> Arbres qui connoissez l'estat de ma langueur,
> Soyez les confidents des peines que i'endure,
> Et souffrez que ie grave en vostre escorce dure
> Le beau nom que l'Amour a gravé dans mon coeur.
> (II.i)

Panthée's rebuff enrages him. For revenge against her he will die, and perhaps the gods will avenge his death by changing her into that tree on which he has written her name:

> Dieux! si vostre equité ne manque de puissance;
> Punissez sur le champ cette méconnoissance;
> A des coeurs moins ingrats vous avez fait sentir
> D'un indigne mespris un iuste repentir,
> Vous les avez cachez sous l'écorce des arbres,
> Vous en avez formé des rochers & des marbres;
> Monstrez vostre iustice à vanger mon trespas.
> (II.iii)

These are not the same gods to which Cirus looks for support and a recognition of his goodness. They are the old Pagan gods of Nature, busy at vengeful metamorphosis. The difference between Araspe and Cirus, and in their different

ways of looking at what happens to them, is in these lines of Araspe when he admits to Panthée that he loves her:

> Ie ne puis me dédire en ce peril extreme,
> Ie ne puis le celer, Madame, ie vous ayme,
> Et i'ayme mieux mourir adorant vos appas
> Que me rendre immortel ne les adorant pas. (II.iii)

Cirus' superior moral code keeps him from being destroyed by love. It is not the Pagan reason, but something new, not yet named as Christian but very close to it. It allows him to be generous in judging Araspe's actions toward a princess who was to be honored even in captivity. Leading a just and honorable life can leave a man free to be merciful. Knowing he is capable of such generosity, the wise Chrisanthe reminds him that Araspe, like so many other young men, is to be pitied for being young and passionate but without faith and therefore without divine help:

> Sire, en toutes les Cours l'imprudence est commune
> A tous les ieunes gens qu'esleue la Fortune;
> L'homme foible & leger sans un secours divin
> S'enyure de faueur comme l'on fait de vin.
> . . . . . .
> Qui n'estant retenu d'aucun mors vertueux,
> Donne à ses apetits un cours impetueux. (III.v)

Though Araspe's unreasonable love has destroyed what seemed to be a young man of great promise, we know it was not love but a lack of that "secours divin" which made his weakness fatal.

Panthée, on the other hand, is safe from such a fate because she is faithful to her husband, "un amour legitime." Araspe knows from the beginning that Abradate is an unbeatable rival in the uneven struggle for "Panthée est à la fois sa femme & son Amante" (II.i). The princess scorns the

weak love of Araspe as unworthy, just as Mariane had scorned the profane love of Hérode. But unlike Mariane, she loves her husband and enjoys the pleasures of physical love within the safe bonds of marriage. She tries to describe to her maid, Charis, the delights of a legitimate love and the pain of separation:

> O Dieux! Si tu sçauois ce que c'est que d'aimer,
> Quand d'un feu légitime on se sent enflamer,
> Et que la raison suit l'instinct de la Nature;
> Tu connoistras bien mieux la peine que i'endure. (II.ii)

Through the Pagan princess, Tristan makes his first attempt to show the superiority of a love blessed by marriage to the Précieux relationship which was often adulterous.[15] When Araspe first admits that he loves her, Panthée's reaction is immediate and harsh:

> Sçavez vous qui ie suis, songez-vous qui vous estes?
> Quoy? Vous ne respectez dans cette passion
> Ny mes chastes amours, ny ma condition? (II.iii)

Not only is she a princess, but she is protected from him by her marriage vows. This is just as the Church would want it, an approved union of man and woman, sanctified in modern society by the Church, and free of any taint of sin. Tristan only says that this heart burns with a fine love born of the instinctive attractions of Nature guided by the firm hand of reason, but praising the institution of marriage and sympathetically siding with Panthée against her courtly suitor as he does, must have pleased the Archbishop of Reims.

When Abradate is killed in battle, Panthée, as a Pagan princess, commits suicide over his body, blaming Pagan causes for his death:

> Que i'embrasse ce corps où mon coeur se mouuoit;
> Que ie baise ce sang où mon ame viuoit,
> Et blasme en liberté dans de si grands desastres,
> La Fortune, la Mort, les Destins, & les Astres.
> (V.iv)

But Abradate himself is a curious mixture, and it is easy to think of him in a Christian context. Before going into battle for his new master, he imagines his own death:

> Seigneur, en vostre nom i'espere d'en gaigner,
> Ou du moins en mourant ie sçauray témoigner
> Qu'en un fragile corps est une ame bien née,
> Quand ie rendray la vie à qui me l'a donnée.
> (IV.iii)

Not only is this Pagan prince here stressing the importance of the soul over a fragile body, but he is saying that a divinity has given life and will take it back again. Abradate's is a Christian way of looking at death.

After the battle is over and he has been killed, Oronte, another soldier, returns to tell Cirus about it and describes a hell on earth, "Le feu, le fer, les coups, & les cris pitoyables/ Forment là de l'Enfer des tableaux effroyables" (V.i). Abradate's death was particularly violent. He was isolated by the enemy and pierced a thousand times by their spears. "Car des Egyptiens c'est la brutale enuie/ De uanger mille morts sur une seule vie" (V.i). Although there are still frequent references to "le destin" and la Parque," it is the figure of a martyred Christian which comes to mind, and not a battle victim of Antiquity. Panthée underlines the sacrificial quality of Abradate's death when she says to Cirus as they look together on the mutilated

body, "Ah Seigneur! voyez un peu les coups,/ Qu'avec tant de courage il a receus pour vous" (V.iv). In her grief over his death, she cries out against the gods for having deserted their faithful servant and having let him die in spite of all her prayers. But she quickly asks forgiveness for she knows he is now in heaven with them, "Sans doute il est assis là-haut à vostre table" (V.ii). It is difficult here not to be reminded of the gathering together of Christ and the disciples for the last supper.

Perhaps Tristan never consciously conceived of Abradate as a sacrificial symbol more akin to Christianity than to any other religion, but there are elements in his story which are not typical of the Pagan hero. He does not dominate the play but is one of three important men, each representing a facet of the religious problem--Cirus, the great king responsible to his moral gods; Araspe, miserable without these moral laws to live by; and Abradate, the innocent victim, sacrificed in the end. This constitutes a closer look at the traditional idea of a hero. It has elements of the warrior of Antiquity, but added to his bravery is a new code of ethics based on divine justice personified in Cirus, and perhaps even further, in Abradate, there is the hero who goes out to battle in the service of his king and dies symbolically, a sacrifice which saves the others.

These Christian implications are not restricted to the play itself. The Dedication which precedes is appropriately reverent, and following the final act Tristan has added two

religious poems. One is on the death of a member of the Archbishop's household, François de Bridieu, Abbé de Sainct Léonard. It is of course Christian in theme and full of praise for his spiritual qualities. His poetic reward is to be borne magnificently to heaven "sur des aisles de flame." The sonnet which accompanies this one is a personal plea by Tristan himself for better health. He prays to the Christian God, powerful enough to give or take life; "Rendez-moy vostre grace & ma santé ravie,/ Vous qui pouvés d'un mot ressusciter les morts" (n. pag.).

Immortality, miraculous cures and resurrections, divine justice and sanctified love, Tristan finds them all in Christianity. His sermon is a little louder, a little more orthodox in Panthée than in Mariane. This might in part be explained by the fact that he wrote Mariane when he was in relatively good health but Panthée, though written soon after, was the work of a sick man who was becoming disillusioned with popular success, and who claimed that even a successful play brought only passing acclaim, "Ce seroit beaucoup se trauailler pour ne rien acquerir que du bruit & de la fumée" (Avertissement, n. pag.). Might this not reflect an evolution toward maturity for a poet made more serious by illness and pain?

In 1644, Tristan wrote La Mort de Sénèque,[16] and he followed a trend of Classical theater in making Rome the locale of the play. The Roman Empire in the years following the death of Christ, at the time when the new Christian religion was spreading across Asia Minor and into Europe, was a historical subject wherein dramatists could mix Pagan and Christian themes without sacrificing "vraisemblance." Word of Christianity had come to Pagan Rome and marvelous stories circulated about the new Messiah who had preached and performed miracles in distant Judea. Converts gave up their Pagan deities and began to worship the one supreme God who had lived on earth for a time as the man Jesus. One of these converts was Paul of Tarsus. Historically, it is accepted that Paul had some connection with Seneca, tutor to the Emperor Nero. How great this influence was is debatable. No one has ever proved that Seneca was converted by Paul to Christianity, but many believe he was.

When Tristan first conceived his play, several versions of Seneca's last words before his death had been written. The Annales of Tacitus say nothing of a possible conversion. Contemporary with Tristan was Father Caussin's La Cour sainte, which he had consulted earlier in writing Mariane. This version is Christian and stresses the deep friendship of Seneca and Paul and the many letters which passed between them deeply influencing the Roman philosopher.

Besides the Caussin version, there appeared in 1637, Les Dernieres paroles de Sénèque. The name of the author

does not appear on the title page, but in the "Avertissement," a certain Mascaron, a lawyer from Provence, is designated as the author. This layman's account, quoted by Madeleine, discounts the validity of the questionable letters: "Ces lettres de S. Paul à Senèque & de Senèque à S. Paul . . . sont condamnées par tous les sçavans, comme Appocrites & faites à plaisir" (p. 55).

Tristan accepted Father Caussin's account as being nearer the truth than that of Mascaron, but from the latter he conceived the idea of going back directly to Seneca's own Consolatione, Naturalium Quaestionum, and his Epistolae ad Lucilius where, says Madeleine, "Il y trouvait même (puisqu'il faisait sienne la thèse du R. P. Caussin) des traces de Christianisme, ou, pour plus de précision, de ce spiritualisme qui depuis bien longtemps déjà avait envahi les esprits, à Rome autant que dans le reste du monde" (p. XVIII).

La Mort de Sénèque is first of all a philosophical play. The action is based on a plot to murder the Emperor Néron, but this is only a diversion; the real interest and value of the drama lie in Sénèque, his relationship with his pupil, and his attempt to philosophize away the horror and fear of death. He represents first of all, the Stoicism of the Ancients, based on a thoughtful and strong-willed acceptance of both life and its final and inevitable end. In Tristan's time, this attitude was found to be not enough, and the uncertainty and cruelty of modern life was more easily lived with in the acceptance of a religious faith.

Seneca was especially well situated in history to illustrate a fusion between Stoicism and the new Christianity.

The tone of Tristan's play is set in the dedicatory letter when he praises the Count of Saint-Aignan whose ancestors form "un long ordre de Heros où l'on peut compter autant de Demi dieux que de testes" (p. 4). Saint-Aignan is himself no exception for his heroism is comparable to that of the Greeks: "Ie n'y voy que des prodiges heroïques dés vostre plus tendre ieunesse; I'y remarque beaucoup de Combats plus dignes d'estre celebrez par les belles plumes, que celuy d'Hector & d'Ajax" (p. 4).

Tristan goes on to praise virtue and glory born of reason as Saint-Aignan's greatest qualities, "Ces divines habitudes que la Raison establit en nous en despit des sens . . . cette sagesse vigilente, qui reigle avec tant d'auctorité les passions qui se desbordent; & qui se conserve le pouvoir de les calmer lors qu'elles sont les plus esmeües" (p. 5).

Thus we are launched on a wave of admiration for the ideals of Classical civilization. But a fatal flaw shows itself immediately in Néron. He has been nurtured on the finest teaching that the great Sénèque can give him, and yet he is prey to his own weaknesses, passions that lead him to commit deeds of cruelty and which make him susceptible to the suspicions his wife Sabine arouses in him against his own senators and generals. Exposed to the finest Stoic principles, he is yet the worst of men. His second wife,

Octavie, has just been executed by his order for trying to usurp the throne, but he fears that her sympathizers are still free and moving among the people, arousing them to plot against him once more.

There is no doubt in these opening scenes between Sabine and her husband that both of them are Pagan. Néron mentions Fortune and hopes that she is on his side, and Sabine says a special god guides her in foiling Sénèque's design to usurp power. But her denunciation of Sénèque makes Néron begin to question his loyalty, and an interesting dialog follows between the teacher and pupil which might nave taken place among seventeenth century apologists.

After Sabine departs, Sénèque comes to Néron asking him to take back all of his gifts for they are distracting him from the good life:

> Sans doute ces efforts nobles & genereux
> Mettroient ton Precepteur en un estat heureux,
> N'estoit que le bon-heur abhorre l'opulence,
> Et consiste au repos plustost qu'en l'abondance.
> . . . . . .
> Repren tous ces Bien-faits, & permets que ie quite
> Ces marques de ta gloire, & non de mon merite.
> . . . . . .
> Mon iugement s'égare en ces Biens superflus,
> Ie m'y cherche moy-mesme & ne m'y trouve plus.
> (I.ii)

The philosopher is afraid of the seductive charms of worldly possessions, and he warns against them in Tristan's play just as Christ did in his parables and sermons. Néron insists that his material gifts to his teacher are nothing compared to the rich gifts of wisdom he has received. Misunderstanding completely Sénèque's fear of too much attachment

to the material world, he singles out as his most important lesson learning how to speak and sway men against their own reason. But he has a real fear of his own passions, and he knows the value of reason in controlling them:

> Tu sçais qu'aux voluptez la pente est fort glissante
> A ceux dont la ieunesse est forte & florissante.
> Occupe ta sagesse à regler mes desirs,
> A compasser toûjours mes ieux & mes plaisirs.
> . . . . . .
> Quoy, me vouloir quitter? ce seroit me trahir,
> M'abandonner au vice, & me faire haïr. (I.ii)

Some of the terrible results of Néron's undisciplined passion are revealed by the words of Tristan's heroine, Epicaris, a young and beautiful freed slave. Though brave and glorious like Mariane, she is Pagan and wants the gods appeased by the blood of Néron, for he has committed unspeakable deeds against the daughters of the most noble families. Even in the gods' sacred temples, no woman is safe from his lust, nor is Rome itself to be spared the horror of his deeds. Ravaged by fire, the city, "dans une nuict obscure,/ De l'estat des Enfers fut l'ardente peinture" (II.ii); and all the while Néron, "tout enyvré de ioye/ A ce funeste objet chantoit des Vers de Troye" (II.ii). This is the usual historical interpretation of Nero with a Catholic orthodox twist in the fiery hell of Rome aflame.

Epicaris has others with her who agree that Néron is evil and must be destroyed. Together, they plot his death. When it is suggested to Pison, the chief of the band, that he invite Néron to his home for a banquet and have him killed there, Pison draws back, alarmed that he might besmirch the

name of his household gods by such a deed, and frightened that it would call Jupiter's wrath down upon him. The group decides that Néron will be murdered in the anonymous crowds at the approaching festival to honor Ceres, goddess of plenty.

In a conversation with his nephew Lucain, Sénèque refuses to join the plot against the emperor, and he gives this excuse which Lucain is to transmit to Pison:

> Dy luy qu'il m'en dispense & que ie suis malade.
> Aussi bien i'ay promis d'aller voir cette nuit
> Un vieux Cilicien aux bonnes moeurs instruit,
> Un prophete nouueau dont la doctrine pure
> Ne tient rien de Platon, ne tient rien d'Epicure,
> Et s'esloignant du mal veut introduire au iour
> Une loy de respect, de iustice & d'amour. (II.iv)

Sénèque is here clearly talking about a visit to see Paul whose doctrine is a complete break with the philosophers of Greece. He describes it as a new law of respect, justice, and love. Respect and justice might have been words used to describe elements of Pagan philosophy, but love for one's fellow man was a quality peculiar to Christianity. Lucain sees no value in these new religious ideas and he replies, "I'ay trop d'aversion pour les sectes nouvelles" (II.iv).

We are reminded again that we are among Pagan and superstitious people when Sabine recounts her dream in which she has seen Mars raise his sword to kill Néron, and she cries out for help. The gods Bacchus and Ceres rush to her aid and disarm Mars, "L'un couronné d'espices, l'autre de raisins meurs,/ S'estans soudain iettez sur le Dieu de la

guerre,/ Ont fait en fin tomber son Coutelas à terre" (III.ii). The plan to kill Néron fails however, and Pison blames fate:

> Le sort nous est contraire & le Ciel en courous,
> Pour conserver Neron, prend party contre nous,
> . . . . . .
> O malheureux destins que le Ciel & la terre,
> Les hommes & les Dieux nous declarent la guerre.
> . . . . . .
> Une cruelle Estoille, ardante à nostre perte,
> A sans doute vaincu par ses malignitez
> Les presages heureux dont nous estions flatez!
> (IV.ii)

These have all been Pagan pronouncements. Even Sénèque has not said he is convinced by the new prophet of Christianity, only that he will pay him a visit. But under the non-Christian surface an undercurrent runs strongly and inevitably toward a confrontation with death that includes certain preparations counseled by the Church of Tristan's time. We have a beginning in the conversation between Lucain and Sénèque when Lucain insists that man is ill-equipped to meet death for he is an animal like all the others on the earth, and "A tous les Animaux la mort est redoutable." Replying, Sénèque is careful to separate man from other life, and to remind Lucain that he has a mind which sets him apart and which allows him to come to terms with death: "Par la philosophie on la rend plus traitable" (II.iv).

Later, there is another reminder of the need to prepare for death. Sevinus, a senator involved in the plot, finally agrees to invite the emperor to his home and have him murdered there. Néron is surprised to arrive and find a banquet prepared, for Sevinus is reported to be in trouble

with his creditors and nearly bankrupt. Néron asks him how he can give such an elaborate banquet for his friends and Sevinus replies that he is preparing for death, just what the Church was urging the faithful to do:

> En tout temps, ô Cesar! on ne peut faire mieux
> Que de se preparer aux volontez des Dieux!
> Puisque le fresle fil dont depend nostre vie
> Finist quand il leur plaist, non selon nostre envie!
> Et l'on ne doit iamais attendre au lendemain
> Pour faire les apprets d'un despart incertain.
> (II.iii)

Life and the ending of it are for Sevinus in the hands of the gods. Christianity would give this supreme power to one God, but the preparation for death is common to both.

In the last act we see Sénèque, armed with the philosophy of the Ancients, preparing to die as Néron has commanded. "Sénèque," says Tristan in the "Argument" to the final act, "pré-sent son heure derniere; & s'y prepare en Philosophe" (p. 104). First, he establishes the power of the soul to survive the body, the duality of man:

> Mon Ame, appreste-toy pour sortir toute entiere
> De cette fragile matiere
> Dont le confus mêlange est un voile à tes yeux.

This soul came from heaven and there it will return:

> Si l'on te bannist de ces lieux
> En t'envoyant là haut, c'est chez toy qu'on te chace,
> Ton origine vient des Cieux. (V.i)

The spirit of these last words comes from Seneca's own writings. According to his Epistulae ad Martia, XIV, the soul ascends to heaven and to eternal rest. Tristan's version is almost the same except that this eternal repose takes place "dans l'estat d'une meilleure vie" (V.i).

Sénèque now accepts one God, whose spirit watches over those who worship him:

> Principe de toust estre où mon espoir se fonde;
> Esprit qui remplis tout le monde,
> Et de tant de bontez favorises les tiens, . . .

He is a God who delivers his children from their oppressors:

> Tu voy les cruautez de qui ie suis la proye,
> Et i'atens de toy seule mon repos & ma ioye;
> Fay que ie goûte de tes Biens,
> Et me tires bien-tost afin que ie te voye,
> Du ioug de ces pesans liens. (V.i)

Sénèque's wife, Pauline, grieves at the thought of his death, and he tries to console her by picturing a very real heaven which takes the sting out of death. He has listened to the words of Paul's master when Christ assured the faithful that his Father's house had many rooms, and that they would be ready for members of the Christian family to occupy in Paradise:

> Le pelerin lassé d'un penible voyage
> Aveuglé de la poudre, ou moüillé de l'orage,
> Se peut'il affliger avec quelque raison
> Quand il touche du pied le seüil de sa maison?
> (V.i)

Pauline loves life and she begs him to cling to it for that is the will of Nature, to survive in spite of everything. But for Sénèque, steeped in Stoicism, there are spiritual values more important than physical existence; "En ces occasions faut-il qu'on abandonne/ Son honneur & sa foy pour sauver sa personne?" (V.i).

He cuts his wrists, inviting death to come because "La Nature le veut & Neron le commande" (V.iv). Without remorse, he leaves the living to join those who have already passed beyond.[17]

Hearing of the way he died, Néron's wife hastens to interpret Sénèque's words in favor of the Pagan ideas of death,, but the Centurion reveals that Seneque, in his last moments, has professed something quite different:

> Alors levant les yeux,
> Il a dit en poussant sa voix foible & tremblante,
> Dans le creux de sa main prenant de l'eau sanglante,
> Qu'à peine il a iettée en l'air à sa hauteur:
> Voicy ce que ie t'offre, ô Dieu Liberateur!
> Dieu, dont le nouveau bruit à mon ame ravie,
> Dieu qui n'es rien qu'amour, esprit, lumiere & vie,
> Dieu de l'homme de Tharse, où ie mets mon espoir
> Mon ame vient de toy, veuille la recevoir. (V.iv)

These words terrify Néron who believes that the heaven which welcomes the noble and now Christian Seneque, is preparing for him "quelque éclat de tonnerre" (V.iv).

Tristan has conceived of Sénèque as a Pagan philosopher, converted late to Christianity by Paul. He is not the first to accept Seneca's conversion, and the play makes us inclined to take his interpretation as a real historical possibility. The philosopher has not had to reject any of his ideas, belief in a heavenly eternity for the soul is to be found in Seneca's own letters. Tristan has only added to this a new faith, historically acceptable, which was appealing to many of Seneca's fellow Romans. The conversion comes dramatically at the moment of Sénèque's death, when the question of immortality springs to mind, and after Sénèque has seen his teachings fail to make a great king of Néron.

It would seem that Tristan had arrived at a happy combination of the history of Antiquity and the Pagan hero just at the moment when it was completely "vraisemblable" to turn

these two things to the use of Christianity. The gods and fate fade before Sénèque's last words. But the Stoic hero has had to be sacrificed for the converted Sénèque has lost his human independance. Had Tristan been secretly convinced for a long time that Christianity, if accepted, spelled death for Classical Stoicism? It is doubtful that he consciously saw the two as irreconcilable. Yet the co-existence of Pagan and Christian, and the resulting confusion about metaphysical questions--God, immortality, human responsibility--still kept him from achieving a philosophical unity in his plays and a resolution of the Christian-Pagan opposition continued to elude him.

La Folie du sage,[18] written in 1645, is perhaps Tristan's most interesting play. In many ways it is more modern than his earlier works, it engages a wider range of questions and is not so strictly held in check by Classical form. It is a tragi-comédie, with emphasis on magical effects, a type of play which Tristan had thus far carefully avoided, although it must have had an appeal for him. The play is especially important for the two long monologues of Ariste, a scientist-courtisan-philosopher who is temporarily deranged. In these tirades, he eloquently espouses Naturism, Stoicism, Christianity, without showing a marked preference for any of the three, unless it is a final personal dissatisfaction with Stoicism. Airing opposing metaphysical

theories was not altogether safe for the author. In the introduction he is careful to emphasize the wisdom of Gaston's wife Marguerite, compared to the folly of Ariste, and he assures her that his play is light-hearted and not to be taken too seriously:

> Madame: I'imite les Sacrifices des Anciens en la qualité de cette offrande. Ils presentoient à quelques-vnes de leurs Diuinitez les choses qui leur estoient les plus contraires. Aussi presentant cette Tragicomedie à Vostre ALTESSE ROYALE, i'offre vne espece de FOLIE à une Princesse qui peut passer pour la viuante Image de la SAGESSE. (p. 3)

The author has called Ariste's statements folly, but we are on the alert to see whether or not they can be taken seriously, despite the protestations. Madeleine points out the Frontispiece as evidence that they can:

> Le frontispice ne laisse pas d'être fort curieux. Au centre, un vaste écusson mi-parti aux armoiries de France-Orléans et de Lorraine. De chaque côté et au-dessous des attributs divers suggérant, les uns la sagesse, les autres la folie; tels un compas et une marote. Sur une banderole la devise Non Procul, signifiant sans doute que ces deux états d'esprit, sagesse et folie, ne sont pas très éloignés l'un de l'autre. (p. XIII)

Bernardin, while protesting that the details of the monologues are clear enough, would have their inspiration derive from a delirium which Tristan suffered during an illness at the Siege of Montauban years before.[19] Though this is personal opinion and debatable, it is true that La Folie du sage recalls Tristan's novel in the person of Ariste himself who resembles the old magician of Le Page disgracié in many ways.

Opening the play, the King of Sardinia recounts Ariste's ingenuity in frightening off the enemy's army:

> Ariste, vos miroirs & vos feux d'artifice
> Ont fait des ennemis un brûlant sacrifice,
> Et ces longs contrepoids qui portans sur les eaux
> Avec tant de merueille enleuoient leurs vaisseaux,
> On montré clairement qu'un nouuel Archimede
> Ou mesme quelque Dieu se trouuoit à mon ayde.
> . . . . . .
> Mais ie serois encore à la mercy des flots
> Si vous n'auiez tousiours veillé pour mon repos;
> Et si de vostre esprit secondant mon courage
> Vous n'auiez par vostre art conjuré cet orage. (I.i)

The science of alchemy had always been of great interest to Tristan and, addressing Marguerite in the dedicatory letter, he describes the "Divin Autheur" as a master alchemist, "Le Diuin Autheur de toutes choses . . . a visité bien exactement vostre vertu par plusieurs années. C'est un Or qu'il a voulu mettre à la coupelle des afflictions pour faire mieux congnoistre son excellence" (p. 4).

He is also interested in mysteriously powerful effects that result from some of Nature's own properties, poison for example. Ariste says that gossip is "vn subtil poison/ Dont la noire vapeur offusque la raison" (I.i). His daughter, Roselye takes a powerful potion made of Nature's herbs when she chooses suicide rather than abandon her true love and belong to the King as he has ordered. Canope, her maid, drinks the same "noir breuuage," for its "froideur mortelle/ Peust terminer nos iours d'une fin moins cruelle" (V.v). Ariste imagines his daughter's death and sees her "receuant la froideur de ce mortel poison" (III.iv). The potion she has been given turns out not to be fatal but puts her into a

deep sleep. A doctor arrives to reassure the grieving father and to awaken the sleeping woman. Given the opportunity, Ariste launches into a long catalog of Naturist beliefs in questioning the doctor about his opinions. Does he believe he can cure by consulting the stars, does he know how to best use the healing powers of stones, metals, salts, minerals, of herbs, flowers, fruits and roots? From gums and juices could he make potions to heal the sick? Ariste asks the doctor if Averroës is one of the great philosophers on which his art of medicine is based. We are reminded of Vanini, the exponent of extreme Naturism, who also preached that Averroës was his prophet and saw all kinds of powers emanating from Nature. Or perhaps, continues Ariste, the doctor gets divine illumination from numbers or from some god. Finally, he poses the important question: "Et me dirois-tu bien l'origine d'où sort/ Le soufle de la vie & celui de la mort?" (IV.1). The doctor replies grandly, "Seigneur, ie sçay de plus ressusciter les morts."

Ariste: Quoy? tu sçay rappeller les ames dans les corps?
Le Medecin: I'en viens faire chez vous l'heureuse experience.
Ariste: O secret admirable! ô diuine science!
Si tu n'es pas menteur, il faut que les mortels
Esleuent ton Image au-dessus des Autels.
(IV.1)

To accord a Naturist doctor the possibility of magic powers wonderful enough to be worshiped is to have Nature encroach on the territory of God.

Not only do natural phenomena get an airing here safely hidden in the speech of an old man talking nonsense, but Tristan's old feeling about the stars having already sealed the fate of each individual is a refrain echoed by every character in the play at one time or another. Ariste praises their power to accord the finest qualities to the virtuous, and begs them to protect Roselye:

> Celestes ornemens de qui sont reuestus
> Ceux qui dés leur bas âge embrassent les vertus,
> Saintes impressions d'honneur & d'innocence,
> Fauorisez sa cause & prenez sa deffence. (I.ii)

These "brillans feux du Ciel" seemed at first to promise good luck for they had a favorable aspect at the time of his birth, but when he learns of Roselye's apparent suicide, his tone changes, the star under which he was born is after all a cruel one:

> Quelle Estoille maligne influant les miseres,
> Et meslant du poison dans les choses prosperes,
> A changé si soudain l'estat de mon bonheur,
> Me rauissant le bien, le credit & l'honneur?
> (III.iv)

The king is superstitious too, and he blames his ungovernable passion for Roselye on "vn Astre tout puissant" which "rendoit à son pouuoir mon sceptre obeissant" (I.iii). Hearing of her suicide, he reacts exactly as Ariste, blaming the tragedy on "la rigueur des Astres irritez" (IV.ii). But just as quickly, hearing that she is not dead, he finds a favorable star presides over the land bringing happiness at last.

Roselye and Palamede, the young lovers, are as unfortunate as the older generation in their horoscopes. When

all else fails, Roselye hopes she will be delivered by the "puissances celestes" and talks vaguely of some kind of miracle. Disappointed at being forced by her father to give in to the King, she nevertheless tells Palamede that no one is really to blame, it was preordained by Nature's powerful agents, those "Astres irritez" who were envious of her good fortune.

Possibly even more dangerous for Tristan than this talk about the stars was Ariste's tirade on the origin of life. Astrology had existed side by side with the most reasonable philosophies of Antiquity, and still had some popularity at the court of Louis XIII, which was none-the-less safely committed to Christianity. Whether the Church liked it or not, it had had to accommodate to some of this kind of occultism. But the idea of life as growth springing from Nature itself and not from God was a belief acceptable only to an atheist. Ariste asks the doctor this question about the origin of life:

> Et me dirois-tu bien l'origine d'où sort
> Le soufle de la vie & celuy de la mort?
> Scais-tu par quels canaux les Diuines Puissances
> S'escoulent iusqu'à nous parmy les influences?
> Ces Torrens infinis des benedictions,
> Ce concours merueilleux des Emanations?
> Cognoy-tu cet Esprit vniversel du Monde
> Qui penetre dans l'air, dans la terre & dans l'onde?
> Cet Esprit general en vertu sans pareil
> Dont la bonté Divine a remply le Soleil?
> Cette union de Sel, de Soufre & de Mercure,
> Qui maintient tous les corps qui sont en la Nature?
> (IV.1)

It is astonishing that Tristan wrote lines such as these in the year 1645, with the Office de la Sainte Vierge soon to

appear. But he could and he did, hiding behind the flimsy subterfuge of Ariste's temporary insanity from grief over his daughter's apparent suicide. He continues to undercut man's position as child of God, reducing him to no more than an "animal parlant, raisonnable & risible" in a tiny universe in which physical activities bring about a thousand evils and changes. He is,

> Vn mixte composé de lumiere & de fange,
> Où s'attachent sans fin le blasme ou la loüange.
> . . . . . .
> Où l'ame se retire & fait ses fonctions,
> S'imprime les vertus, ou trempe aux passions;
> A qui tousiours les Sens, ses messagers volages,
> Des obiects recognus raportent les images. (IV.1)

He is expressing dramatically some of the ideas that interested the Gassendists, a modern Epicureanism whose relative values and emphasis on experience as the way to knowledge clashed violently with the absolutes of Stoicism and the Church. Those restless atoms, combining haphazardly, make of man "vn jouet de la mort & du temps,/ Du froid, de la chaleur, du foudre & des Autans,/ Et sur qui la Fortune establit son Empire/ Tandis qu'il peut soufler iusqu'à ce qu'il expire" (IV.1).

Ariste is a man who knows about science and he is something of a magician because of this knowledge. He gets amazing and seemingly magic results simply by knowing how to use some of Nature's secrets. Yet he hangs back from embracing a complete Naturism because he still wants to separate the soul from the body and make of it something more than data taken in by the senses. His attitude about suicide shows this:

> Et l'Estre souuerain qui d'un rayon de flame
> Et d'un souffle immortel nous a pourueus d'une Ame,
> Deffend expressement que nos propres efforts
> Pour aucune raison la chassent de nos corps. (I.ii)

Here, Ariste seems to be a Christian in his rejection of suicide and anti-Naturist in according to one God the creation of human souls. But more often it is a Pagan world in which he lives, a world constructed by the gods of Nature:

> Oui, ces Dieux dont les mains ont forgé le tonnerre,
> Ont arrondi le Ciel, ont suspendu la terre,
> Et des astres encor ont construit les Maisons,
> Reglant les iours, les nuicts, les mois & les
> saisons. (V.iii)

These gods are taken seriously by Ariste and more than once he suggests that prayers to them might help the situation. He urges Roselye, "Allez, courez au Temple, embrassez les Autels,/ Cherchez de la faueur entre les immortels:/ Leur support auiourd'huy nous est fort necessaire" (II.ii). He still believes in his own strength and in the glory of an honorable death if all their pleas are unanswered, "Souffrons & succombons avecque bien-seance;/ Ne perdons pas la gloire en perdant le bonheur,/ Et preferons tousiours la mort au des-honneur" (II.ii).

But with all the misfortunes that beset him, this Stoic attitude dissolves into one of self-pity and persecution:

> Par quel desreglement suis-je persecuté
> Avecque tant d'injustice & tant de cruauté?
> Il n'est rien d'ordinaire en cette destinée
> Et ma raison timide en demeure estonnée. (III.iv)

He goes to his books for comfort and guidance, but he finds none and angrily turns on those philosophers who have guaranteed

virtue as a way of life. Enraged at being deceived by their doctrine, he bitterly addresses all of them:

> Esprits dont la Doctrine en erreurs si feconde,
> S'est acquis tant de gloire en trompant tout le monde,
> Nous donnant la Vertu pour un souuerain bien:
> Que determinez-vous d'un sort tel que le mien?
> . . . . . .
> Vous auez asseuré qu'en suiuant la Vertu
> Iamais l'homme de bien ne se treuue abatu:
> Qu'il est aux accidens un Cube inesbranlable
> Tousiours en mesme assiette & de face semblable:
> . . . . . .
> De mesme qu'un Rocher dans le milieu de l'onde.
> (III.iv)

Ariste is deceived by a lifetime of believing that he could control his fate by living according to principle, and his attempts to be virtuous have resulted in disgrace and apparent death for his daughter, and have incurred the dislike and suspicion of the king. That celestial fire has been extinguished by injustice, loss, and outrage, and those men of Antiquity are the ones he blames. Renouncing virtue as a defense against fate, his long tirade ends on a note of despair as he cries out to the lifeless volumes, "Vous l'avez soustenu, Vous en avez menti" (III.iv). There is urgency and real feeling in this tirade of the grieving father, and it lays open to question the whole structure of Pagan Stoicism.

Under the guise of what he calls the wise folly of Ariste's tirades, Tristan has presented a valuable description of the theories of the nature of man which were being debated among the most able men of his time. His picture would not

be complete without a Christian side. He has attached names to the discussion of Stoicism and Naturism, Socrates and Averroës, for example. Christianity is not formally presented, but there are Christian ideas in his arguments on Divine Providence. It does not however, have the last word on that difficult question. At the beginning of his troubles, when he knows Roselye must bow to the King's desire for her, Ariste has not lost faith in a divine providence from whom he begs help:

> Diuine prouidence à qui rien ne resiste!
> Qui m'as veu si content, & qui me voids si triste,
> Pardonne à mes transports puisque ie m'en repens
> Et te laisse toucher aux pleurs que ie répans.
> I'ay mon recours à toy, c'est en toy que i'espere;
> De grace prens pitié d'un miserable pere.
> Ie remets ma fortune & ma fille en tes mains
> Qui sçavent disposer du projet des humains.
> Et puisqu'à ta grandeur il n'est rien d'impossible
> Broüille tout ce dessein d'un ressort inuisible.
> (I.ii)

He tries to reassure Roselye that they will be looked after, for "Le Ciel ayme le iuste, & hait les iniustices:/ A quiconque fait bien tous les Dieux sont propices/ Et s'ils laissoient ainsi perdre les innocens/ Ils seroient criminels, ou seroient impuissans" (II.ii).

Although she cannot know the divine overall plan for mankind, Roselye here is sure that God has planned events in the best way possible, and she tells her maid:

> Canope, quelquefois la diuine puissance
> Permet que l'iniustice opprime l'innocence,
> Et souffre du desordre aux choses d'icy bas
> Pour beaucoup de raisons que nous ne sçavons pas.
> On void le plus souuent la vertu trauersée. (II.ii)

Yet so often both Ariste and Roseleye insist that their fate

is determined by the unfriendly stars! Ariste finds it very difficult to accept a divine plan that does not take into account his virtuous life. The more misfortune he experiences, the less sure he is of the ultimate justice of providence.

La Folie du sage is a play about the supernatural--Pagan, Christian, Naturist. Tristan offers several explanations of its mysteries without finally attaching himself to any one. The King is directed by an ambiguous "clarté celeste," a "souverain genie" (I.i). There is order "que les Cieux establissent," says the King, and "Il faut que je commande, il faut qu'ils obeïssent" (V.v). But what this order is, whether "les cieux" are Pagan or just a literary term for the Christian God that accords divine rights to kings is still in doubt. Ariste never decides. He has rejected the Ancients who preached Stoicism, and this may reflect Tristan's own disenchantement with that part of Antiquity. He is drawn to the idea that man is Nature's idea, and not God's, and yet he wants to believe in a divine providence.

Philosophically, as a reflection of the many ideas at war in his own time, this is Tristan's most interesting play. These ideas "jettent probablement un jour sur la pensée secrète de ce poète qui fut l'ami de Cyrano, et que celui-ci appelait un philosophe, 'le seul philosophe'."[20] A sly rearranging of the title at the end of the play is Tristan's signal that he wants Ariste's tirades taken seriously, when he has the King say, "Je demande surtout que iamais on

n'oublie/ Que l'on a veu d'Ariste une Sage Folie" (V.v). And wise follies they are, they give us a glimpse of Tristan's credentials. He was not blindly stumbling around in that labyrinth of intellectual ferment which was part of his century. If he could not or would not finally decide on any one philosophy, he did clearly understand the importance of each one.

Shakespeare's adage, "There is no fury like a woman scorned," describes Tristan's queen in La Mort de Chrispe.[21] The subtitle to the play, "Les Malheurs domestiques du Grand Constantin," gives us a hint of the violence we will meet in Constantin's household.

Queen Fauste is very proud and she is violent. When she falls in love with her stepson, Chrispe, and when she is rejected, everyone suffers from her wounded pride. She discovers that he loves his cousin, Constance, and the older woman seeks a murderous revenge on her young rival. This is the story of Phèdre without Phèdre's terrible self-knowledge and remorse. It is pure melodrama. Hoping to murder Constance by sending her a pair of poisoned gloves, Fauste inadvertently murders Chrispe too. In despair at failing to get him for herself, the Queen throws herself into a steaming bath or cauldron, reminding us vividly that she is going to suffer in hell. Constantin believes his wife deserves such an end, then accepts his own grief at the death of his son as a divine

punishment for having betrayed his promise to God to make his empire Christian.

Pride has changed since we observed it in Mariane. What was a part of her strong will has become, in Fauste, the destructive element on which the whole play turns. This is a treatment of that human characteristic which never failed to interest the serious dramatists, and which had become a whipping boy for the Apologists. It was more and more the way the Church itself was reacting to proud self-sufficiency, so important to philosophical Stoics and brash libertines.

At first, we get only hints of Fauste's demanding ego. Chrispe persuades her to ask her husband to spare the life of his brother-in-law, the father of Constance. The young man flatters his stepmother and exploits her love of power. "Vous estes le bon Ange & l'Ame de l'Empire," he tells her at one point. Persuaded by his words and madly in love, she agrees to intercede. There has been a tacit agreement between the father and son to indulge Fauste's vanity and thus to keep peace. Constantin sounds like a tired, henpecked husband when he says to Chrispe, "Tu cognois cet esprit qui veut estre flatté,/ Et i'aime le repos & la tranquillité" (II.vii).

We know this unpleasant side of Fauste has existed long before her love is scorned, but until her terrible jealousy is aroused, she is able to make moral distinctions about herself and she knows when her actions are

unworthy. The passion for her stepson tears at her real desire to remain an honorable queen, "L'Honneur qui d'un costé/ Monstre sa seuere beauté,/ L'Amour paroist de l'autre entouré de delices" (II.1). She does not take duty and honor lightly, and she detests the illegitimate love which puts her at the mercy of passion, calling it "la haine du Ciel & l'horreur de la Terre" (I.1). Her strong sense of duty struggles with this new love and she cries, "Le Deuoir & l'Amour avec trop de rigueur,/ S'apliquent à la fois à déchirer mon coeur" (I.1). Pride in her blood momentarily keeps in check any avowal of this love to Chrispe, for "Nul crime à ce beau sang ne se peut reprocher,/ Et i'ayme mieux cent fois mourir que le tacher" (I.1). This decision to keep honor intact is bought at the cost of personal happiness and she echoes the words of Araspe when she admits, "Ma resolution me comble de douleurs" (I.ii).

Though it is basically selfish, her pride operates for a while as a defense against evil, "ce dereglement sans pareil," as Fauste calls her passion for Chrispe. She realizes that Chrispe does not love her, that only a sad ending can result, but like all Précieux lovers, caught hopelessly in their own longing for self-destruction, Fauste prefers the sad position she finds herself in to a life without Chrispe. She succeeds in keeping a grip on herself and resists confessing to her stepson that she loves him until she discovers Chrispe's love for Constance. Imperiously, she commands him to have nothing more to do with

his cousin or her family. When Chrispe flatly refuses and angrily leaves, she cries out in rage, "Tout est perdu pour lui s'il tarde à m'appaiser" (III.iii). Her vengeance brings ruin and tragedy to the household of Constantin; Chrispe, Constance, and Fauste herself are victims.

Throughout the play, Fauste does act in a consistent way with our idea of her. She is a Pagan queen, proud and destructive and never out of character. We are led to believe that Constantin is Pagan too. Only very late in the play do we realize that he is a convert to Christianity. Pagan indications abound; Chrispe has described his father as a favorite of the gods, "Qui voit dans le Ciel par les Divins mysteres/ Ta Fortune tracée en brillans characteres" (II.vii). It is true that Constantin does not call on Pagan gods, but he does believe in omens and thinks the future can be predicted by strange dreams. Heretofore, Tristan's "Christian" characters have not been superstitious, and we are deceived by his fear of an owl seen in his room in broad daylight, and by the sad look and baleful howl his dog gives, prophesying bad luck. Constantin is as susceptible to superstition as Hérode was. There is one small hint that he is Christian midway through the play, when he admits to Lactance that Chrispe is his favorite child, and calls on God to witness it, "Tous mes autres enfans me sont beaucoup moins chers,/ I'en atteste le Ciel, & le Dieu que ie sers" (III.i). Despite this hint, we are brought to the last act completely unprepared for Constantin's acceptance of his misfortunes as

a punishment of the God whom he has betrayed by forgetting Him. It is even more bewildering to find Constantin visited by such misfortune when he has acted as a Christian king should, for he has heard the pleas of Chrispe and Constance, and has mercifully pardoned Licine, believing with Constance that "Le plaisir de bien faire est un plaisir Celeste" (III.vi).

This good king apparently deserves nothing but the best. We have not seen him commit a sinful act. Why then, must he be crushed under the tragedy brought about by a jealous wife? Tristan steps back from the prospect of this unjust fate for a king who has lived according to the principle of charity, that magic word of the Christian Apologists. In an earlier scene he had put dangerous words in the mouth of Lactance as he meditates on his horrible dream of Chrispe's murder:

> I'ay long-temps contemplé l'inconstance des choses;
> Medité sur mon songe & promené mes yeux
> Sur l'instabilité qu'on treuue sous les Cieux,
> Où la plus belle vie & la mieux attachée,
> D'un prompt coup de ciseau se voit souuent tranchée.
> (III.i)

This must not be allowed to stand as the final opinion on that delicate question of Divine Providence. Constantin, in order to refute it, emerges at the end as the real historical emperor of Rome, the first leader to embrace Christianity. In his final declamation, he sees Chrispe's death as brought about by the hand of God:

> Ie puis bien discerner la main Toute-puissante,
> C'est par son mouuement que ie suis abatu,
> C'est ici que sa force accable ma Vertu. (V.vi)

But Constantin continues to praise his benefactor and to accept his punishment as just when he declares, "Par ces viues leçons ie deuiendray plus sage,/ Le mal que ie ressens est à mon avantage" (V. vi). As emperor, he has forgotten to cleanse the land of error and blasphemy, of temples to false gods, and he has not replaced them with the true God:

> Ce grand Dieu qui m'assiste, & qui dans ma souffrance,
> Par sa saincte faueur soustiendra ma constance,
> Consolera mon coeur de sa secrette voix,
> Et me fera tout vaincre à l'ombre de la Croix.
> (V.vi)

These final words reveal the reason for the terrible loss of his favorite son. Constantin had forgotten his duty as a Christian king to create a Christian nation. There have been hints that he was not Pagan like those who surrounded him, that he did indeed worship one God. But the divine action seems severe when we have seen the king leading a virtuous life and showing mercy to a former enemy. It would seem that for a Christian ruler, the task of leading his people demanded a higher allegiance on his part than that of his Pagan predecessors.

Tristan had to develop character in a believable way to write a good Classical drama, for the action of the play was the result of personality. Because we see no evidence of Constantin's Christianity, his acceptance of his personal tragedy as a punishment from God is not convincing. On the surface it is a triumph for the new religion, a Pagan emperor

converted to Christianity, but we cannot see the conversion taking place because the character has not come to grips with any of the real metaphysical questions which serious men were asking themselves.

Osman,[22] written in 1647, spells the death of the proud hero. The young sultan "avoit de l'eclat autant que le soleil" (V.iv). His figure is handsome, and his pride gives him a magnificent air. He fears nothing. But as the play opens, he is preparing to abandon his capital, Constantinople, and flee to Egypt. This is not what we expect of a brave ruler, and we know from the beginning that if he persists in doing this, he is doomed. Osman's sister, the Sultane, voices her forebodings and begs him not to leave his people. The excuses he gives reveal his weakness.

The first scene opens, as did La Mariane, with a prophetic dream in which the Sultane sees her brother killed. The Preciosité of Tristan's poems is evident when she cries, "O sommeil outrageux qui me trouble si fort,/ On peut bien t'appeller le frère de la Mort!" (I.i). She is sure the dream will come true because she has heard that his soldiers are arousing the people against him. When she repeats this to Osman, he justifies his departure and claims he has nothing to fear from his people. "Ie puis passer

ailleurs en toute liberté" (I.iii). But his soldiers are another matter, and they are the very reason he is leaving the city. The guard responsible for his safety has shown itself to be cowardly in battle, and he is going to find better ones in Egypt:

> Ne trouuant plus icy que ce Camp mutiné,
> Que ces lâches Soldats qui m'ont abandonné;
> . . . . . .
> Le dessein de partir ne se peut differer
> Ne pouvant nous deffendre, il faut nous retirer.
> (I.iii)

Not content to describe his soldiers as cowards, Osman continues to condemn them as physically soft, a danger pointed out earlier in La Mort de Sénèque:

> Des Soldats dont le luxe amolit la nature,
> Des courages faillis qui font de tous costez
> Mourir la discipline entre les voluptez. (I.iii)

This sultan who will reveal himself as anti-religious, stresses the fact that these corrupt soldiers are Christians:

> Ie n'ay plus de Soldats que ce Corps lâche & traistre,
> Amoureux du Repos, ennemy de son Maistre,
> Sorty de race infame & de sang de Chrestien.
> (I.iii).

He not only wants to assure his own safety, but he wants to punish them for their cowardice in not defending him in battle; "Ie veux pour mon repos comme pour leur suplice/ En un autre climat faire une autre Milice" (I.iii). Osman thus justifies his behavior and the blame for it is placed on his cowardly soldiers.

The distraught Sultane begs him to leave immediately, if he insists on going, and to do it secretly. But Osman is deliberately delaying his departure in order to take

with him the daughter of the Mufti, whose beautiful picture he has seen, and whom he now covets for himself. But, suggests his sister, perhaps the picture flatters the real woman and she is not as beautiful as she appears in the picture. Proud Osman dares anyone to deceive him in such a way, "On ne peut me tromper sans vne audace extreme" (I.iii). In any case, continues the Sultane, he is foolish to think only of physical beauty, and to fall in love with a picture. Replying, Osman reveals the source of all his actions, gratification of personal desire. He will have the woman, "Il n'importe comment; ie me veux satisfaire" (I.iii). This insistance on having his way will brook no opposition; even the Mufti himself, with all of his civil and religious authority, will not stop him. The Sultane assures Osman that the Mufti will never change his mind, but Osman is not intimidated, "Il sçait que ma colere est assez redoutable" (I.iii).[23]

Indications are increasing that Osman will not get all he wants. A vizir arrives to tell him that the janissaries have armed themselves, and the Sultane again warns her brother that the "mauvais destins" threaten his life. She continues into the second act her repeated litany of trouble to come, and prays for Osman:

> O Fortune inconstante & de qui les caprices,
> Elevent & font choir les plus grands edifices!
> Et qui prens sans raison plaisir à déthrôner,
> Ceux à qui iustement tu devrois tout donner,
> I'ay peur qu'aveuglément tu ne choques mon frere.
> (II.i)

She begs the stars to follow another course and to prevent an unjust war in which Osman, "Astre de la Terre," will surely perish. The setting of this play is contemporary with Tristan's own life, and the angels of the Moslem religion are added to Fortune in the Sultane's supplication:

> Et vous saint Messagers, sacrez Nonces des Cieux,
> Esclairez son esprit & dessillez ses yeux:
> Donnez luy des conseils, faites qu'il les appreuve.
> (II.i)

The Sultane knows that Osman can avert the tragedy, and that destruction will result from his own actions and not from chance. If he could only receive a divine revelation! But Osman is not in tune with heavenly voices, and her entreaties leave him furious, not prayerful. As her foreboding increases, so does his anger and he cries, "De grace à ma faueur, quitte cette humeur noire,/ Et te tiens asseurée à l'ombre de ma gloire" (II.ii).

The Sultane has sought out a mystic to interpret her dream, and the holy man has affirmed her fears. Enraged at this new evidence of what he considers a lack of confidence in him, Osman accuses the mystic of being a charlatan:

> Ie sçay bien qu'un Hermite enclos dans sa celule,
> Vient de donner du trouble à ton esprit credule,
> Qu'il te fait redouter vn songe deceuant,
> Dont la solidité n'est rien qu'ombre & que vent.
> Crois-tu donc Mustapha! ce Deruis frenetique
> Est-ce une bouche à rendre une voix prophetique?
> (II.ii)

His contempt for such humility breaks forth when he is advised to take the hermit's words seriously. As king, he needs no such advice:

> Mais les autres Estats, quand ils sont menacez,
> Demandent-ils ainsi conseil aux insensez,
> Et voit on quelque part que les grands Politiques
> Concertent leur conduite avec des frenetiques?
> (II.ii)

His sister points out to him a uniqueness in his country which Osman has never really accepted. It is not like other states, its laws are based on a religion:

> Cet Estat eleué sur les plus grands Estats,
> Subsiste par des Loix que les autres n'ont pas;
> Et sa propre grandeur fait voir la difference
> De nostre Politique & de nostre creance. (II.ii)

These words only add fuel to his anger, and he threatens to have the holy man killed if he does not cease his dire predictions. All of the Sultane's warnings against Osman indulging himself at the expense of his people have come to nothing, and she retires leaving him more determined than ever to leave Constantinople taking the Mufti's daughter with him.

However, Osman's fascination with physical beauty has left him unprepared to accept la Fille. On meeting her for the first time, he recognizes her queenly appearance, but is disappointed that she is not beautiful:

> Aupres d'elle ma soeur ne semble qu'vne Esclave,
> Mais elle a plus d'orgueil vingt fois que de beauté;
> Le portrait qu'on en fit, est un portrait flaté.
> (II.iii)

He rejects her, and for the most hypocritical of reasons. After swearing to have her at all costs, defying religious and civil custom and law, he now calls them to his defense, pretending he is unwilling to go against their authority:

> Madame, ie ne veux que ce que me permet
> Avec facilité la Loy de Mahomet.
> Ie ne donneray point en irritant le Temple,
> Aux Sultans à venir un si mauuais exemple;
> Mon esprit a gousté les raisons du Mouphti,
> I'estois dans vne erreur, enfin i'en suis sorti,
> Sans perdre plus de temps, allez qu'on la r'amene.
> (II.iii)

But Osman cannot dismiss la Fille so easily. She is too proud to suffer such an affront, and she becomes the instrument of his destruction, as she calls for vengeance:

> Le Prophete là haut n'aura point de puissance;
> Ou deuant qu'il soit peu, i'en auray la vengeance,
> Il aura contre luy tous les bons Musulmans,
> Les Anges, les humains, les Cieux, les Elemens.
> (II.iii)

Her hatred is all the more venimous because it is mixed with love; "Ouy! i'ayme ce cruel, ouy i'ayme ce barbare,/ Et confesse tousiours que son merite est rare." It is this volatile mixture of love and hate on the part of the rejected Fille which will bring about Osman's downfall:

> Il faut pour satisfaire à ma haine infinie,
> Qu'on éclate tout haut contre sa Tyrannie,
> Qu'il soit hay de tous, qu'il soit abandonné,
> Qu'il soit assiegé, pris, degradé, detrôné. (III.i)

She plots with the officer Selim, to destroy Osman, and as reward she will accept the soldier as a suitor, but she admits secretly to her maid that "mon coeur n'est plus à donner" (III.i), so great is her passion for the emperor.

The irresistible appeal of the young Osman is constantly emphasized by Tristan. When he goes out to meet the mutinous soldiers, he is a magnificent hero:

> Dessus ses brodequins & sur sa veste encor,
> Eclatoient des rubis, des perles & de l'or,
> . . . . . .

> Mais cette belle taille & cet air magnifique,
> . . . . . .
> Eblouissoient les yeux & frappoient les esprits
> Avec mille brillans qui sont d'un autre pris.
> Apres avoir lancé des regards tout de flame,
> Qui passants sur les fronts penetroient iusqu'à l'ame,
> Et faisant dans les coeurs vn merveilleux progrez.
> (III.ii)

Osman never seems to realize what he has done to make his soldiers rebel, for he defies them to find him guilty of the smallest crime. Has he not been brave, pious, free of vices? His very presence before them makes the twenty thousand soldiers "muets comme marbres glacez" (III.ii). Osman returns to the Serail "superbe & tout enflé de gloire" (III.ii).

Selim and the Mufti again stir the soldiers to revolt against their king, and the people join them as they march on the palace. Just before their arrival, Osman has a conversation with his teacher, Lodia, who warns him once again to be careful; "Tempere s'il te plaist la force de ton coeur" (IV.i), and urges him to flee before it is too late. In the face of unavoidable defeat, Osman again refuses "une honteuse fuite" before those "fils de Chrestiens" who are no better than dogs (IV.i). He proudly rejects the last chance for escape, and goes out on the balcony to face the crowd, shouting, "Qui vous fait assembler pour me donner conseil?/ L'ombre est-elle en estat d'eclairer le Soleil?" (IV.iv). Once again he excuses himself with a pious pronouncement:

> Vous excitez en vain cette rumeur mutine,
> Lorsque ie veux partir pour la Sainte Medine:
> Vers le sacré tombeau ie porteray mes pas,
> Que vos seditions ne retarderont pas. (IV.iv)

Orcane, rising to speak against him, brings into question everything Osman has said. First, he reminds him that a ruler's sacred duty is to remain with his people. Second, Osman's charges against his own soldiers are wild exaggerations. But the most unworthy of all his maneuvers is the use of religion to give his deeds an appearance of piety:

> Pourquoy faut-il Seigneur! employer l'artifice
> Pour tromper auiourd'huy ton Peuple & ta Milice;
> Quoy? feindre pour la Mecque un voeu de Saintetè,
> C'est te trahir toy mesme avec impietè!
> Et c'est prendre à tesmoin la Puissance Diuine
> D'une mauvaise foy que Bisance deuine,
> Et qui sous la couleur d'vn voile specieux
> A paru dés l'abord toute claire à nos yeux
> Nous sçavons bien, Seigneur, que ce pelerinage
> Est vrayment une fuite & non pas un voyage:
> Il ne faut point vser de serments superflus;
> On void bien que tu parts pour ne reuenir plus.
> (IV.iv)

Orcane's men also know that the king has robbed a tomb, taking a jewel from the turban of the dead Acmat. Yet the soldiers do not want to force Osman out, and Orcane again begs him to stay with his people. The king is untouched by the pleas. Imperiously, he cries that he will have them all killed for their insolence. His threat is empty and the fifth act opens on a defeated and abandoned Osman, begging fortune to consider his plight:

> O Fortune! Nimphe inconstante,
> Qui sur vne conque flotante
> Fais tourner ta voile à tout vent! (V.i)

All of his friends are gone, dead or forced to flee, and his enemies grow in power. Why has everyone abandoned him? Even now, Osman cannot understand his own defeat. He believes that "D'icy la raison est bannie" (V.i). It is inconceivable to

him that a humble dervish has taken the throne from a mighty king, for the hermit who predicted his defeat has unseated him. Osman, who from the beginning has not understood the importance of religion to his own success as a ruler, cannot believe the Christian prophecy that the meek will inherit power and that the proud will fall before them. If he had been overcome in battle by another brave leader, then he could have accepted defeat:

> Mais que ie sois destruit, mais que ie sois chassé,
> Par vn homme idiot, par vn oncle insensé:
> Qui s'est reduit luy mesme en un lieu solitaire,
> Qui ne sçauroit parler, ny ne sçauroit se taire.
> . . . . . .
> Ie ne puis démesler un noeud si fort confus,
> Ie m'y void, ie m'y cherche, & ne m'y trouue plus.
> (V.i)

The last echo of that warning against pride first voiced by the Sultane comes from the daughter of the Mufti herself. If Osman had respected the virtues and the "sainteté" of her father:

> Le Diadesme encor brilleroit sur ta teste
> Et le sacré respect de la religion
> Prendroit tes interests en cette occasion. (V.ii)

Cirus had been a good king. He ruled with the blessings of the gods and in their service, but Osman, though magnificent on the surface, ruled only to satisfy himself. He used religion for his own ends and was guilty of the hypocrisy that Cirus had warned against. Nothing was sacred to him, not even religious teaching. Perhaps Tristan made Osman's pride seem attractive in order to contrast even more dramatically the ruler's defeat at the hands of the "foolish" holy man. Osman

is one of a great race of heroes who can no longer rule because religion--Moslem or Christian--must now be part of his character if he is to survive his own passions.

Have we not come full circle back to Hérode who, leaving religion to Mariane, was the victim of his passions? But Tristan is more explicit with Osman who has tried to live without religion and still worse, to use it as an excuse for base actions dictated by his own selfishness. Hérode is dead and mourned in the last scene of La Mariane, but Osman is replaced by a religious man, a hermit and a mystic. The great king himself never realized that the humility of religion had triumphed over his worldly power because it offered a remedy for his fatal disease of pride.

La Folie du sage was a dazzling display of philosophical erudition on the part of Tristan the poet. Amarillis[24] is pure diversion. There is not a scientific or philosophical thought which is here taken seriously. Tristan, in 1652, reverted to the tradition of the pagan pastorale, and it appeared that nothing had changed since he wrote Les Plaintes d'Acante almost twenty years before. Serious plays and religious devotionals evaporate as though they had never existed in the face of the hedonistic, erotic, and playful Amarillis.

Modeled closely on Rotrou's Célimène, Tristan wrote this play to entertain and there is little instruction in it.

"C'est icy un Tableau où deux differens Pinceaux ont contribué," says the printer in his "Advertissement." But the Stances and the scenes of the satyrs were added by Tristan, and it is in these that we find some of the most sensual and erotic passages. Philidas, the young poet who loves the unresponsive Amarillis, writes these lines:

> Mes esprits sont tous languissans,
> Mes foibles & timides sens
> N'ont plus de clarté ny de force,
> Et mon malheur est sans comparaison,
> Depuis qu'Amour a semé le diuorce
> Entre mon Ame & ma Raison. (II.iii)

We can see that Tristan's mind is on love and the senses, and we do not expect or get any intellectual discussions. The trees are called on to listen to the young lover's woes, and he asks the gods to relieve him by "un dormir sans reveil" (II.iii). We are now in the magic land of escape from the present, and the young Belise says on her arrival in the beautiful woods from the court:

> On gouste les plaisirs les plus purs de la vie,
> La cabane me plaist bien plus que nos maisons;
> Les villes à mes yeux ne sont que des prisons,
> Ie hay des Courtisans une foule insolente,
> Icy tout m'entretient, tout me rit, tout m'enchante. (I.i)

Nature is permitted to rule hearts and wills by her sensuous appeal. The satyrs are not restricted in the expression of their appreciation of the nymphs who inhabit the woods:

> L'une qui sur le bord marchoit comme à tastons,
> Laissant ses vestemens montroit ses beaux tetons,
> Et touchant de son pied cette onde cristaline,

> Faisoit voir au grand iour une jambe poupine,
> Une cuisse bien faite, un ventre potelé,
> Pour qui nostre Dieu Pan luy-mesme auroit brulé.
> (II.i)

This is only one of many such expressions of unlimited and uninhibited delight at the sight of beautiful women. The satyrs do not hide the fact that they are out to "contenter nos flames" (II.i). Tristan's additions to the original Célimène only underline and extend what Pagan and sensual qualities existed in the original. These, together with the story of the two young couples finally happily united after some persuasion by the charming Belise, make up Tristan's worldly fairy tale.

Now that we have examined all but one of Tristan's plays (Le Parasite is a comedy, and does not touch on our subject of Christian and Pagan influences), can any conclusions be formulated about Tristan's aesthetic and philosophical preferences? A tentative one can be offered. As long as he wrote under the influence of Classical rules, he tended to deal with metaphysical problems. There are more interesting statements about Pagan and Christian ideas here than elsewhere in his work. Through stage personalities--good and bad kings, innocent and not so innocent queens--there are personifications of the philosophical and Christian ideas which interest us most. The value of Stoicism is constantly examined. After 1644 and the publication of La Mort de Sénèque, it is not championed as a satisfying answer to the human dilemma. Long before, in Panthée, and even in

La Mariane, we see its limitations. If faith in human potential to arrive at fixed values is fading, are passion and irrationality supplanting it? Is Tristan feeling more keenly than ever the "malaise" of his century, that disappointment in man's ability to control himself so deeply felt after the religious wars? Is he persuaded by scientific discoveries to discount the old authority of the Church? La Folie du sage might lead us to think so. Amarillis seems completely Epicurean. It tells us nothing unless it is that Tristan has abandoned reason and virtue for love and sensuality.

And yet, there are two lessons which seem constant throughout his theater. One is the terrible destructiveness of pride, and the other is that unchecked passions will turn us into Nature's plaything. Incapable of leading a good life, we must indulge our senses to the point where they engulf us. Calling God's children back from the dangerous Paganism and self-adulation of the Renaissance, the Church could ask for no better voice than that of this perplexing poet. Living and partaking of as worldly a society as we are likely to see, Tristan is nevertheless echoing the voice of the Church itself when he condemns pride--that Renaissance vice--as being against man's best interest, and passion--Nature's own voice--as human enslavement.

NOTES

[1] La Mariane, ed. Jacques Madeleine (Paris: Hachette, 1917), p. 1. All references are to this edition.

[2] Reynold, p. 18.

[3] Lanson, Esquisse, p. 56.

[4] J.-P. Chauveau's review of La Tragédie, by Jacques Morel, XVIIe Siècle, 70-71 (1966), 146.

[5] Madeleine, p. 20.

[6] Ibid, p. 29.

[7] Ibid, p. 30.

[8] In The Strangers (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), Claude Abraham points out that this idea of a hero was "in the tradition of the century," and that both Mariane and Osman are "young and attractive, noble and bold" (p. 33).

[9] David Westgate, "La Mariane and the Formation of Classical Tragedy," Nottingham French Studies IV, no. 1 (May 1965), 6.

[10] Chauveau, p. 146.

[11] Bernardin, pp. 348-49.

[12] Hérode's attitude toward Mariane is complicated by the fact that she had once loved him enough to save his life. "His pride and his possessive love are both shaken by the disdainful rejection of the woman he adores and to whom he owes the very throne he is so proud of having secured" (The Strangers, p. 52).

[13] Dedieu, p. 507.

[14] Panthée (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1637). References are to this edition.

[15] According to Précieux ideals held by the aristocracy of the time, this praise of the institution of marriage was an attitude which limited the woman to something less than the individual liberty she insisted on. Perfect marriages were possible, but rare. An imperfect or unsuccessful marriage should not be allowed to enslave the woman. "Si elle n'y réussit pas, libre à elle de prendre des allègements des dispenses avec une loi qu'elle ne reconnaît pas comme absolue. Elle aura le droit de garder sa faveur à l'élu, qui ne sera pas le mari: elle conciliera, en les séparant, le mariage et l'amour" (Bray, La Préciosité et les précieux, p. 165).

[16] La Mort de Sénèque, ed. Jacques Madeleine (Paris: Hachette, 1919). All references are to this edition.

[17] Death is more Christian for Sénèque than it was for Mariane, points out Abraham; "Mariane saw in death little more than a release. Sénèque sees more: to die is to be reborn" (The Strangers, p. 34).

[18] La Folie du sage, ed. Jacques Madeleine (Paris: Droz, 1936). All references are to this edition.

[19] Bernardin, p. 412.

[20] Adam, Histoire, II, 346.

[21] La Mort de Chrispe (Paris: Besongne, 1645). All references are to this edition.

[22] Osman (Paris: de Luynes, 1656). All references are to this edition.

[23] There is a hint in this first act that Osman may meet his match in the Mufti's daughter, for she, too, is proud. Fatime, a member of the Sultane's court, has made sure Osman has seen the beautiful picture of her friend. But, at the same time, she warns the sultan that la Fille is "Fiere & pleine d'un orgueil/ A mettre d'un amant l'esperance au cerceuil" (I.viii).

[24] Amarillis (Paris: de Luine, 1653). All references are to this edition.

V.

PROSE AND "AMBIGUS"

The hero of Tristan's only novel, Le Page disgracié, is a young man much like the author himself. He is an aristocrat without a family, a wanderer without a home. The novel is a curious mixture of medieval and Rabelaisian "contes," of the chivalric world of L'Astrée, and of the picaresque tale of adventure in a realistic world, "un compromis entre le récit chevalresque et le récit de moeurs, le plus souvent très réaliste."[1] There was a vogue for this kind of narrative during the seventeenth century, and the public avidly read stories of vagabond heroes who encountered all kinds of people in their adventures. Le Page disgracié had been preceded in France by Sorel's Francion, and in Spain by Cervantes' Novellas. These long tales reflected different aspects of society and, in this sense, were realistic. Tristan's story is also rich in this variety. "Il abonde en renseignements sur la Cour, la Ville et la Province, même sur certains pays étrangers, sur les lettres et le Théâtre, les moeurs, les croyances et les superstitions populaires, entre autres sur l'astrologie et l'alchimie, encore si en vogue à cette époque, même auprès des esprits éclairés" (p. XXXVII). The title indicates that Tristan was ambitious about painting a large literary canvas, and that he wanted to discuss more than one class of society.

In its entirety it reads: Le Page disgracié où l'on voit de vifs caractères d'hommes de tout tempéraments et de toutes professions. Such a title is typical of the picaresque tale.

It is probable that much of the book is autobiographical. There are tales of the young page's life at court which are fairly accurate accounts of Tristan's own experiences. This material about his childhood places the novel chronologically before his Lettres meslées, though the Lettres were published a year earlier. Like the page, Tristan remained at the court until he was thirteen, and then was forced to flee because of his own hot-headed behavior. The extraordinary voyages which follow are only partly factual. The page visits England, Scotland, and Norway before returning to France, and there is no record that Tristan himself ever traveled so widely. We do know, however, that his accounts of life in the service of several aristocrats are based on his own experiences. The author knew at first hand many of the characters and situations in his literary creation, and he speaks from personal experience. The story is a mixture of romantic galantry (his adoration for his young English pupil with whom he falls in love), of realistic buffoonery (the cat blown up to twice its size by a straw), of magic and of magical effects created by chemicals mixed in the dead of night by the page and his young court friends. Tristan's own life was such a mixture, and the final effect of the narrative is unified only by the presence of the page. Just as Tristan's own outlook is marked by inconsistency,

so the little vignettes inserted into a picaresque-type narrative and the constant change of milieu both give the general impression that the author has no thought of subordinating his novel to any kind of unifying action which would reveal psychological subtleties in his hero. The page remains a superficial figure, a hero to whom things happen, but who basically is not changed by these events.

The boy we meet in the first pages of the novel is not very different from the young man who leaves us at the end of two volumes, promising to return later with more adventures and disillusioning accounts of the basically evil nature of human beings. This attitude is almost inevitable in a novel concerned mainly with the vicissitudes of an innocent abroad in a corrupt society. It is a ready-made literary convention to display Tristan's continued belief that he is a plaything of fortune. It reflects superficially what the Gassendists were saying on a more profound level, that man is at the mercy of the powerful forces of Nature, and that individual will can do very little to change this condition.

But Tristan parts company with the amoral, carefree picaresque hero who is free from the weight of a conscience, for the page knows his vices and admits them; "Je n'écris pas un Poéme illustre où je me veuille introduire comme un Heros, je trace une Histoire deplorable, où je ne parois que comme un objet de pitié, et comme un jouet des passions

des Astres et de la Fortune" (p. 10). "C'est une fidele copie d'un lamentable Original, c'est comme une reflexion de miroir" (p. 11). This theme is not new in Tristan, but runs like a linking thread through his poetry and his prose. Since he is powerless to overcome or change his own nature, as a non-believer he has no choice but to consider himself the victim of an indifferent destiny pre-ordained by the stars.

Mixing philosophy with narrative, Tristan takes a position on the will versus passion debate very early in his novel. He makes it clear that the page is a victim and not a victor, that he is condemned without appeal because of his own weak nature. The problem is to know exactly what form destiny is going to take, even if we can be sure it will always be unkind. Only three pages after having linked bad luck to the stars, Tristan blames the loss of a family inheritance on Divine Providence. "Mais comme on apperçoit en toutes les choses une vicissitude perpetuelle, et que selon les secrettes et justes loix de la Divine Providence les petites fortunes sont eslevées, et les grandes sont aneanties, j'ay veu comme disparoistre en naissant la prosperité de mes peres" (p. 13).

Whether he means the same thing as his contemporaries by Divine Providence is open to question because he abandons both the term and the idea and returns quickly to his conviction that the stars rule destiny and decide the charac-

teristics of every personality. "J'eus Mercure assez bien disposé, et le Soleil aucunement favorable: il est vray que Venus qui s'y rencontra puissante, m'a donné beaucoup de pente aux inclinations, dont mes disgraces me sont arrivées. Je croy que cette premiere impression des Astres laisse des caracteres au naturel qui sont difficiles à effacer: et que s'ils ne forcent jamais, au moins ils enclinent sans cesse" (p. 16). Tristan does not deny completely the role of free will here, that part of man's personality which would allow him to dominate events and to put them to his own use, but he severely limits the extent to which it can control the passions which we inherit according to the position of the stars at our birth. Natural inclinations are powerful factors. "On dit que le Sage peut dompter cette divine violence, mais il faut aussi qu'il soit veritablement sage, et l'on ne trouve gueres d'esprits de cette marque" (p. 16).

It is possible then, says Tristan, that reason and wisdom can control destructive passion which enslaves man from his birth. His contemporaries who insist on the power of will and abstract ideals may be right, but this reason is so rarely found among humans that it can have an effect on the lives of very few. Most men do not have enough reason or will to overcome temptation, and even the most devout souls, "eux dont les ames ne regardent plus que le Ciel" (p. 17), are assailed night and day by dangerous temptations which return over and over to do unceasing battle with goodness and piety.

Tristan's ambivalence is again evident in a philosophical passage where he begins by attributing passions to the position of the stars at the time of birth and finishes by pointing to "les saints Personnages" forever tempted by God himself. "Il est vray que pour rendre leur merite plus grand, Dieu permet que les Demons s'en meslent" (p. 17).

A vascillation between Christian and non-Christian marks the story itself. Because of the many references to the stars as the power that governs man's fate, it is probable that this was Tristan's true interpretation of fate at this time, and yet the publication date is 1643, just a year after his Christian Office de la Sainte Vierge. But now destiny is most often directed by forces of Nature. When the author uses the term "divine providence" or inserts a Christian allusion, it seems almost an after-thought, a last minute reminder that we are in seventeenth-century France where the Church cannot be ignored completely in philosophical interpretation of metaphysical questions. And yet it is to "la Philosophie" that Tristan turns for help in controlling the instincts and not to the rules of the Church. "Il faut qu'une bonne eslevation soit bien assistée de la Philosophie pour combattre toujours avec avantage des ennemis qui nous sont naturels." (p. 17). Terms themselves show a double orientation. Sometimes the page refers to his gambling as a vice, sometimes as a sin. The Christian idea of personal guilt inserts itself by words that imply a more serious transgression rather than just a bad habit.

There are statements and events which seem almost Church propaganda. In the service of the king, the page departs to do battle against the Protestants at La Rochelle calling the enemy, "ce Monstre furieux" (p. 397), who drew strength in battle from "le pur effet d'un faux zele qui les faisoit ainsi devenir plus qu'Amazones" (p. 409). In the course of the battle, the page becomes seriously ill, and he will allow no one to come near except "deux bons Peres Religieux . . . qui m'avoient donné de grandes et justes impressions de leur science et probité" (p. 409). While ill, he has visions in his delirium of a Christian heaven and hell about which he composes a poem:

> Tantost je croyois estre en la troupe des Anges,
> Et là de mon Sauveur exalter les louanges:
> Tantost je croyois estre au plus creux des Enfers,
> Tout embrasé de feux, et tout chargé de fers.
> (p. 422)

This sickness has made him more of a believer. As a precocious child, he had once announced to a Church official that Catholics offered no concrete details on hell, and he doubted even the existence of "des tenebres où il y avoit de si grands feux allumez" (p. 18).

Tristan loved magic and illusion just as all the Baroque writers did. But Baroque can also be Christian, and when Tristan introduces his mysterious old alchemist he is careful to make him as Christian as possible. The interest in alchemy and magic was widespread in the first half of the seventeenth century, and Tristan seems to have been fascinated by it. One day, still at the court, the

page happened to open a book by Baptiste Porta called Magie naturelle:

> Trouvant là dedans des petits sujets qui me sembloient jolis, je l'achetay pour essayer d'en mettre quelques-uns en pratique. . . . Nous y trouvasmes la maniere de faire de certaines chandelles à faire voir le soir tous les assistans avec des testes d'animaux, mais leur composition nous parut un peu mal-aisée; nous aymasmes mieux experimenter un autre secret de mesme espece, qui se pouvoit facilement effectuer et à peu de frais. C'est une composition de canfre et de soufre detrempez ensemble avec de l'eau de vie, dont le feu devoit faire paroistre les visages comme sont ceux des trepassez. (p. 73)

Jean Baptiste Porta was an Italian scientist who died in 1615. Although his research in physics and chemistry might have been welcomed by those men of the Church who, like Father Mersenne, were interested in securing a bond between religion and science, he was considered dangerous by the more powerful authorities, and his academy of Secreti, which he established in his home, was condemned and suppressed by a decree of Pope Paul III, who forbad him to have anything more to do with "illicit arts" (p. 72).

This was generally the attitude of the Church toward those who claimed to derive magical transformations and powers from Nature herself. It was dangerous to believe that the miraculous had anything but a Christian explanation. The supreme power of God and his Church was threatened by a faith in the occult powers of Nature. Most Christians looked on alchemists with horror as the Devil's disciples. But the strange old man in this novel is a kind of hero, a figure of superhuman knowledge who promises to

make his young admirer rich by the secret knowledge he possesses. Far from an agent of the Devil, the page thinks this friend is "un remede envoyé du Ciel pour adoucir ma fortune" (p. 89). Actually, the strange figure bent over a fire in the middle of the night is making counterfeit coins by melting metals together. The boy thinks he is a new Artefius, a great man of magic power like the twelfth century magician who claimed to have lived a thousand years by the secrets of the philosopher's stone (p. 91). He begs the old man to take him on as a companion, promising never to divulge the secret of the magician's power.

The magician himself is quick to connect his power to a higher source. He tells the page,

> Que ce benefice si précieux n'estoit pas produit seulement par le soin des hommes, qu'il y avoit une particulière benediction dans l'accomplissement de ce grand oeuvre, et que ce seroit meriter une eternelle malediction, si l'on n'usoit de cette grace avec grande consideration. . . . C'estoit pour ces raisons qu'il menoit une vie cachée et penible, apprehendant que la divine Justice le precipitast dans les abysmes eternelles après une si rare faveur, s'il l'employoit en mauvais usage. (pp. 96-97)

The two set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where together they will worship at the tomb of "celuy qui a fait tout le Monde" (p. 97). The old man insists that the page make a full confession of all his sins to a priest and then takes him to a convent where they spend the night after having received a warm welcome from the nuns.

The alchemist boasts of two special accomplishments, visions he has in his sleep which predict the future and

have already foreseen important events which have taken place, and his ability to divine the nature of a person and predict his personal future by a look at the lines in his palm. Accurately, he tells the page in this way that he is too given to sensual pleasures, and warns him of a possible disaster, but one that can be avoided by acting wisely. Soon after, he leaves the page, promising to meet him in three weeks in London. He gives him two parting gifts, a handful of counterfeit money, and several pinches of a magic powder that wards off sickness. The page is later to make good use of both. Convinced that the alchemist holds the key to his fortune, the boy goes to meet him in London, but he is not there, and the page loses sight of him forever.

The episode of the magician reflects a popular interest in the occult, a general inclination of many to find the supernatural in Nature. Along with a Christian faith, some believed that Nature, too, had its miracles. Such an important Church figure as Saint Thomas Aquinas had found alchemy fascinating, but had dropped it, fearing that it posed a threat to Christian authority. But many alchemists claimed, as did Tristan's magician, that its powers were distributed by God among certain men. In any case, the alliance between Christianity and alchemy was questionable, and the supremacy of a Pagan Nature or a Christian God still went unresolved in the minds of many men.

The page's love affair with his young English pupil offered Tristan the occasion to include in his varied novel an account of a romance which bore all the characteristics of the Précieux ideal. The pitfalls of the Carte de Tendre had replaced the physical tests of the medieval knight. The new code for amorous perfection was more superficial and less serious than the earlier ideal. The knight himself was no longer a warrior whose personal prowess was a test of his love. He was a young courtisan, vain about his appearance. "J'estois devenu beaucoup plus long à m'habiller qu'à l'ordinaire, affectant ridiculement une propreté qui ne m'estoit point naturelle. Je portois tant de plumes au tour de mon chapeau, qu'il sembloit que ce fut une capeline" (p. 181).

He is no less vain about the appearance of his mistress; "Son poil estoit chastain, son teint assez delicat et beau, ses yeux bien fendus et brillans, mais sur tout sa bouche estoit belle, et sans hyperbole, ses levres estoient d'un plus beau rouge que le corail" (p. 123). Her appearance stirs in him "un grand trouble" and a "confusion estrange." His passion for her is "un tyran desordonné qui fait connoistre sa grandeur sans aucune moderation" (p. 141). Reflecting Tristan, the Précieux poet, the page accepts "une si glorieuse servitude" (p. 126), and as a prisoner of love he wears "les fers les plus agreables du monde et qu'il n'y avoit point de couronnes en l'univers pour lesquelles j'eusse voulu donner mes chesnes" (p. 143).

The contrast between this kind of submission and that of the medieval courtly lover demonstrates how far the aristocratic society of the seventeenth century had strayed from what was originally a sublimation of passion in the service of the Church. The earlier lover had sought to link his earthly love to a religious one by glorifying his Dame almost as he would the Virgin Mary, emphasizing her purity and accomplishing for her acts of bravery that had religious importance--recovering the Holy Grail or a thorn from the crown Christ wore on the cross. In Tristan's day the knight had become a member of drawing room society, and the dragons to be overcome were jealous fellow aristocrats. Love had become worldly and had linked itself once again to the sensual pleasures of Antiquity, admiring beauty and recalling myth. The page's mistress is a lovely jewel, displayed traditionally against a backdrop of Nature, the grotto, but a miniature kind of Nature, carefully crafted by man himself to suit a delicate and refined taste. No spiritual qualities are necessary to the physical perfection that stirs the passion of love in the page.

Tristan's novel, like his letters collected and published a year earlier, is a mixture of literary conventions, both Pagan and Christian. The form of the realistic novel is fundamentally an amoral non-judging look at contemporary society. Into this framework, Tristan has put realistic anecdotes, medieval tales, encounters with the occult and with representatives of the Church, accounts of battles

fought in the name of Christianity, profane love, and long philosophical ruminations on man's nature and his destiny. Certainly this variety reflects his own experience, for he was caught in the middle of the philosophical controversies. He was exposed to every sort of attack on Christianity. He seemed to have been in just the right place to see each wave of unbelief crest and recede. A child at a court where magic, astrology, and blasphemy were all accepted, a young playwright in the period when a Cornelian Stoicism saw the possibility of man himself as important, a poet at the court of the most publicized libertine of the century, he lived his whole life in a time when the Church fought desperately to incorporate a new universe discovered by science and a new and strange world presented by the voyages of discoverers. But he was also exposed to coercion by the Church, a coercion which sometimes took the form of powerful and persuasive arguments for Christianity put forth by Church men of great talent and intelligence, or laymen as remarkable as Pascal.

It is difficult for an author not to weight the scales on one side or the other of an argument. Despite all the references to Divine Providence, to God, to admirable men of the Church, and even to the basically Christian source of the alchemist's occult powers, Tristan is still a Naturist when the page blames the stars for his troubles. The religious touches are unconvincing in the long run. They lie

half forgotten, almost an after-thought of the young aristocrat, guided by his horoscope, enjoying this world too much to think about the next one.

With the publication of Les Amours in 1638, Tristan had found himself a celebrity in the salons of Paris. During the years that followed, he became the very good friend of Mlle de Choiseul and, in 1642, he published a collection of letters and dedicated them to her on the occasion of her marriage to Du Plessis-Guenegaud.

Letter writing was a literary form that tempted aristocratic circles. L'Astrée was dotted with them, Mme de Sévigné was later to make them a literary expression par excellence, and the eighteenth century would perfect them into fictional masterpieces. Tristan's collection of Lettres meslées[2] contains largely love letters, but there are several "Lettres héroïques," on the pattern of Ovid and Ariosto. These letters had probably never been sent to anyone, and the person to whom they were addressed was often simply designated by the letter "X". They were never part of a real correspondance but the form being popular at the moment, Tristan used it.

The "Privilege" tells us that at this date, January 15, 1642, Tristan was still in the company of Gaston, but he must have sensed a rupture or the dispersion of Gaston's

group, and felt his own need for a new sponsor when he dedicated this work to his old friend who had often received poetry from him and who had done him many favors. We find in these letters very definite allusions to orthodox Christianity, which had begun very subtly with Panthée and were becoming more evident in Le Page disgracié. Even as early as 1634, they had been evident in the poems written on the death of the Infanta. Here, there is no effort to incorporate the opposed points of view into a larger whole. The letters are a mixture and not a blend.

Letter XVII is a Pastoral, an imitation of an earlier Pagan original in which Dorinde suffers from an unrequited love for the hunter, Sylvio, who loves the forests more than any woman, "Delices de ces Bois, & de ces Rochers, dont vous cherissez la compagnie, & la desolation de cent Nimphes dont vous méprisez les apas," says Dorinde sadly, reproaching Sylvio his preference for the beauties of Nature (p. 279). Though she realizes how hopeless her love is, an unexplainable power pulls her toward him. "Il falloit absolument que ce fust par la secrette vertu de quelque inuincible influence, qui me conduisoit malgré moy, où je n'aucis pas dessein d'aller" (p. 283). And like all of Tristan's lovers who are driven by passion, there is no cure for her sickness, "Il n'y a point de vertu d'herbes, ny de pierres qui ne soit impuissante pour mon secours" (p. 292).

An oracle, speaking for the gods, angrily commands

the hunter to love Dorinde, "Auriez-vous assez d'impieté pour vous obstiner à choquer le vouloir des Dieux, & faire mentir leurs Oracles? Et penseriez vous estre assez fort pour surmonter les Destinées?" (pp. 303-4).

Several letters later, the power of these gods is again described, but after some serious Christian moralizing. The shepherd Ariste speaks of his love for Amarillis and of her power over his destiny, "Ie veux dire cette celeste beauté où les Astres ont enfermé mes Destinées, & comme escrit fatalemẽt les secrettes loix que ie dois suiure" (p. 511).

In another letter the metaphor is Christian. We are no longer in the company of nymphs but of an "infidelle." Addressed "A Elle-mesme," the author begins, "Ma raison vous a condamnée comme infidelle, & mon iuste dépit vous a brûlée en effigie; le calambour de vostre euentail a seruy de bûcher pour faire consumer vostre image; & toutes vos lettres condamnées comme d'vne nouuelle heresie, ont esprouué la mesme rigueur" (p. 269). Infidelity in love, the author seems to say, is just as serious as blasphemy against the Church, and deserves a punishment reminiscent of that of Théophile.

In letter XXIII, he calls down the vengeance of the heavens on her. "O Ciel secourable, amy des innocens affligez, & iuste vangeur des tyrannies, ne me ferez vous point raison de cette cruelle Maistress. . . . Si vous estes aussi iuste que puissant, ne laissez point son

ingratitude impunie" (p. 159). Immediately, he retreats from this attitude of anger and asks not for justice but mercy, and this from love and fortune, "Mais il me reste encore tant de tendresse pour elle, que ie ne luy sçaurois souhaiter de mal. L'Amour & la Fortune m'obligeront beaucoup, lors qu'ils ne l'affligeront pas" (p. 160).

The alternation of Christian and Pagan continues through most of the love letters. In letter XXIX, addressed again to "Elle-Mesme," the poet evokes another mythological figure, Cassandra, the harbinger of doom, who would certainly have had the power to see into the future, and to know that this love affair would end badly just as he has predicted, "J'ay bien predit les choses futures, mais cela n'a pas empesché qu'elles ne soient arriuées; & comme une autre Cassandre, i'ay eu le don de sçavoir declarer l'auenir & le malheur que l'on n'a pas voulu me croire" (p. 176).

For the most part, the tone of the pastoral romances is more lighthearted and less personal than the letters of advice. Those Tristan wrote to his brother seem to be warnings about what will happen if he does not honor the Christian God as all-powerful:

> Il feroit à propos de vous employer à faire acquisition de biens plus solides. Pour cet effet, il est besoin d'avoir vn but qui soit honneste & legitime; & vous mettre bien avec Dieu. C'est la source de toutes les graces & de toutes les prosperitez; les diuers accidens de notre vie sont du secret ressort de son Eternelle Prouidence. C'est sa haute & parfaite

> sagesse, qui conduit insensiblement toutes choses à leur terme, & qui donne l'ordre & les Loix à ce que l'on appelle Fortune. (pp. 455-56)

The power of God to know the innermost thoughts of man leads him to decide who will succeed and who will fail. "Celuy qui fait quelque entreprise sans la luy recommander, n'en sçauroit voir réussir vn bon euenement, il ne bâtira que sur du sable, & ses ouvrages succomberont" (pp. 456-57).

In still another letter, Tristan makes clearer his position on the power of good works to determine the final judgment, "Il laisse libre l'election du bien & du mal, mais il punit les mauuaise determinations, comme il recompense les bonnes" (p. 480). Do not be deceived about this final reward and punishment, warns the author. It may not be immediately forthcoming, but "Les Rois & les Empereurs ne peuuent faire que des faueurs temporelles, & Dieu fait des graces qui durent eternellement" (p. 480).

Two philosophical outlooks, one Pagan and the other Christian, are hard to sustain on the same level, especially when it is a question of who or what directs human affairs. But Tristan continues to mix them and to create such strange combinations of Naturism and Christianity as we find in a letter to his doctor, thanking him for his care during an illness and praising his ability and knowledge:

> Mais vous n'avez pas acquis ces grandes lumieres en beuuant dans une fontaine; ou bien en vous endormant sur une montagne: c'est au prix de beaucoup d'huyle consumée, & de beaucoup de veilles laborieuses: Il n'a pas seulement esté necessaire pour cela que vous vous soyez fait amy des Grecs: il a fallu que vous ayez encore esté familier des Arabes; & que vous ayez tenu caché les ressentiment que vous auez contre les ennemis du Sauueur du Monde, afin d'aprendre quelque chose de ceux qui l'ont crucifié. Qu'est-ce que la Terre pousse en sa superficie, ou qu'elle recelle en ses entrailles dont vous ne connoissiez point la valeur? & quel effet procede de la rencontre des Astres, dont vous n'ayez pas la connaissance? (pp. 414-15)

This is a strange mixture of Christian allusion to the Jews who crucified Christ followed by a reaffirmation of the power of the earth and the stars to heal.

The stars continue to rule in Pagan splendor, for Tristan's poetic self is irresistibly drawn to the romance of astrology just as romantic poets like Gerard de Nerval who came after him. These stars share with the earth intangible bonds and "respandent avec leurs influences, l'agreable émail des fleurs & des herbes" (p. 136).

But these Lettres meslées are an uneven mixture of pastoral and courtly love turned bitter by jealousy and infidelity; of Pagan and Christian images and metaphors; of singing the beauties of Nature and of a nagging didacticism about the value of the Christian religion. In many of them, what was once a general but poetic concept of some prime mover behind the beautiful face of Nature now becomes the rigid, orthodox God of seventeenth-century

Catholicism. These letters fall far short of what we expect of Tristan the poet. They are disappointing, and one cannot help wondering how Mlle de Choiseul received this strange mixture on the eve of her wedding.

Magicians and magic were part of Le Page disgracié, Tristan's novel which appeared in 1643, and magic powers to bring people back to life were touched on in La Folie du sage, which appeared in 1645. Thus far, Carriat's comment on Tristan's fascination with magic was true: "L'occulte, le surnaturel, la magie l'attirent. Il ne fait d'ailleurs en cela que partager les goûts de son temps et la commune croyance aux sorciers, aux magiciens, aux fantômes."[3]

But there was that other aspect which the Church represented, a faith in God as the ultimate magician, with Christ capable of demonstrating his power in concrete form. Witches, ghosts, and ordinary magicians were often replaced by the power of Christian figures. In 1646, close on the heels of La Folie du sage, Tristan published a book of prayers and meditations, often in verse, designed to be used by members of the Catholic Church, and acknowledging God and Christ as the only real sources of supernatural power.

By this time, Tristan had explored most of the non-Christian ideas about the supernatural and the reality of an eternal soul. These ideas included Pagan gods and influential stars, magicians and magic potions, biological as well as Classical explanations of our mental and spiritual life. Pagan gods predominate in his poems, probably because Tristan found them more poetic than other images of the supernatural, but in his prose of the 1640s, the mixture of Christian and non-Christian elements increases and the dominance of the Pagan is not so clear. Lettres meslées has no continuing theme, and there is little attempt to adapt or accommodate the Christian and Pagan references. Tristan's purpose in mixing the two is not clear, he seems to cling to the Pagan for its beauty while clubbing us with moral lessons of the Church. Le Page disgracié is also uneven in tone, but it was meant primarily to entertain, and philosophical inconsistencies do not seem so important nor do they detract appreciably from our enjoyment of the story. But it does seem that Tristan is deliberately adding more Christian references and ideas until, in 1646, L'Office de la Sainte Vierge[4] settled any doubt that remained about Tristan's incorporation of Church belief into his philosophical and artistic concept of the supernatural or metaphysical. But it took its place beside Nature, as simply another possible explanation of the mystery.

Antoine Adam believes that Tristan, at least as a

young man, was an atheist, and that he shared his ideas about religion with his friend, Théophile. "Ils étaient tous les deux aventuriers de tempérament et athéistes de profession."[5] Carriat, on the other hand, claims a slow conversion to Catholicism on the part of the poet as he grew older. "Séduit dans sa jeunesse par le libertinage, ou libre pensée, Tristan est venu par la suite, lentement, au catholicisme, sans désavouer d'ailleurs complètement, quoi qu'il dise dans L'Office de la Vierge, ces aspirations juvéniles."[6]

Be he atheist or Christian, an explanation of Tristan's strange mixture, of his abrupt change of tone, of his own piety or lack of it as reflected in his work, cannot be attempted without taking into account a third factor, his eternal search for an ideal protector who would rescue him from the poverty which stalked him continually. The Office was dedicated to Queen Anne in an attempt to please an avowedly pious monarch, and his ideas probably adapted themselves accordingly.

It is of course impossible to know just how much of this devotional expresses Tristan's beliefs, and how much of it was dictated by the necessities of his life. This type of devotional was always a best-seller, and dedication to a pious queen insured success. From the text itself there are indications that Tristan had given up associating with the most blasphemous libertines, that he had radically

changed in some of his earlier philosophical ideas, and that he was trying to adapt his aesthetic tastes to Christian subject matter with some very non-Christian results. These attempts were sometimes strangely incongruous mixtures and the changes are not final and clearcut. Tristan still balances between Baroque and Classicism in style, and his non-Christian ideas often erode the Christian dogma of L'Office.

He himself confessed at this time that he had undergone some changes in his own personal way of looking at the world. The society of men had proved to be disappointing, and now religion seemed to offer some comfort. It is to the Church that he turns for something more important than his day-to-day existence:

> Mon Ame laissons le soucy
> De toutes mondaines matieres:
> On ne doit apporter icy
> Que des larmes & des prieres.
>
> Ie m'en vay adorer le grand Maistre des Cieux.
> Chassez donc loin de moi ce qui me peut distraire,
> Et tournez vers l'Autel, & mon coeur & mes yeux.
> (p. 77)

Bitterly, he singles out those who enter the Church for other reasons than to worship, men who might formerly have seemed daring and glamorous to him, certain libertines whose audacity now is repugnant, "la liberté condamnable de certains gens, qui ne semblent frequenter les Eglises, que pour y apporter du scandale & pour montrer aux gens de bien, qu'ils n'ont ny pieté, ny foy, & qu'ils ne viuent

sur la terre, que pour mourir eternellement" (p. 79). He sets himself distinctly and safely apart from them in the personal prayer which follows:

> Seigneur, les Malheureux dãs les tourmẽs extremes,
> Contre vostre Sainct Nom vomissent des blasphemes,
> La rage anime leur discours:
> De moy, i'ay resolu, quelque mal qui m'opresse
> De recourir à vous sans cesse,
> Et vous benir tous-jours. (p. 107)

This escape from corruption had never been easy for Tristan. He was a part of a frivolous and irreligious world for a long time. He loved to gamble, to play the carefree nobleman, a man with an appetite for sensual pleasure. His despair is real:

> Helas! ie fus conceu dans l'ordure du vice:
> Et le monde trompeur fut ma mère nourrice;
> De son laict dangereux ie fus empoisonné.
> (p. 120)

The poet often attributed his lack of resistance to this kind of life to his evil star, which had ordained that he be buffeted about by fate with not much will to overcome it. He considered himself a victim of chance, a helpless pawn. As a gambler, he saw life as a matter of luck. Perhaps because of this, it was hard for him to adapt a philosophical attitude to his personal troubles, but he feels an emotional attraction toward God:

> Ie brusle du desir de chanter vostre gloire
> Et de mourir pour vous.
> . . . . . .
> Mais le Demon, l'amour, & les vanitez foles,
> Par qui de vous seruir ie fus tous-jours distrait,
> Vont faire leurs efforts afin que mes paroles
> Se trouuent sans effet. (p. 137)

Doris Guillumette, in her study of Tristan, has commented that "pour le contrôle des passions Tristan fait appel à la philosophie et pas à la religion."[7] Thus far, this has been true to a certain extent. He has called on reason to save him from the slavery of his passion, but this reason has nearly always failed to win in a direct confrontation with love. In this work, he rejects the philosophical ideas of virtue and reason as sufficient to resist life's temptations. Man must have help from a divine source:

> Sous de si grands assauts toute vertu succombe
> Qui n'a point pour suport vostre diuin secours.
> Seigneur, en ce danger de peur que ie retombe
> Soustenez moy tous-jours. (p. 138)

The Stoic splendor of personal will to overcome never seemed to be a part of Tristan's picture of himself. He knew that he was headstrong, loved to gamble, and enjoyed drinking more than was good for him. But he denounced his "mauvaises habitudes" which resulted from his strong personal drive to have a good time, a will without principle which drove him away from any personal heroism. "Chaste espouse du Sainct Esprit", he begs, "Faites par vos Suffrages que ses diuines lumieres dissipent les tenebres de mon entendement, que sa celeste ardeur fonde la glace de ma volonté" (p. 307). And echoing the preoccuation of his century with the dangers of self-love, he cries, "Changez en mon coeur mon amour propre en haine" (p. 547). He remembers that he has lived indifferent to

spiritual values, a life hardly acceptable to a demanding God, "Ozeray-je maintenant me tourner vers le Ciel, moy, qui n'ay iamais regardé que la Terre?" (p. 100). In choosing Psalm 130 to paraphrase, he underlines his own unworthiness,"Ie sçay que mes pechez sont digne du suplice,/ Si tu les voulois prendre aux rigueurs de la loy" (p. 545).

His wasted youth lies heavily on him now. He is sick and growing old. There is pleading in his voice when he addresses God, "O Seigneur, pardonnez moy la negligence qui me rend si mauuais mesnager d'un temps si court, & qui me doit estre si precieux." (p. 432). This anxiety to be pardoned has an almost desperate tone, the author is willing to beg for it, "Mon Dieu, pour desarmer vostre main du Tonnerre,/ Ie me iette contre la terre/ Dont vous m'avez tiré" (p. 105). And finally,

> Esprit Sainct, Esprit adorable,
> Qui ramenez l'esprit errant
> Prenez pitié d'un miserable
> Qui soûpire en vous adorant. (p. 445)

These personal protestations of belief and dependance on divine help are accompanied by some philosophical changes. The first and most important concession is that God directs Nature. He is identified as "Tout-puissant" and "Createur de toutes les choses visibles, & inuisibles" (p. 100). The sea has no decorative Neptune and no Tritons or mermaids. It is not an autonomous power who sends the sailor to his death when it is in an angry mood. Those murderous waves now obey a higher power, "L'insolence

des flots respecte les limites,/ Que vostre voix leur a prescrites.". ." (p. 106). Nature in all her richness, came into being only as the creation of one supreme God, and not too long ago, "Considerons qu'il n'y a pas six mille ans que le Ciel, la Terre, la Nature humaine, & les autres choses ont esté creées, qu'avãt ce temps-là, il n'y auoit aucun Estre que Dieu seul" (pp. 283-84). And all the riches of the earth, all the beauties of Nature "ne font rien qu'un tresor magnifique & varié, que vous avez estalé pour l'homme" (p. 285).

This is appreciation of Nature as the Church wanted it, tamed beauties created for men to enjoy in moderation by a God who expected gratitude. Those men who conceived of Nature as life itself, as a dynamic combination of matter rich with promise of growth and change, often could not accept this Christian restriction. But Tristan puts even the Pagan images of fecundity in the service of the Church. Ceres is now Sainte Hyacinthe who has taught and civilized a Pagan land with God's work, "Vous auez salutairement instruit & ciuilisé la Sarmacie, semant la parole de Dieu dans des campagnes infideles, & faisant de grandes moissons, en un Terroir qui ne portoit auparavant que des ronces & des espines" (p. 408). Man is no longer Nature's most sophisticated expression of herself, but God's creature, for man is made in his image. Nature is not mother to the human race, God is father.

It is surprising that Tristan, so reluctant to embrace

Christianity, should write this book of devotion, and should do it so wholeheartedly. He flails man for his lack of gratitude to his maker:

> O noire ingratitude! ô lâche procedure!
> Qui donne de l'horreur à toute la Nature:
> L'ouurage combat son Autheur,
> Un ver ose offenser la Puissance Eternelle,
> L'Estre fragile se rebelle
> Contre son Createur. (p. 106)

God's rule over Nature established, his position of authority over man settles another philosophical uncertainty, Divine Providence. He rules not only Nature's behavior, but the fate of man as well:

> Vous estes ce doigt tres-Auguste
> Qui puissant à nous reformer
> Regle les mouuemens du Iuste,
> Aussi bien que ceux de la Mer. (p. 446)

Gone is the power of the stars to help or hinder man. Blind fate or a chance chain of events cannot interfere with the superior plan, all those who live on the earth below are in the hands of his divine providence. To those who do not acknowledge him as supreme, God metes out punishment in a "dernier jugement" (p. 88). Even the most powerful of earthly princes must see their power come to an end with death, and must face the "Tribunal redoutable" (p. 366). Therefore, "Heureux est celuy qui se iuge & qui se chastie luy mesme durang sa vie: parce qu'il ne sera pas iugé rigoureusement apres sa mort" (p. 113).

The judgment takes place after death, and the question of Immortality, that other great debate of the

century, is answered in strictly orthodox terms. An afterlife depended on how a man regulated himself on earth according to a necessary belief in one God who directs lives and events even before death, according to his overall plan. Without this belief, immortality was impossible, it was because of God's supreme generosity that an afterlife was possible.

By resisting the temptations of worldly pleasure, one could look forward to reward after death, but these pleasures were exceedingly dangerous and could lead to eternal nothingness. The poet who could not resist the delights of the flesh nor the torments of love, could nevertheless warn others about them in no uncertain terms. The body, source of so much pleasure and often master of a helpless will, could be reduced by death to nothing more than food for worms:

> Là ce corps qui si difficile
> Demandoit tant de mets diuers,
> Descharné, relant, immobile,
> N'est rien qu'une charongne vile,
> Qui repaist & loge les vers. (p. 563)

The body and the soul are at last separated and set one against the other in eternal battle. The reward for holding fast to spiritual goodness and Christian piety was the blessing of God himself for his "Esleus," and a good conscience was "un bien qui vaut des tresors,/ C'est un avant goust de la gloire/ Et c'est un fruict de la victoire/ Que l'Ame emporte sur le Corps" (p. 566). On the

other hand, those who were bent on sensual and immediate pleasure would be punished with remorse. But even though this sin was beguiling, man did not fight unarmed against it. He had the support of God who had come to live among men as another man, suffering as they did.

Tristan, in speaking of Christ, is, at least for the moment, a stout Catholic. For God and Christ are one and the same. There is no ambiguity, no possible mistake to be made about the identity of this Christian God. We are constantly troubled in his other writings about what he means when he speaks of the "Premiere cause," the "Monarque des Cieux," the "Merveilleux Ouvrier," or a "Puissance eternelle." Here there is no doubt at all that this God is strictly within the Catholic context, a God who made himself known through a son, Christ, who was born and lived among men, God made flesh. "O merueille de l'infinie bonté de Dieu! on void naistre sous un pauure toict, . . . celuy qui d'un mot de sa bouche a formé le Ciel et la Terre" (p. 310).

The doctrine of Original Sin is called explicitly to mind, "Ie me resiouïs de vostre naissance, ô mon Sauueur, avec les Anges & les Pasteurs; ne pouuant assez admirer, ny benir cette bonté qui vous fit descendre du Ciel en Terre, & vous charger ainsi de toutes nos infirmitez" (p. 83). He is the source of all miracles, giver and taker of life itself, "Vous qui pouvez d'un mot ressuciter

les mors" (p. 425). For the moment, Tristan has forsaken his position of philosophical independance. Here, he renounces the Pagan "Virtù" as insufficient against corruption, rejects Nature as the source of life, and places God above her. He offers immortality only to those men who accept God and Christ as one, and declares that the soul and body are separate, that the soul can live on but the body must die.

These are teachings of the Church which Tristan champions without equivocation in L'Office de la Sainte Vierge. "Seigneur, ie croy tout ce que vostre Eglise m'oblige de croire: elle à qui vostre Sainct Esprit a declaré vos eternelles Veritez" (p. 86). He believes a return to the Faith has always been possible for him since he was fortunate to have had Catholic parents and to have been born into the Church. The eternal truths are there to be found again after periods of uncertainty and doubt. Tristan says all of this a little smugly as he separates himself from the real "infideles" and "barbares" who have never been enlightened.

However, this new allegiance is not so clear cut nor convincing in his choice of appropriate forms in which to express his ideas. Aesthetically, he still straddles two worlds. The hero of this book of devotionals is Christ. From his own experience, Tristan can conceive of the religious figure in two ways, as a brave warrior against

the infidels, and a suitable hero for "vers héroïques," or as the object of adoring worship, a kind of replacement for the unattainable woman of courtly poetry. He chose the second picture of Christ, and inevitably attached it to his familiar way of writing love poems. For Tristan, love is always a matter of adoration, and it was natural for him to replace the object of that adoration with the figure of Christ. Of course Christ is not this woman, he is the traditional "Agneau sans tache, Cette haute Majesté, devant qui les anges s'abaissent" (p. 78). Or, for Mary Magdalene, he is a "divin soleil" (p. 555). But there is a little of the position of the lover in the kneeling angels, and a great deal of the Précieux beloved in the phrase, "divin soleil." Christ is clearly merged in Tristan's mind with the beloved mistress when he writes "Sentimens Amoureux de l'Ame pour Iesus Christ":

> O Beauté qu'adorent les Anges
> Et dont les appas sont si doux:
> Par quels aveuglemens estranges
> Me suis-je separé de vous?
> . . . . . .
> Quel nuage, ou quels artifices,
> Loing de vos pas m'ont fait errer,
> Et courir à d'autres delices
> Qu'à celles de vous adorer.
>
> Ne suis-je pas bien miserable
> D'oublier un si digne amant?
> O Seigneur est-il rien d'aimable
> Que vous n'ayez parfaitement?

Précieux mannerisms help to spoil any spiritual effect that such devotion might have as he continues:

Mon ingratitude à cette heure
M'est odieuse au dernier point:
I'en souspire, & si ie n'en pleure,
Ie pleure de n'en pleurer point.

Tristan expressed sensual feeling in his love poems by the warmth of the season or by comparing his passion to a flame. Here he describes what is supposedly spiritual in the same way:

Faites que vostre saincte flame
Embrase mon coeur nuict & iour,
Et blessez pour iamais mon Ame
Des traits de vostre chaste amour. (pp. 108-10)

The use of the words "Saincte" and "chaste" to describe the flame does little to alter the sensuality of the treatment. The fire burns undampened in another poem a few pages later. Inside the church, emotion is very strong, "Là pour sacrifier au Sauueur de nos ames/ Nos coeurs seront l'Autel environné de flames," and the worshipers "Offrant au lieu d'encens des souspirs amoureux" (p. 123), seem to be misplaced courtly lovers.

Fire and blood were images which Tristan used often in the poems of Les Amours, and they are again his favorites in these hymns of devotion, "Seigneur, fai que pour toy, mon coeur soit tout en flame,/ De mesme que pour moy, ton corps fut tout en sang" (p. 93).

Much has been written about the importance of water in Baroque poetry as an image of movement and instability. Tristan's stricken shepherds sat beside brooks to pour out their sorrows, their love turned streams to flowing

fire. At the communion table, the red of wine transformed into blood is the "source en miracles feconde,/ Où ie desire estre lavé!" (p. 94). It is that "divine liqueur . . . beau sang," which will produce in the heart of the penitent "un decoulement salutaire!" (p. 94). Christ's blood becomes "une source empourprée" (p. 280), or a living fountain, "ce beau pourpre coulant/ Qui de tes membres ruisselant,/ Forma tant de vives fontaines" (p. 118). Dazzling fountains, precious gems, flowers, were all favorite images for evoking an atmosphere for earthly love. To the red fountains of Christ's blood, Tristan added the flowers of his wounds:

> Divin Autheur de toutes choses,
> A qui les ronces & les clouds
> Quand tu voulus mourir pour nous
> Estoient des oeillets & des roses. (p. 118)

Such Baroque excess was not so uncommon in some of the Christian poetry of the day, which sometimes went so far as to take its form from love poetry which was being sung at court. But many poets saw the lack of suitability in trying to express spiritual values in sensual poetry. Tristan too, had seemed to see the necessity for a simplicity of form and "vraisemblance" in his theater. He had even praised Malherbe, but he had yet to take his lessons seriously when he wrote poetry. Nothing could be less suitable to the Christian ideas Tristan confesses than his artificial and deliberately sensual way of expressing them.

Christ was conceived of as the adored, the lover, and the Virgin Mary also broke through spiritual restraint as a mother, source of all life, goddess of fertility. She is forever blessed for the divine fruit which she carried, and her physical body is stressed. When Christ is crucified, she grieves at the Cross, not that sad abstract weeping one sees in early Church painting, but painfully, "Le traict de la douleur vous perça les entrailles,/ Et vous laissa longtemps sans couleur & sans voix" (p. 125). Always on the side of sinful man, interceding with God on his behalf, as "advocate des Ames," she is to use more than verbal persuasion, for her power lies in being a woman and a mother:

> Employez le credit de vos chastes mamelles,
> Ces vierges ornemens, ces deux sources iumelles
> Dont avec tant d'amour Iesus fut alaité. (p. 125)

Tristan added to the Mother Mary, a gallery of feminine saints, women sanctified by the Church for their devotion. But in writing and thinking about women, even saints, Tristan could not resist recognizing their physical attractions. Though Saincte Agathe had been ill, she was so exceptional in her religious devotion that she was healed, "Un Sainct fut vostre Medecin:/ Qui vous rendit le priuilege,/ De garder un feu tout divin,/ Dessous deux montagnes de neige" (p. 486). It is surprising and unsettling to come across such erotic treatment of a saint, especially in the middle of a prayer book, and at a moment

when the mind and heart are supposedly at the task of becoming spiritual and arming themselves against just such temptations. Although it may be acceptable as a literary device, it undercuts the philosophical seriousness and leaves us in a state of bewilderment. Perhaps Tristan has never really believed in the new importance of the immortal soul, and the brash young nobleman, laughing at religious seriousness, is there behind the words.

Again, the poet's Préciosité makes lovely flowers of these women. Saint Marguerite is a "Fleur de Vertus & de beautez," among "des fleurs immortelles/ Dont l'éclat brille dans les Cieux" (p. 494). The raising of Lazarus from the dead is presented in much the same way by Mary Magdalene:

> O Lazare qui par les pleurs
> Du diuin soleil que i'adore,
> Sors de terre comme les fleurs
> Qu'arrosent les pleurs de l'Aurore. (p. 555)

Life itself for man is as brief as that of "une fleur exposée à beaucoup de diferens accidẽs; & qui passe dans peu de matins; soit qu'une main violente la cueille, soit qu'elle soit surprise du froid, ou que l'ardeur du Soleil la seche" (pp. 411-12).

Mary Magdalene was a favorite figure of the Christian story for poets of the period, and in his prayer to her, Tristan indulges his predilection for extravagance. Flame and water, religious zeal and tears, are the images in this "Priere à Saincte Magdelaine":

> Ce fut de cette celeste flame, que vos sainctes larmes eurent leur source; ces torrẽs de perles liquides à la faveur desquels le Sauueur lava parfaitement vostre âme. . . . Vos frequens & bruslans souspirs, accompagnez d'une si grande abondance de pleurs vous obtinrent la felicité que demandoit vostre ardent amour. (p. 529)

The ideas are orthodox in the Office de la Sainte Vierge, and one cannot fault Tristan on a consistently Christian philosophy in this work. But his style seems to belie the seriousness of what he is saying. To treat Christ as the object of an adoration described as sensual was to make physical that which should have been spiritual. It is hard to think of charity, that spiritual form of love, as a "feu brulant" or "une source vive & toujours coulante" (p. 461); and sin as a black crow and goodness as a white swan are images that are hard to take seriously in a religious context.

Tristan has written a book of prayer and meditation for Catholics, and he has spoken only of Church doctrine and of saints. But his voice is still that of the court poet who romantically thought of himself as the prodigal son returning repentant to the father's house, bringing with him all kinds of worldly literary tricks.

Tristan's last published work was another book of Christian prayers, hymns, and psalms, Exercices Spirituels. In outline and content it was very much like its predecessor. Tristan was a part of the household of the Duc de Guise, living in the magnificent Hôtel de Guise in Paris, but he was in bad health and his death came in September of 1655. Exercices Spirituels was published ten years later. "On n'aurait guère reconnu en lui le 'philosophe' de jadis, l'homme qui aimait le jeu, le vin et les idées audacieuses. Il était devenu sage, respectueux des puissants, porté à la devotion. . . . Il souffrait de la malchance qui n'avait cessé de le poursuivre. Il avait renoncé à lutter."[8] We know that he died receiving the last rites of the Church.

In these last years, Tristan must have followed the trend among most of the writers of his time and embraced Christianity. Exercices Spirituels is for the most part militantly orthodox, and no longer shares the non-Christian ideas of the libertines. Racan, in 1650, was still worried about the views of some of the poets who denied there was any divine justice regulating the affairs of men. Tristan was guilty himself of alternating between Christian Divine Providence and Pagan chance in his plays and poetry. There had been no continuing evolution away from the "Fortune" or "Parque" of Antiquity toward the Christian divine punishment and reward. It does seem to be true

throughout his work, however, that Tristan referred to chance or fortune or "les astres" when he was talking about something that seemed unjust, a terrible tragedy fallen on innocent victims such as an early death for some who had led an exemplary life. But even a limited use of the dangerous words, which might suggest that events were not in the hands of God, was becoming suspect. Those who still denied divine rule over human events were "environnés de méfiance. . . . Désormais il leur faudrait dissimuler, ruser, biaiser."[9]

Does Tristan hide his true feelings when he suppresses any mention of fate or chance or fortune? Is he pretending to believe in divine justice, heaven and hell, because it is the safest thing to do? Carriat insists that "Tristan ne pouvait pas ne pas sagement finir dans la peau d'un homme en règle avec Dieu."[10] He evidently has the approval of Church authorities when he publishes this work. Just before the "Privilege du Roy," and after the contents, there is inserted an "Approbation des docteurs," signed by La Hay & C. Morel Mazure, Curé de S. Paul. These were Doctors of Theology, members of the Faculty of Paris who, after reading the contents of Exercices spirituels,[11] placed their seal of approval on it. "Nous n'avons rien remarqué qui soit contraire à la pure doctrine de la Foy, & aux bonnes meurs de la Sainte Eglise Catholique, Apostolique & Romaine."

Tristan's plan was to join the best prayers from a book written by a "Devot religieux d'une Illustre & Docte Compagnie," with the principle responses and hymns of the Church, translated into the prose and poetry of Tristan himself. This collection would be "à l'usage des Ames Chrestiennes" (p. 2). At the same time, he had an eye on what would suit the popular taste. This book was dedicated to Monseigneur Séguier, Chancelier de France, and Tristan was very frank in his "Dédicace" about the reasons why he had chosen him. "I'ay cru qu'offrant celuy-cy à Vostre Grandeur, si remply de Sainte & solide Doctrine, elle ne le desagreroit pas; Et qu'un Nom si illustre & si reveré par tout le Monde, luy donnant plus de poids, le rendroit plus considerable parmy ceux qui n'aspirent qu'à leur salut & qui cherchent ce qui les peut instruire" (pp. 2-3). The devotional never deviates from this doctrine. The Church's story is told with restraint and a classical sense of balance and of suitability of style to subject matter. Some non-Christian habits of expression do appear from time to time, but they do not harm the generally reverent tone of the work. Nature's beauty, which has been a setting for love, becomes a hymn of praise to God:

> Estoiles, fleurs du firmament,
> Oeil du iour, oeil de la nuit brune,
> Soleil ardent, humide lune,
> Loüez le seigneur hautement.
>
> Flocons blancs tõbans de la nué,
> Gelée & glaçons condensez.

Iours & nuicts, terrestre ombrages:
Tourbillons, foudres & nuages,
Sans fin le Seigneur benissez.

Fleuves, mers, ruisseaux, & fontaines,
Benissez-le lourdes Balaines,
Poissons qui dans l'eau vous iouéz,
Hostes de l'air de tous ramages,
Animaux privez & sauvages,
D'un accord le Seigneur louéz. (pp. 220-21)

The Virgin is still sensual as she was in L'Office de la Sainte Vierge. She is at once spirit and flesh, virgin and mother, "Vous estes demeurée Vierge après vostre enfantement" (p. 206). "Tousiours Vierge, Temple du Seigneur, sacré cabinet du Saint Esprit" (p. 238). "Vostre pureté & virginité vous estes exaltée pardessus les choeurs Angeliques" (p. 138). But the Virgin Mary also serves Tristan as a symbol of fecundity, as the nourisher of life in a physical sense. The child who is to rule "la machine de l'Univers, est porté dans le sein d'une vierge feconde" (p. 232).

Celuy qui regle, & qui compasse
Le cours de tous les Cieux & la fuite des tẽps,
Est celuy qu'une Vierge en ses pudiques flancs
Cõtiẽt, forme & nourrit par l'effet de la grace.
(p. 575)

Many of Tristan's poetic metaphors are used again, this time to serve a Christian end. That precipice over which so many of his lovers threatened to throw themselves in despair, can represent the danger of destruction for the sinner. "Celuy qui n'evite pas avec soin les moindres dangers de tomber au peché mortel, est en l'estat d'un

insensé qui se pourmene indiscretement sur les bords glissans d'un precipice" (p. 20). And the ship, always in danger of shipwreck on the seas of love, is now man, tossed about in a sinful world and brought at last safely into port by God's help (p. 545). Old images which can illustrate a philosophical and spiritual theme are saved from Pagan works to enhance the beauty and meaning of the Christian one. Only the sensual side of beauty did not suit what Tristan was saying and he was very careful about using it. A Précieux description of Nature could be suitably incorporated into a poem about the Nativity, for example:

> Des portes où la ieune Aurore
> Verse le iour qui nous colore,
> Iusqu'aux noir climats du couchant,
> Celebrons les grãdeurs de nostre divin Maistre,
> Qui d'une Vierge vient de naistre,
> Sous la foiblesse d'un enfant. (p. 531)

But these Précieux images and metaphors are carefully restricted to descriptions of Nature, gift of God to man, or they are used where the context is suitable. Tristan has discarded his old habit of using extravagant sensual and mythological decoration for any subject. He treated a non-Christian subject in Amarillis, that very late adaptation of Rotrou, and he was thoroughly Pagan, but there was no mixture. Excercices Spirituels has a Christian subject, and it is free from Pagan allusions.

This is a long devotional of over six hundred pages. It is repetitious as Church liturgy often is, and it is

not all Tristan's own work. But the old Pagan influences have been suppressed throughout. Gone too, is most of the erotic pulse of the poetry, and Nature has bowed her glorious head to a spiritual and unseen creator. In some ways, this is disappointing. Classical gods fired the imagination with their deeds, and Nature unchecked was extravagantly beautiful, but something has been gained too, by Tristan's self-discipline, a seriousness which gives a subdued but constant rhythm to what he wrote and a dignity to his art that it had sometimes lacked. It would seem that he had learned that Christian and Pagan images and ideas were hard to mix in the same work. Perhaps this last devotional represents a final unifying of Tristan's inconsistency in a renunciation of philosophical independance, and an acceptance of Christian doctrine. Or perhaps it was an aesthetic decision to give up Baroque variety for Classical simplicity.

CONCLUSION

This study was undertaken to try to find out why a seventeenth century literary man like Tristan L'Hermite would mix Christian and Pagan ideas the way he did. The society he lived in considered them contradictory. We had hoped to find some final resolution of this contradiction, but it is not there. Throughout his work, he not only straddles the fence on the biggest conflict of his day, but he partakes generously of ideas from both sides and mixes them indiscriminately in his work. We have seen how religious poems appear tucked in among erotic and Pagan expressions of earthly love, how mighty Stoicism gave way to serious self-doubt, and how Tristan tried to crown it with a garland of Christianity in his plays.

This mixture reveals a dichotomy of content which remains unresolved, for Tristan's philosophical viewpoint is never clarified by a final acceptance of either Christian or Pagan ideas. His style is tremendously influenced by non-Christian conventions which are derived from Renaissance worship of Classicism, from a Naturist response to beauty perceived by the senses, and from the Précieux emphasis on earthly love. In the long run, he was unable to successfully

adapt these aesthetic preferences to Christian subjects, and much of his work is a mixture of non-Christian images and metaphors used to express Christian ideas. There is a disparity between form and content with a resulting lack of harmony. Nor can we find a chronological evolution toward a more successful wedding of form to content. The Pagan Amarillis was written just three years before Exercices Spirituels, and L'Office de la Sainte Vierge appeared about the same time as the carefree Page disgracié.

Is it possible, then, to make out of the work of this paradoxical man some kind of balance sheet with Pagan on one side and Christian on the other? If a count of images and themes were taken, the Pagan influence would have to win in his poetry, especially in the Vers héroïques. He wrote to praise his protectors and what could be more glorious than the heroes of Antiquity? Sometimes he does weaken and literally throw in a Christian allusion of two. Sometimes, especially in the collections of love poetry, he will add a completely Christian poem, and this is indeed disconcerting, for it alters the tone of his other poetry and makes us begin to ask questions about whether or not he really believes in the possibility of man being heroic. We often must accept the humbling position of the Christian influence, for it is closer to us in time as it was to Tristan. It goes a long way toward destroying the grandeur of Antiquity which was Tristan's real idea of poetry. But the majority of his Vers héroïques are unblighted by the mixture.

It is in the love poems that we find a pessimism about human relationships. As long as the poet was contentedly Pagan with nymphs, woods, grottoes, and young lovers whose woes were not to be taken too seriously, the pessimism did not show. But later, when he knows that sensual love is torture and says so, when he is trapped in a box of Préciosité with nowhere for his poetic spirit to go, the way is opened for a try at spiritual redemption. His later love poems are discontent, sad, and bitter for the most part. He gave full reign to his eroticism, and the neglected spiritual side of him, satisfied in heroic verse by the marvelous qualities of the warrior, became dissatisfied and took revenge.

Christian poems are few in number, and the mixing of Pagan and Christian does not occur too often, either. Nearly every time it is an artistic mistake, and Tristan might prefer to have these "hybrid" poems forgotten. But his belief in Stoic heroism may be a poetic pose with the mask slipping as he continues to write about the disappointments of love. It was not a pose for the Pléiade group nor for those he admired most among Classical poets, it was the source of their lyricism. If not deeply felt, this ideal would be hard to maintain in the face of personal disappointment in a more pessimistic century.

The plays, written concurrently with the poetry, reveal how hopeless is the task of sorting Tristan's work according

to chronological development. In poetry, he clings to Renaissance influences. In the theater, while accepting to a large degree stylistic Classicism, he becomes more modern in his ideas.

Mariane is both Stoic and religious, immortality is real and personal. Cirus is a king responsible to heaven for his behavior. Constantin is openly Christian, and Sénèque is converted in his last hours. But here we draw up short before Tristan's inconsistency. La Folie du sage is a play with many ideas about man and fate, but a belief in astrology wins out. Amarillis is a reversion to all the eroticism and Pagan pleasure in Nature which we thought he had abandoned. Osman is Moslem, not Christian. But all of these plays, except Amarillis, are possibly Christian in two ways, they show the terrible destructive results of pride, in Fauste and in Osman for instance, and they expose the ravages of the passions in characters like Hérode and Araspe.

In his other works we may unearth Tristan's idea of a replacement for reason which has failed miserably to hold man in check. Le Page disgracié, like Lettres meslées, is a mixture of Christian, Pagan, and occult, which is almost impossible to classify. The novel would seem to be non-Christian despite its innumerable Christian suggestions because of its overweening interest in the worldly life of the page and the hero's own conviction that he is the victim

of a malign fate. The novel makes no case for Reason, and offers no substitute. Lettres meslées does, and spells it out in no uncertain terms--faith in a Christian God and all the Church teaches. But here the mixture is so incongruous--letters full of nymphs next to letters about angels--that Tristan's sincerity is laid open to serious doubt.

This is not true with the two religious devotionals. Any Pagan influence in L'Office de la Sainte Vierge seems to stem from his yet unsuppressed eroticism, and this often spoils the expression of what may well be a sincere faith in Christianity. Exercices spirituels is more satisfactory. Only rich images of Nature's beauty and a still sensual Virgin recall the earlier poet, and these are now safely in the service of God. Tristan is here offering Christianity in place of inadequate reason as the answer to self-control, and therefore a way to success and happiness.

In his own life Tristan had not seen reason triumph over fate. He always thought of himself as the victim of unknown forces. Irrational at heart, Stoic absolutes never really suited him. But he had an enormous interest in the metaphysical, what lay outside man, all around him in Nature or far off in the heavens, and he searched endlessly for explanations. Christianity now seemed to be as much of an answer as he was likely to get, an irrational Christianity of faith which fitted his outlook better than a religion of reason.

But he was not Christian in a great deal of his work. His Discours, which he presented to fellow artists on his acceptance to the Académie, may show us why. Behind the words, so reassuring in uniting Christian and Pagan, lies perhaps an explanation of Tristan's duality:

> Je suis mis au rang de ces grands génies qui s'étudient heureusement à la recherche de la souveraine raison, et qui la font paraître au jour avec tous les ornements qui lui sont propres; qui nous représentent la théologie en sa majestueuse pureté, l'histoire en sa curiosité grave et fidèle, et tout ce qu'on appelle les belles-lettres avec un art pompeux et fleuri et des grâces toutes nouvelles.

But his last words are these:

> Je me trouve aujourd'hui vengé par les propres mains de la Vertu de tous les mauvais traitements que j'ai reçus de la Fortune.[12]

His art, which is Pagan in concept if not always in execution, has won him great honor, just as he has honored others in his poems about great warriors. The glory of Antiquity, which inspired him as a poetic ideal, is embodied in reason and virtue. At this moment, Tristan the poet has triumphed and has avenged himself on that other Tristan, stalked by an unfriendly fate from the moment he was born.

To explain Tristan's inconsistency is to see him as a poet separated from the superstitious and often weak seventeenth-century aristocrat that he was. As a poet, he honored his protectors in recreating Antiquity, and he praised aristocratic women in sensual images of Nature.

As playwright, he dealt with kings and queens and the questions of his day in an attempt to follow Classical philosophers as they debated Stoicism and Epicureanism. The poet sometimes forgot his Pagan ideal and followed the aristocrat in his love of magic and superstition. He forgot all about Antiquity when he returned with him to the Catholic religion.

This study may prove one thing about Tristan, that his vision of life was double. That as an artist he wanted to be Pagan and recreate Antiquity, but as a man he succumbed to the influences of his own time. Ideally, he believed in man's reason and in Nature's supreme powers as had the poets and philosophers he loved. But Tristan, the seventeenth-century courtier, would have had to show in his life the influences of Christianity. These spilled over into his work and made the mixture of Pagan and Christian. In this duality, Tristan is eminently Baroque. His work is without a final artistic resolution. Rather, it is open-ended, offering possibilities, ideas, but never conclusions. This is the hostility to a finished work of art that Rousset sees in the Baroque artist. This reluctance to choose a definite point of view is fortunate in the case of Tristan, for he spreads before us many points of view common to his age. It is because of the inconclusive quality of his ideas and the half-muted lyricism of his poetry that we find him so representative of that transitional period between the

Renaissance and the second half of the seventeenth century, a time when the endless human debate between the mind and the heart, reason and passion, science and religion, involved a whole society, and inspired its artists to examine them in literature that is as valid today as it was over three centuries ago.

NOTES

[1] Le Page disgracié, ed. Auguste Dietrich (Paris: Plon & Nourrit, 1898), p. xv. All references are to this edition.

[2] Lettres meslées (Paris: Courbé, 1642). All references are to this edition.

[3] Carriat, Tristan ou l'éloge d'un poète, p. 76.

[4] L'Office de la Sainte Vierge (Paris: n.p. [1646]). All references are to this edition.

[5] Adam, Théophile, p. 34.

[6] Carriat, Tristan ou l'éloge d'un poète, p. 76.

[7] Doris Guillumette, "La Libre Pensée dans l'oeuvre de Tristan L'Hermite," Diss. University of Massachusetts, 1969, p. 110.

[8] Adam, Histoire, II, p. 69.

[9] Pintard, p. 75.

[10] Carriat, Tristan ou l'éloge d'un poète, p. 123.

[11] Les Exercices spirituels (Paris: Loyson, 1665). All references are to this edition.

[12] Recueil des harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie française (Paris: Coignard, 1698), p. 16.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lucy Broyles Golsan was born June 2, 1926, at Rome, Georgia. She was graduated from Miami High School in 1943, and in 1946, she received the A. B. degree from Wesleyan College, Macon, Georgia. In 1966, she received an M. S. degree in French from Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.

After teaching French at Grady High School in Atlanta, Georgia, she enrolled as an NDEA Fellow at the University of Florida in 1968. For the academic year 1970-71, she was Assistant Professor of French at Georgia State University, Atlanta.

She has lived twice in France with her three children, once in Marseilles in 1960, and again in 1965 in Barjols.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Claude Abraham, Chairman
Professor of French

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Raymond Gay-Crosier
Associate Professor of French

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Francis Hayes
Professor of Spanish

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of French in the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dean, Graduate School

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