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The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1964
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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH INFLUENCED ANDRÉ ANTOINE AND PRODUCED THE THÉÂTRE-LIBRE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

by

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The Ohio State University
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the two people who have given me the energy and inspiration to complete the degree. Without the assistance of my mother, Mrs. Alfred Sporre, and Samuel T. Wilson, this work would have never been accomplished. This acknowledgment can be only a small token of my debt to them.

Without the continued challenge offered by Roy H. Bowen, my adviser, this topic would not have been attempted. His interest in naturalism created an urge within me to find the source of its vitality. Yet, this dissertation would have never been completed without the assistance of John H. McDowell; besides obtaining the necessary promptbooks, he created a scholastic atmosphere which inspired the student to achieve goals beyond his present sights. Those faculty members of Ohio State University whose intellectual stimulation made my sojourn there more than exciting were Charles C. Ritter, George Crepeau, Robert W. Wagner, and John W. Black. Above all, I want to thank the Interlibrary Loan Department of the Oxley Thompson Library for assistance in obtaining all the published plays which André Antoine produced at the Théâtre-Libre.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The major tenets of acting, directing, and scene design of today's theatre have been shaped by a single event. The origin of these precepts can be traced to the founding of the Théâtre-Libre by André Antoine in 1887. The artistic attainment of the Théâtre-Libre spawned similar European groups of which Otto Brahm's Freie Bühne was the most immediate and best known. In the United States, the following generation saw the growth of the art theatres which also appear to be related to Antoine's work. Kenneth Macgowan states a representative view in believing that the genesis of the American little theatre movement can be traced to Antoine's Théâtre-Libre through the art theatres; and, in turn, the American university theatrical development can be related to the community theatre movement begun in the 1920's. This chain of theatrical phenomena has been lengthened to the extent that an influence can be seen currently in the American professional theatre. Therefore, an investigation of the era which produced the Théâtre-Libre and its principles might be in order to further an understanding of our own theatre's heritage.

In France, the nineteenth century was one of turmoil. From the French Revolution to 1880, the French government was in a constant

state of unrest. Six forms of government existed during this period. A similar unrest in the arts is noticeable, for painting and playwriting progressed from neoclassicism through romanticism and realism to naturalism which found a home in the Théâtre-Libre. To understand properly the development of naturalism in the French theatre, a survey of the socioeconomic conditions of the epoch is necessary. Such a survey should also quicken our insight into the various individual phases of our total inquiry.

Definition of Terms

Our investigation first requires a generalization of several words--reality, truth, and verism. Reality "is obviously conceived as the orderly world of nineteenth-century science, a world of cause and effect, a world without miracle, without transcendence."[1] Truth is the degree of success with which the artist has been able to express his experiences of reality. Verism is the detached and objective manner in which the artist views reality and abstracts his interpretations.

To understand fully the development of an increasing realistic approach to the theatre and to the other arts, a definition of terms is needed due to the semantics of these words. To stress the specific nature of these terms, realism and naturalism, their French spelling (réalisme and naturalisme) will be used hereafter. Throughout this paper, these terms and other related terms employed will be the conventional ones used in the nineteenth-century in France.

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[1]René Wellek, Concepts of Criticism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 241.

The re-emergence of the problems of *réalisme* has been always a potent tradition for "realism in the wide sense of fidelity to nature is indubitably a main stream of the critical and creative tradition of both the plastic arts and literature."[2] Today, the "socialistic realism" of Russia has attempted to combine nineteenth-century realism with a form of classicism. Our *réalisme* has been tempered by the expressionism of the 1920's and the development of plot and character through a psycho-analytical representation. The qualities of deception or delusion in realistic art have varied from the completely physical delusion (the external) to the emphasis upon a mental illusion (the internal). Today, *réalisme* means more than the truth of the observation by its depiction of common place events, characters, and settings. American realism contains an element of regionalism which includes (as in the nineteenth century) a descent into the slums, stockyards, farms and mines besides a distrust of the European, the intellect, the traditional, and to learning in general. More than ever before, the *réalisme* of today encompasses a wide variety of forms since the content may vary from a picturesque imitation to the psychological imitation of the world around us.

To explain more fully *réalisme* and *naturalisme*, those qualities against which it was in revolt have to be defined. Since these two artistic concepts were reactions against neoclassicism, this earlier art form must be clearly understood; as throughout this investigation,

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

the antagonism of *réalisme* or *naturalisme* with neoclassicism will be linked to the socioeconomic changes of the day. From the *Le Cid* controversy of 1635 to the first half of the nineteenth century, neoclassicism was strengthened and reinforced as the dominant art form. To make neoclassicism consistently effective, it was associated with rationalism to the extent that they became one.

Neoclassicism reached its peak during the Age of Reason in the eighteenth century. From the Age of Reason, the best concepts of neoclassicism can be best described. Before attempting a definition of neoclassicism, an explanation of the word, reason, is in order. Reason, as the prime generator of all thought, began with René Descartes who felt that the idea of man as a unit of reason possessing sense was thought's best tool when reason was stripped of its prejudices and used as an abstract instrument. This concept developed the idea that pure common sense was an elementary factor of all thought; for it had existed since a primitive epoch when man was only guided by natural laws. Since Nature was controlled by laws perceptible by ordinary reason, it was felt that common sense and Nature were equable. The examination of Greek and Roman beliefs reinforced this power of reason; for during these early civilizations, all values were felt to have been immutable and above the variable and impermanent. The idealism of the Greeks (seen in the writings of Aristotle and Plato) appealed to the French and their neoclassicists. Thus, reason was the fundamental of all thought; and as a result, the respect for the authority of reason was held together by probability, decorum, and universality.

When reason became bound to the notion that an unchanging law governed the world of Nature and man, Nature became the beautifully co-ordinated handiwork of the "Great Designer." It was "a harmonious whole in which the earth, man's dwelling place, was still the most important creation."[3] Since man was impelled by self-interest to seek pleasure and to avoid pain, it was felt that man's natural reason or his natural goodness was able to guide him toward the proper ethical life. This new respect for reason was equally conspicuous in religion (for the Deists, it was the basis) and in scientific research. As every individual participated in the uniform life of nature, his mind was capable of discovering truths without the insertion of an outside influence or "an ecclesiastical tradition." Science gave to humanity a new faith in the mind of man and in the perfection of God as the "Great Designer" of a harmonious universe. Thus, reason became the guide and revealer of all happiness and the immutable laws which, in turn, gave man a greater rational control over his physical environment. In this manner, science became the rational study of the normal laws or rules of nature. "To follow Nature was to follow common sense."[4] Through the appeal to common sense, rules which were derived from the study of ancient practices and theories of the Greeks and Romans were codified and became the key to rational pleasure.

The dominant qualities of neoclassicism which were reinforced by the employment of the three unities (time, place, and action) were

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[3]Francis Gallaway, Reason, Rule, and Revolt in English Classicism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 21.

[4]Ibid., p. 122.

probability, decorum (as a form of type), and universality. Probability gave belief or life to the art form. To achieve belief, the concept of the unities of time and place was used to restrict the art form to its greatest degree; for the strict neo-Aristotelian insisted upon complete illusion in the drama. Complete illusion meant that there could be only one place for each action. This action, of necessity, was a single action set within a single revolution of the earth. The duration of the performance, generally, became the duration of the action since only one place could be illustrated on the stage. To assist in obtaining this probability, decorum was brought into operation. Decorum meant that manners of the character (or the type) had to be probable.

> "Manners" were supposed to differ according to the humor or disposition, age, sex, climate, quality, or condition; and must be so clearly portrayed that without hesitance the spectator could judge the naturalness of the action which the manner produced.[5]

At the same time, each character was assumed to have a ruling passion. The action showed this character in his passion thereby reducing the complexity and the subtlety of life to an order. The social order of that day rendered the rule of decorum easily acceptable. Above all, the universality of neoclassicism which preferred the general over the specific was the eighteenth-century scientific and ethical form of emphasis on common sense as derived from reason and its deductive rationalism. Since Nature was controlled by uniformly scientific laws, the natural had to be uniform or universal. The very marrow of neoclassicism was its love of the universal, the static, the uncomplicated,

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[5] Ibid., p. 129.

and the uniform. Basically, the Age of Reason was an extension of Platonic ideas which had flourished during the Renaissance. This "Platonic tradition in European thought accounts for the interpretation of the Natural as the perfection of the individual species which is never reached except in the realm of the 'Ideal!'"[6] In turn, the artist was permitted to neglect observation. By resorting to the imitation of the supreme forms of antique art as the perfect embodiment of the Natural, the artist did not need to be concerned with observation or its reality. Thus, neoclassicism became an expression of the ideal seen through the use of reason as the absolute incarnation of Nature. After the acceptance of the theories of réalisme, "nature" meant that which the artist saw about him available for interpretation. The realist considers nature and reality one--an empirical fact.

Though closely related, réalisme and naturalisme are two separate degrees of verism. The differentiation between and the alliance of these two terms must be clearly understood for the background of this study. Both words first appeared during the eighteenth century and were related to the then-current theories of art. Naturalisme, the more generally employed term in the eighteenth century, denoted an extension of neoclassic principles. In approximately 1870, the Academie des Beaux-Art, the artistic arbiter in painting, defined the word, naturalisme, as the "exact imitation of nature in all things."[7]

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[6]Ibid., p. 154.

[7]Pierre Martino, Le Naturalisme Française, (1875-1890) (Paris: Librairie Armond Colin, 1930), p. 4. Author's translation.

This definition was associated with idealism, for the tenets of the neoclassic school prescribed a standard interpretation of the articles to be represented.

The changes in the concepts of naturalisme occurred slowly due to the dominance of neoclassicism. The standard French dictionaries of the early nineteenth century offered evidence to illustrate the shifting concepts of naturalisme. During the first half of the century, Littre's Dictionnaires de la langue française expressed the representative usage and standard definitions. Naturalisme was "a system of thought employed by those who designated nature as the first principle."[8] This definition employed by Littre was derived from a philosophical term of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries for materialism, epicureanism, or any secularism.

Naturalisme had always been concerned with the representation of nature, but the early nineteenth century began to modify the eighteenth-century sense of the word. Now, there were to be vast contrasts in the ideas of naturalisme. As early as 1826, a writer in the Mercure française felt that a new literary doctrine was gaining "ground every day and leads to faithful imitation not of masterworks of art but of the originals offered by nature."[9] By 1839, Sainte-Beuve railed against a general slackening of neoclassic principles as did the newspaper Revue des Deux Mondes, in 1852, when reviewing the romantic poetry of Théophile Gautier. All three criticisms complained

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[8]Ibid., p. 2. Author's translation.

[9]Wellek, op. cit., p. 227.

that literature was becoming "too realistic." In contrast, Charles Baudelaire, in 1848, felt that Balzac was "an observer. . . a naturalist who knew both the law of the generation of ideas and those of the visible beings."[10] Now, naturalisme began to be associated with an expression of daily life. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the term réalisme and its implication slowly began to surplant those of neoclassic naturalisme and to erase any connection the term naturalisme had with neoclassicism.

The term, réalisme, was first employed by the painters in the early part of the nineteenth century. Artists of the period were concerned with new concepts of reality. During this time, neoclassicism appeared to withdraw more and more from a bourgeoisie-accepted reality, and it ignored and denied any theory which did not permit the expression of the ideal characteristics of the object. The nineteenth-century development of réalisme began about 1830 when Eugène Delacroix began to assail the neoclassicism of Jean Auguste Ingres. Following Delacroix, Gustave Courbet actually considered himself a "realist." Three essentials, according to Courbet, composed the primary doctrines of réalisme as contrasted with those of neoclassic painting: first, the right of the artist to do what he wished; second, the right of the artist to paint contemporary subjects; third, the right of the artist to represent the truth in an "actual" manner.[11] In the catalogue for

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[10]Martino, op. cit., p. 3. Author's translation.

[11]Pierre Martino, Le Roman realiste sous le second empire (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1913), p. 77. Author's translation.

Courbet's private exhibition held at the time of the Exposition of 1855, he professed:

> The title of realistic has been imposed upon us similarly to the title of romantic which was placed upon the men of 1830. These titles, as in other times, have given a just idea of things; if it were otherwise, the titles would be unnecessary.
>
> To avoid any difficulty in comprehending my ideas, I must limit myself to a few words of explanation to forestall any misunderstanding.
>
> I have studied, in a detached manner and without taking sides, the systems of the older and newer art forms. I have wished, no longer, to imitate the ones who copy each other; my thoughts have not been able to arrive at the indolent goal of art for art's sake! No! I have wished very simply to follow in the tradition of reasonable feelings and the independence of my own individuality.
>
> To know is to have power, such are my thoughts. To be the same tradition of manners, of ideas, of the aspects of my epoch, according to my appreciation, in a word, to make a living, such is my goal.[12]

One of the precepts of réalisme in the nineteenth century was the return of an emotional quality to art. Neoclassicism codified the means to perceive and express reality to such an extent that a sterile quality developed and it was this quality which became a anathema to the younger painters like Delacroix and Courbet.

A contemporary of Delacroix, Champfleury (Jules Husson or Fleury) transferred these concepts of reality from painting to literature. In his many novels and essays, Champfleury expressed his belief in réalisme as a vital tenet of art. In Le Réalisme (1857), Champfleury stated his position.

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[12] Ibid., p. 76 ff. Author's translation.

> The reproduction of nature by man can be neither a reproduction nor an imitation, it will always be an interpretation.[13]

> Customary (everyday) life is composed of small insignificant facts which are as numerous as the twigs on a tree; these small facts join together and become a branch, the branches become a trunk; a narrative is filled with indolent details which are able to be reproduced without fatigue to the reader. A real drama does not begin with a knowing action; sometimes it does not become united; like that of the horizon, with those who see the end of the world. The novelist chooses a certain number of knowing facts, the groups, the distribution, and the framework. In all stories, it is necessary to have a beginning and an end. But nature has neither arrangement, coordination, nor framework nor beginning nor end.[14]

In describing daily life, Champfleury manifested a renewal of artistic integrity, for a continuation of neoclassic precepts would have only produced, according to Champfleury, movements comparable to ronsardism and gongorism which were considered, in effect, inanimate movements. The constant exercise of such restricting maxims would diminish the portrayal of "customary life" in writing and painting. Thus, the realist felt that neoclassicism could no longer be a useful style.

Jules-Antoine Castagnary, by introducing the philosophical, and Pierre Joseph Proudhon, by introducing the social, amplified the rudimentary images of Champfleury. Both made valuable contributions to the theories of réalisme which were to bear results in naturalisme. During the Second Empire, another generation of contemporary writers, Edmond Duranty and eleven others, founded a magazine called Réalisme. As the

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[13]Champfleury, La Réalisme (Paris: Michel Levy Freres, 1857), p. 92. Author's translation.

[14]Ibid., p. 96. Author's translation.

principal motivating force within this group, Duranty acknowledged his belief in the propositions of Champfleury. Duranty and his collaborators stated that their specific goal was to envision "the social side of man, which was more visible, more comprehensive, and more true. . . [and] to reproduce the things which touched the life of the largest number of people."[15] Having moved rapidly from the simple theories of Courbet, these later realists introduced the social manifestations of life into the arts. They stated that réalisme had to return "sincerity to art."[16] To fulfill the realists' goal, the arts had to become useful. This attitude was their reaction to the romantic theory of art for art's sake. Art, according to the editor of Réalisme, was "an instrument of intelligence and of education--positive and proper--to be employed by [the artists and writers] without fear or reproach."[17] Though the magazine had a very limited life, it bitterly fought neo-classicism and romanticism.

A mid-century revised edition of Littre's book, the Dictionnaire general de la langue française of Hartzfeld and Darmesteter defined naturalisme as "the theory, in pursuance, that art ought to be only the reproduction of nature."[18] Though this definition is still vague, it suggests a more unrestricted approach to the transferral of reality to an art form than the definition in the Littre Dictionnaire.

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[15]Martino, Le Roman . . ., p. 91. Author's translation.

[16]Ibid., p. 87. Author's translation.

[17]Ibid., p. 92. Author's translation.

[18]Martino, Le Naturalisme . . ., p. 2. Author's translation.

Castagnary has been credited as being the first individual to apply the word "naturalisme" to these concepts. About 1863, he said:

> Art is the expression of life under all phases and on all levels, and that its sole aim is to reproduce nature by carrying it to its maximum purpose and intensity; it is truth balanced with science. The naturalistic school re-establishes the broken relationship between man and nature.[19]

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the development and popularization of natural science formulated many new hypotheses. From these hypotheses, artists extracted concepts of observation and classification to increase their degree of truth in art. Now for the first time, the creator and the critic found themselves objectively aligned with the scientist.

Probably the greatest innovation which came from the concepts of naturalisme developed a subject matter indigenous to a broader section of the public. The neoclassic school demanded that all content be derived from Greek and Roman life and mythology. In altering the nature of subject matter, naturalists turned to life and nature itself. Taking their cue from the scientists, the recorded all details of life to obtain the reality of the scene. The catalogue for the Salon of 1867 explained the method employed by the artist.

> Nature and man, the fields and the city; the field with the depth of its skies, the green of its trees, the transparence of its water, the haze of its changing horizons, all the attractive charms of vegetative life during the seasons and days; the city with its men, women, families, the conditional forms of the function and character, the diversity of free social spectacle seen under the sun in a public place or seen discreetly in

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[19] John Rewald, The History of Impressionism (New York: The Museum of Modern Art distributed by Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 20.

> the closure of the pregnancy of a house, all the surprises of the individual life are collectively seen in their day of passion and manners. . . Naturalisme does not propose any other object and does not accept any other definition . . . If its triumph is assured for eternity, it will conform to the scientific method of observation and will be in harmony with the general tendencies of the human spirit.[20]

Besides the scientific application of observation to art and the introduction of more immediate subject matter, there was another trend which affected the final meaning of naturalisme. It began with Auguste Comte. In the search for a greater degree of truth in art, Comte discovered that it was possible to revive the spirit of the encyclopedists and inject it into literature. (Later, this aspect of naturalisme became identified as positivism.) Comte told us that "the veritable philosophic spirit consists of a simple methodical extension of good common sense to all accessible subjects of human reason. . . The positive philosophy will conduct a necessary and more suitable humanity to the social system of nature and that it will pass its homogeneity, in extension and in stability, to all those who pass it on."[21] Positivism brought to naturalisme a deeper penetration of reality. The political, moral, religious, artistic aspects of life were now united in a totality.

After 1880, a dichotomy of naturalisme and réalisme was apparent but it was a relatively minor split. The significant difference between these two terms must be outlined, however. Réalisme, being the earlier aspect of this revolt, was "a specific state of the

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[20]Martino, Le Naturalisme . . ., p. 5. Author's translation.

[21]Ibid., p. 9. Author's translation.

spirit, pensive and melancholy, which was very proud and revolutionary; and the other [naturalisme], a true rage to display the natural and the man in which was a more common and honest a manner."[22] The aims of realisme and naturalisme were the same. Their dissimilarity appeared in the artist's penetration and techniques employed to capture this probing. Realisme was concerned with environment and naturalisme was concerned with analyzing the individual in his interaction with his environment. In a sense, the difference between the two was a matter of degree.

By 1880, naturalisme "was always manifested as a movement of reaction: a reaction against the romantic, a reaction against the conventional and false, a reaction against the grandiloquent and the bombastic, a reaction against the novel and aristocratic, a reaction against the tyrranical cult of form, a reaction against the name of simple reality."[23] The younger generation of artists (of which Zola was a dominating figure) which contained an increasing number of bourgeoisie considered the conventional false. The grandiloquent and bombastic in art were equated with the nobility and its love of neo-classicism. The antagonism between neoclassicism and realistic concepts became evident as the bourgeoisie increased their importance on the political and social scene. The main artistic development in France during the nineteenth century, thus, became more and more allied with the bourgeoisie and their tastes.

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[22] Ibid., p. 6. Author's translation.

[23] Charles Beuchat, Histoire du naturalisme francaise (Paris: Editions Correa, 1949), Vol. I, p. 12. Author's translation.

René Wellek probed the nineteenth-century French terminology of réalisme and naturalisme in his excellent book, Concepts of Criticism. This author felt that early nineteenth-century réalisme "should give a truthful representation of the real world: it should therefore study contemporary life and manners by observing meticulously and analyzing carefully."[24] He defined mid-nineteenth-century naturalisme as "the doctrine of Zola; it implies a scientific approach, it requires a philosophy of deterministic materialism" which was in contrast to réalisme as the older realists were far less clear or unified in their philosophical affiliations.[25] Yet, Wellek felt that, in France, the over-all characteristics of this movement restricted its terminology to réalisme. The definition Wellek employed for this réalisme was that it was "the objective representation of contemporary social reality."[26] Objectivity, for Wellek, meant "something negative, a distrust of subjectivism, of the romantic exaltation of the ego: in practice often a rejection of lyricism, of the personal mood" and social reality "implied a lesson of human pity, of social reformism and criticism."[27] In spite of the didacticism of this definition, réalisme, as Wellek preferred to call the movement, associated the objective with social observation.[28] It is Wellek's definition of the overall development which will serve this investigation.

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[24]Wellek, op. cit., p. 228.

[25]Ibid., p. 234.

[26]Ibid., p. 241.

[27]Ibid., p. 247 ff.

[28]Ibid., p. 242 ff.

The important facet of naturalisme is suggested by its alliance with the political and social conditions of the day. Beginning with the Le Cid controversy, neoclassicism was the officially approved artistic style. For the following two centuries, there were repeated attempts to reform neoclassicism, such as those essayed by Gluck in opera, Noverre in dance, and Beaumarchais in drama, besides those launched by Diderot, the French enclyclopedist, and Rousseau, the philosopher. After the French Revolution, the previous political, social, philosophic, and artistic suppression exploded into a continuously troublesome situation. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the most positive steps were taken to alter the prevalent style.

As the importance of the bourgeoisie increased in the political and social scene, the necessity for a change in the arts became apparent and the rebellious movements known as romanticism, realisme, and naturalisme illustrated this growing bourgeois dominance. Any artistic demands made by the aristocracy were resented by the bourgeoisie. After the Third Republic, the bourgeoisie had improved their socioeconomic position to the extent that they assumed an even greater degree of control of the political and artistic activity; thereby, a naturalistic movement came into its own. After 1880, naturalisme was the accepted form of artistic expression.

Aims and Limitations

This investigation is concerned with the causes and influences which created naturalisme in the theatre. To achieve this aim, a

contrast between the theatrical practices before and after Antoine's Théâtre-Libre must be delineated. Any dissimilarity will be noted by, first, examining some promptbooks of productions at the Comédie-Française and, second, by ascertaining the nature of Antoine's productions from his notes, the published play scripts, and available critical reviews.

The logic in choosing the Comédie-Française for this comparison stems from its longevity and status. From its founding in 1680, this theatrical organization was always considered the first in France. During this theatre's history, the apex of an actor's career was the honor of becoming a member of this distinguished company. Even though the nineteenth century saw the establishment of a second national theatre, the Comedie remained foremost.

The broad nature of this subject necessitates certain limitations. First, a fifteen-year period from 1875 to 1890 was chosen as it encompassed the formative years of André Antoine's life. Second, the Comédie-Française was picked as typical of standard theatre practices of that day. Third, an additional limitation stemmed from the necessity to develop a parallel between the Comédie and the Théâtre-Libre.

As Antoine's importance emanated from his realistic staging, any contrast or comparison of theatrical practices required common terrain. As naturalisme was related to the social conditions of the day, the need to limit our examination to those Comédie-Française productions written by nineteenth-century playwrights seemed advisable since the repertory of the Comédie had a predilection for the classics.

A detailed understanding of the production methods of the Comedie will better define the need for naturalisme in the theatre. The examination of the Comédie promptbooks will also attempt to extract evidence of acting, directing, and scenic theories or practices at this theatre. Then, today's theatre, being essentially a realistic one, will be seen through the budding precepts of the Théâtre-Libre.

To understand fully the era from 1875 to 1890, a short resume of the political and socioeconomic conditions is necessary. The literary heritage of our period of inquiry is also outlined in order to establish a comprehension of naturalisme in the theatre. Then, the cultural environment which influenced, shaped, and developed Antoine and his principles will become the center of our attention.

CHAPTER II

THE AFTERMATH OF THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

For almost two centuries, a single style dominated creativity in French arts. In the early seventeenth century, neoclassicism was established as the accepted mode for literature and eventually for all the arts. Each succeeding court perpetuated neoclassicism by approving it as the official art style. During the eighteenth century, some minor rumblings were heard but neoclassicism continued to be the modus operandi. It was not until after the French Revolution that a modification of this artistic expression was noticeable and only after the defeat of Napoleon I was there any perceptible change.

After the Revolution of 1789, the political and social conditions in France were extremely unstable and remained that way until the beginning of the twentieth century. During this period, the French government was each of the following governmental forms twice: a republic, an empire, and a monarchy. This unstable governmental situation was a result of unsuccessful attempts at a more democratic administration. The basic reason for this condition was an atmosphere of distrust: the two branches of government did not trust each other and the people did not have any confidence in the government.

The lesson of the Revolution was that the people recognized the need for and the means of obtaining popular sovereignty. The

"revolutionary tradition" which derived from 1789 consistently motivated the populace to assert itself whenever any government became intolerable, and became an important part of the shifting political scene. Moreover, the political scene was divorced from the socioeconomic one during this century.

In the nineteenth century, the revolutionary tradition was linked to the idea of a constitutional monarchy after the failures of the republican governments between the years 1789 and 1848. This tradition, while identified with a vague form of republicanism, became increasingly conservative in its approach to socioeconomic matters. David Thomson states in Democracy in France: The Third Republic that the undue concentration upon the political aspects of the revolutions produced a neglect of the social and economic realities.[1] Even the rising middle class appeared to be socialistically conservative in its attitude toward a more liberal government. These conditions were associated with and contributed to the artistic discontent of the nineteenth century.

The Sociopolitical Background

The reign of Charles X from 1814 to 1830, a reactionary constitutional monarchy, can be characterized as an attempt to govern along eighteenth-century lines. Directly related to the social and political situation of this regime was its artistic suppression. In 1830, a political breaking point was reached when Charles X: (1)

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[1]David Thomson, Democracy in France: The Third Republic (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 15.

muzzled the press, (2) dissolved the newly elected Chamber of Deputies, (3) ordered new elections, and (4) increased the rigidity of the voting qualifications which disfranchised the bourgeoisie who were, fundamentally, his initial support. The period from 1814 to 1848 witnessed a moderate but steady growth in both production and income through the introduction of industrialization. This industrialization which improved the socioeconomic conditions of the middle class had not completely provided for or improved the individual's freedom or his happiness. As a result, a form of socialism began to infiltrate bourgeois thought and caused the bourgeoisie to rebel; and the writers and painters began to resist the continuance of neoclassicism.

Aroused by Adolphe Thiers and Francois Guizot, the workers and students rioted (on July 28, 1830) in Paris and captured the city hall. Charles X fled to England after abdicating. Under the guidance of Theirs, the July Monarchy which retained the central provisions of the Charter of 1814 (a constitutional monarchy) tried to encourage the expansion of industry and trade. As usual, the government ignored the social misery that accompanied this new prosperity. During the first years of the "businessman-king's" reign, the consistently low wages continued an economic imbalance between the nobility and the bourgeoisie. In the eighteen years of its existence (1830-1848), the July Monarchy took only two minor steps in the welfare of the working class (an extension of the primary school system in 1833, and in 1840, an ineffectual law limiting the labor of children). Nevertheless, by 1848, France had made great strides industrially with the result that Paris

was one of the world's great manufacturing centers.[2] Yet, beyond a few isolated cities outside of the capital, the industrialization of the country was not extensive enough to alter appreciably the nation's economy.

Romanticism in France

The artistic release from the reign of Charles X permitted the development of a romantic movement in the French theatres. Through their exposure to the works by foreign playwrights and novelists, the French writers began to understand the advantages of freer artistic forms. The emotional excitement stirred by these foreign authors generated a need for the French playwrights to experiment. In its theatrical form, romanticism was so directly associated with the career of Victor Hugo that they were of similar duration. With the performance of Hernani in 1830 and Hugo's preface to Cromwell, an excellent criterion was instituted upon which to build new artistic concepts. "The Battle of Hernani" served to further the development of a new theatrical precept. In painting, as in other arts, romanticism stressed an individuality, an emotional contemplation of the subject matter, a devotion to the "ugly" as defined by Hugo (instead of a classic norm), and an exciting presentation through the use of contemporary subject matter and "local-color." In time, these attributes of romanticism began to stress the exotic to such an extent that the impression was received that the artist was "fleeing a place and a

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[2]Rondo Cameron, France and the Economic Development of Europe 1880-1914 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 66ff.

time that seemed to have little use of him."[3] The escapism of romanticism was a result of the failure of the democratic revolution of 1830. The July Monarchy failed to resolve the socioeconomic conflict between the bourgeoisie, the nouveau riche, and the nobility.

Unfortunately, the qualities of romanticism soon became tiresome patterns. By 1843, the attributes of romanticism, having run their course, contributed to the failure of Hugo's Les Burgraves. In that same year, 1843, the appearance of another literary tendency appeared. The School of Good Sense, as this reaction to romanticism was called, began as a possible right-wing attempt to correct the excesses of its predecessor.

The School of Good Sense

The contrast between the School of Good Sense and romanticism was indicative of the political and socioeconomic pressures of the era. The School, typical of the 1840's, was a conservative reaction to the excesses of the 1830's. In its totality, the School of Good Sense was a dramatic movement composed of mediocre works. The plays produced by this School have been described as being sombre in color but always respectable, elegant, and reserved. After romanticism had freed the artist from the tyranny of neoclassicism, the School employed many of its predecessor's attributes and attempted to find a reality which had its bases in the problems of the day.

The era of the 1840's was marked by (1) an increasing governmental opposition to Theirs (a favorite of the middle class), (2) the

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[3]Sheldon Cheney, The Story of Modern Art (New York: The Viking Press, 1945), p. 32.

disappointment of the republicans of 1830, and (3) the growth of small socialist groups. In 1847, an economic crisis stopped the expansion of the railroads which, in turn, suddenly suspended many other workers leaving about 500,000 people unemployed. This economic situation produced the collapse of the July Monarchy when the bourgeoisie set up barricades. The moderates gained control of the National Assembly and guaranteed the right to work besides establishing in Paris the National Workshop--the socialist workshop based upon a concept of Louis Blanc (a French political and social philosopher who drew a sharp division between the owners of capital and the wage-earners). Unfortunately, the National Workshop scheme did not follow the socialist's blueprint; instead, the workshops were simply a relief project based on semi-military lines and their failure forced Blanc to flee France.

André Antoine noted the position of the School of Good Sense in the development of naturalisme by claiming Émile Augier and Auguste Vacquerie (two of its prominent exponents) to be the direct predecessors of the Théâtre-Libre.[4] Despite Antoine's opinion, Ponsard was generally considered the School's chief dramatist. In noting the School's relations to the social and political conditions, Camille Latreille, a late nineteenth-century French critic, stated:

> The crisis of 1848 was completely political; but when the disorders of June had compromised the republic

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[4]On the death of Augier, Antoine said that of the previous generation Augier with "his bourgeois and social comedies [was] one of our predecessors and his influence transferred to many young people. Until the appearance of Becque, he had been one of the trumpets of your dramatic literature." Page 119. When the Théâtre-Francaise revived Jean Baudry of Vacquerie, Antoine said: "Here is a play, which, in spite of its romantic author, is not far from the style which we seek." Page 190. André Antoine, "Mes souvenirs" sur le Théâtre-Libre (Paris: Artheme Fayard & Cie, 1921), p. 119; p. 190.

> and showed the disastrous weight which was present in the balance of nations, the unchained appetites and brutal instincts, thinkers and moralists were startled by the disorder of morals; they understood with fright the ruin of institutions and the lowering of the moral level. There was, about the year 1850, a crisis for the true republic--the need to return to beliefs and, perhaps even, the prejudices which preserved the existence of society. . . The School of Good Sense took into its hands the cause of duty and the conscience of the Public.[5]

Thus, The School of Good Sense felt the need to offer its public a form of reality which was more readily understandable to them. As the bourgeoisie were becoming more influential in the Second Empire, the School assisted in aligning the democratic sentiments with the gains of the bourgeoisie.

An important attribute of the School derived from a consciousness of the generation's literary needs. Since this movement was primarily a reactionary one, one of its aims was the restoration of a literary quality to the theatre. The School of Good Sense felt that the passion and lyricism of the romantic writers did not permit a proper literary quality to pervade their works; and thus, the School hoped for the revival of the "belles lettres" of a previous age. While some of this School's precepts reverted to neoclassicism, the degree of the reinstatement of certain neoclassic precepts was neither dogmatic nor restrictive. In returning to a more restrained and rational theatrical form, the School objected to the extent that the playwright's fancy had previously dominated the development of the play's action and characters. The plays of the romantic movement were filled with extraordinary and

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[5]Camille Latreille, La Fin du théâtre romantique et Francois Ponsard (Paris: Libraire Hachette et Cie, 1899), p. 378. Author's translation.

bizarre actions; a modification of these qualities was needed in order to associate truth with the bourgeoisie. Indicative of the general attitude of the School to this dramaturgical problem, Augier said that the quality of action necessary to establish a "leveling of souls" required the characters to be neither "too high nor too low" in their social status.[6] The School of Good Sense knew that its characters (spectateur-types) had to be representative of a reality which was congenial to their audiences. Besides, the School's choice of contemporary thematic material emphasized the fact that reality insisted upon a proper employment of character. Through an employment of literary techniques developed by its predecessors, the School hoped to depict "truth seen through reason and duty."[7]

For the School of Good Sense, reason demanded a return to the clarity of neoclassicism while duty implied a relation to contemporary society. According to the School, the romantics and the neoclassic writers worked in ivory towers. The School, through its emphasis upon an examination of l'actualite, found a concept which was vitally needed for the growth of réalisme and was characterized by its rational investigation of truth.[8]

The social awareness of the School can best be illustrated by their founding of the journal Spectateur Republican. This paper was to be their means of expressing the political and literary principles of

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[6]Ibid., p. 386. Author's translation.

[7]Ibid., p. 412. Author's translation.

[8]Ibid., p. 383. Author's translation.

the School. Though this paper had a relatively short life, it made the writers of that day fully aware of the need to relate their works to the rising bourgeoisie.

By constantly referring to the revolutionary tradition, the School of Good Sense was considered to be the "sons of 1789." The public regarded Ponsard's Lucrece to be "a song in honor of liberty" and a means of promoting democracy, and his Agnes de Meranie as a "legitimate cry of revolt of civil power."[9] In strengthening the democratic attitude, the School of Good Sense insisted that one basic institution was the foundation of any sociopolitical stability. According to the School, this institution was the family. Repeatedly, the disruption of a family became the dramatic conflict which promoted the School's ideas of democracy. For an example, the Sextus of Ponsard, though set in Rome, dealt with the loss of personal dignity (symbolized by the loss of the crown) because the protagonist was cruel to his wife. Similarily, Agnes de Meranie illustrated the power which derived from the honor of a family. A linkage of the bourgeoisie to democracy can be clearly seen in these attitudes.

A controversy, begun with Augier's Gabrielle and continued by Vacquerie, emphasized the importance of the role of the family in a democracy. An article in L'Evénément written after Gabrielle's premiere on December 15, 1849, said: "the play of Augier violently struck out at the doctrines dear to Vacquerie, because they exalted marriage and were against the follies of passion that would eclipse the joys of the

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[9]Ibid., p. 382. Author's translation.

family."[10] On the eve of the Second Empire, these plays continued to demonstrate the theatre's increasing social awareness and also accentuated the governmental blindness to the current socioeconomic position.

The School of Good Sense attempted a return to the "tradition francaise," another term for French neoclassicism. As a conservative endeavor, this tradition, believed to be deeply rooted in the French mind, kept recurring. Sarcey maintained this tradition almost to the end of the century. The adjective "French" should be made emphatic, for this tradition was so jealously guarded that it served as a reactionary portion of any revolt. Nowhere was this attitude more clearly seen than in the reaction to the influence of foreign authors upon the romantic school. Protection of French tradition demanded the exclusion of any precepts derived from beyond French soil and outside of the French neoclassic movement. The School of Good Sense demanded the elimination of these foreign influences. Augier, writing in the Spectateur Republican, insisted that this invasion of "foreign cults" be halted. Previously, the French "spirit" had conquered Europe. Now, why should "the French writers seek outside sources to renew their works!" Augier cried: "Reston Gaulois et que tout ce que nous touchons le devinne."[11]

After romanticism ceased to be the dominant artistic style, the School of Good Sense profitted by the release from neoclassicism which romanticism had achieved. As each succeeding movement naturally

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[10] Ibid., p. 393. Author's translation.

[11] Ibid., p. 388. "Remain French and all that we touch will be devine."

modifies various aspects of the previous one, the School anchored some advanced in the progress toward a greater degree of social truth in the arts, besides initiating its own features. The most important contribution of the School to the development of réalisme was its representation of the individual as a member of society. This achievement was directly related to an awareness of the needs of the bourgeoisie within an art form.

Émile Augier

Upon the death of Émile Augier, André Antoine declared that he was one of the most important ancestors of the Théâtre-Libre.[12] Augier, Dumas fils, and Sardon were considered to be the only important playwrights of the Second Empire and into the Third Republic by Émile Perrin of the Comédie-Française. While Émile Augier began as a playwright of the School of Good Sense, he wrote the majority of his plays during the Second Empire (1851-1870) and outside of the School. His subject matter and its treatment stressed the changing social conditions of that era. To understand his antagonism to the conflict between the social and political, it is necessary to be familiar with the political situation of the Second Empire.

After the fall of the July Monarchy in 1848, the National Assembly served as the provisional government while drafting a new constitution. The Second Republic was created in the fall of 1848 when Louis Napoleon was unanimously elected titular head of the government in one of the most completely free elections in France. After

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[12]Antoine, op. cit., p. 119. See note 4.

Napoleon's election, the conservative politicians were unable to assist him because the new constitution had separated the two branches of the government in such a manner as to hinder any cooperation and any chance of achieving the goals of the 1848 revolution. The needed economic reforms could not be obtained through a compromise between the governmental branches. Again, the revolt of the bourgeoisie did not produce any sociopolitical improvements which they felt were their right as part of the "revolutionary tradition."

When Louis Napoleon was unable to make the Second Republic function, he became resolved to take an action in accordance with his vision and organized the coup d'état of 1851 which founded the Second Empire. With the establishment of the Second Empire, Louis Napoleon (now Napoleon III) endeavored to charm the people with the semblance of a liberal government. Actually, his government was a lightly veiled dictatorship.

Fortunately, the economic growth of France had resumed after the proclamation of the Second Empire. "Capital accumulated more rapidly in the five and one-half years between the beginning of 1852 and the depression of 1857 than in any other period in the history of France."[13] This growth increased the size and economic status of the bourgeoisie and produced a socioeconomic imbalance of dangerous proportions. Napoleon III failed to moderate this imbalance and his failure furthered the growth of new socioeconomic concepts which penetrated and influenced the growing bourgeoisie in their attitudes toward the government and its responsibilities.

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[13]Cameron, op. cit., p. 68.

The Second Empire offered Émile Augier fertile ground for criticism. The dramaturgical development of Augier is interesting as his first plays were essentially dramatic exercises employing thematic ideas that dealt with contemporary problems. Unfortunately, his first plays were simple stories with an attached moral. The plots were never intricate. Generally, a single situation was presented that permitted the development of enough complications to maintain interest. The situations contained a more or less optimistic denouement. At first, the moral was an appendage to the play. As Augier's technique strengthened, the moral became the motivating axis of the play.

His first play, La Cigue (1844), illustrates his allegiance to the School of Good Sense. After having written La Cigue, Augier submitted the comedy to Ponsard. Jules Claretie, as administrator of the Comédie-Française, in examining the play's original manuscript, noted that Ponsard had indicated some corrections in the play's verse that were later completed by Augier. Claretie also noticed several dramaturgical comments which were derivatives of the School's precepts.

In Augier's second play, Un Homme de bien (1845), an improvement in his writing technique is noticeable. Again, the play is in verse. Having learned his lesson from Ponsard, Augier did not let the verse of this play hinder either the action or the characterization. However, the important element to observe is the skill with which Augier had begun to control his plot and characters.

Augier's third play, L'Aventuriere (1848), contained a balance between the action and moral. This play, in verse, indicated a concern for contemporary mores. The play, set "in 15 . . In Padua," dramatized

the conflict of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The plot dealt with an actress who attempted to enter a respectable family by concealing her name and career.

In Gabrielle (1849), Augier continued to employ the moral as the foundation of the play. This play emphasized the importance of a family's bonds when affected by the wife's adultery. To make the play more poignant, Augier introduced the character of a younger daughter. The contrast of the young girl's innocence (a symbol of the family solidarity) with the adulterous action of her mother was planned to appeal to the family sentiments of the bourgeoisie.

Of the early plays of Augier, the first injection of a completely contemporary note was found in Philibert (1852), but it was only a guarded form of réalisme. Latreille maintained that this play was the completion of Augier's transition from one movement to another. For the fast fading days of the School, Philibert was an outstanding success. This play contained a sense of beauty, "un parfum de poesie," that was to be an important feature in all of Augier's remaining works.[14]

In leaving the precepts of the School of Good Sense, Augier moved from poetic drama to prose drama. When La Dame aux camelias (1852) of Dumas fils exalted profane love, Augier was shocked by the possibility of the prostitute becoming a respectable member of society by her redemption through love. Thus, he wrote Le Mariage d'Olympe. Secure in his craft, Augier began a vigorous attack on the current trends of social relations. Typical of the rising bourgeoisie, Augier

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[14]Latreille, op. cit., p. 404.

approached the current socioeconomic problems from a conservative point of view. Feeling that the institution of the family was essential for the well-being of society, Augier bitterly fought for the stability of the family.

From the beginning, Augier's purpose in writing the comedy of manners was a humanitarian one. Since his favorite subject was the family, he repeatedly centered his basic situation about a faltering family solidarity. This fundamental predicament was described and underscored by Augier when he sensed the damaging influences which the demi-monde was currently exerting; the Empress and the aristocracy had become charmed by the lower social strata to the extent that they granted social recognition of sorts to the demi-monde.

Augier's hatred of the prostitute was not a personal one; it was a social abhorrence. Since members of the court, including the Empress, wore masks and cloaks as a disguise to venture into disreputable places of entertainment or onto the boulevards, Augier felt that this practice of the nobility was in conflict with the solidarity of the growing middle class. An affair which scandalized the conservative bourgeoisie dealt with several court ladies who were picked up by the Prefect of Police as they pretended to be prostitutes and had to be rescued by their husbands. The perverted interest in the prostitute as an individual and the intrusion of the prostitute into the home, according to Augier, would destroy the one vital institution which had to survive the political and social maelstrom of the era.

Possibly his most noteworthy works were the ones that dealt exclusively with the family. His two best plays, certainly his best

known ones, were Le Gendre de M. Poirier and Les Fourchambault. The action of the former, written in 1854, three years after the founding of the Second Empire, dealt with the nouveau riche and their pretension of being a new aristocracy. The play concluded with a compromise on both sides. This play contained some of Augier's finest character delineations. Mr. Poirier was humbled without losing dignity and vigor; his son-in-law gained an understanding of the changing times.

Les Fourchambault, his last play, was one of the most successful to be produced by the Comédie-Française during the first years of the Third Republic. It contained proof of a deepening of Augier's sympathy and understanding of human life.

> Viewed from a strictly logical angle, the play may seem reactionary if not contradictory, yet the young man in the early 'fifties denouncing the fallen Olympes and Navarettes, had with increasing years come to realize that there were exceptions in life, that human nature cannot always be evil. Leaving aside particular questions of the day, wishing to attack no specific institutions, law or social wrong, he bases his play on human frailty and human goodness, infusing the whole into a generous portion of good and kindly humor and general satire.[15]

Among other subjects, Augier attacked the press and money in the play Les Effrontés (1861). Barrett Clark claimed that this play was the first "to treat in a realistic manner the power of the press and [to] paint a truly modern villain."[16] Besides the press, Augier attacked new political concepts in Le Fils de Giboyer (1862). When the public considered this play to be anti-clerical, Augier insisted that this was

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[15]Émile Augier, Four Plays translated by Barrett H. Clark (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1915), p. xxii.

[16]Ibid., p. xx.

not true. "This comedy is not a political play in the current sense of the word: it is a social play. It neither attacks nor defends."[17] This last sentence is typical of the scientific approach which had begun to appear in realistic literature. In the justification of the social worth of the moral play, no other person illustrated the point of view better than Augier himself.

> I do not wish to exaggerate the social role of literature; but in the structure of societies there is an interior framework as important to the general economy as the skeleton structure is to the individual--this framework is the moral. It is by these that nations are maintained better than by speaker's rules and national constitutions. We have seen proof of this the day after the revolutions, during the interregnum of the laws. The moral seems to restore themselves again and again; the moral escapes a secret action for neither decree nor orders have power to reform them.
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> Are we not able to call literature the nourishing coloring of the public spirit? and for the nation, is not the theatre, the most active and most nutritive of all literature? . . . Is not the theatre, in effect, the form of thought which is the most knowing, the most discernible and the keenest? Theatre is in immediate rapport with the audience; its teachings, good or bad, reach them directly and violently. You say that it has corrected no one; I wish it could; but is not the same true with the Holy Bible and the pulpit? Besides the theatre's goal is not to correct a few; it is to correct all the world. While it is not possible to suppress the individual vice, we can suppress its contagion. Of all the tools of human thought, the theatre is the most powerful; that is all.[18]

Augier, during the Second Empire and the Third Republic, developed and maintained a warmth and a verve which gave his plays life. Barrett

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[17] Émile Augier, Théâtre complet (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1894), Vol. IV, p. 5. Author's translation.

[18] Ibid., V, p. 6. Author's translation.

Clark has defined Augier's position in the nineteenth-century French Theatre:

> Augier is the Balzac of the French Stage of the last century: his power of observation, his common sense, his straight forward and honest way of speaking the truth, the great extent and variety of his works, bring him into closer relationship with the great novelist than any other dramatist of his time. Considered as a moralist or social reformer, as an exponent of the domestic virtues, as a champion of the fireside, he is of great importance, but as a painter of the life of his time, of the bourgeoisie as well as of the aristocracy, as a literary artist depicting living men and women, he occupies a position in French literature and drama as sure, though possibly not so exalted, as that of Molière or Balzac.[19]

This power of observation translated into theatrical terms made Augier important to the development of réalisme in the theatre. Augier portrayed society as he saw it, not as the neo-classicists would have liked it to be nor as the romantics thought it was.

Alexandre Dumas Fils

Alexandre Dumas fils, besides being Augier's greatest rival, employed contemporary social problems as thematic material for his plays. As one of the kingly triumvirate, he ruled the theatrical scene for an extended period. Antoine sensed the harm that such a prolonged activity could have upon the development of réalisme. It is the presence of the social questions in the plays of Dumas fils that indicate his connection with the naturalistic trend.

Augier and Dumas fils did not hesitate to attack the same problem at the same time. While both writers were concerned with the family in society, Augier with his background in the School of Good

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[19]Augier, Four . . ., xxv.

Sense employed a conservative approach. Dumas fils derived his attitudes from the romantic school of which his father was one of the foremost exponents. It is not surprising to find that the plays of Dumas fils were more theatrical than Augier's, for the heritage of these two playwrights came from separate trends.

In contrast to Augier, Dumas fils first established a social thesis upon which to construct his conflict. This gave his plays a theatrical quality that appeared to be derived from the romantic school. His subject matter sprang from contemporary issues involving the family. Himself an illegitimate child, Dumas fils defended the family with an animal vigor. Unfortunately, many illogical dramatic devices appeared in the plays of Dumas fils. Nevertheless, the playwright stubbornly insisted upon substantiating his dramaturgy.

The prefaces of two of his plays stand out for their complete expression of his dramatic attitudes. The first preface, to the play Le Père prodigue, tried to justify his lack of technique by explaining the play's construction. Here, he stated that "one can become a painter, a sculptor, and even a musician by dint of study; one never becomes a dramatic author [this way]. One is so immediately or never."[20] Dumas fils carefully suggested that a playwright's ideas were not determined at the outset of his career. "The dramatic author, in proportion as he advances in life, may acquire more elevated thought, develop a higher form of philosophy, conceive and execute works that are more

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[20]H. Stanley Schwarz, Alexandre Dumas, Fils Dramatist (New York: The New York University Press, 1927), p. 147.

consistent than those of his first plays."[21] By gaining a greater fluency in handling ideas, he felt that a playwright lost a little technique. To vindicate this thought, Dumas fils called Molière, Corneille, and Racine to his aid. In the second important preface, to L'Étrangere, he continued his defense: "we lose it [technique] almost always in proportion as we advance in age and in inverse proportion as we gain knowledge of the human heart."[22] From these two prefaces, the essential nature of his dramaturgy can be extracted.

Although a by-product of the romantic school, Dumas fils was very much aware of the increasing efforts toward verism. In the preface of L'Étrangere, he pointed out that réalisme had to be more than a copy of nature. He justified the thesis play by claiming it to be an extension of réalisme. He also felt that a play's dramaturgy was strengthened by the addition of the thesis.[23] But, the techniques to which Dumas fils subscribed were counter to the beliefs of Antoine. Therefore, the dramaturgy of Dumas fils will be described in some detail.

In the thesis play, Dumas fils felt certain elements were neoessary: logic supported by the development of a rapid action; the arrangement of characters; and the proper employment of the denouement. These elements were combined in a proportion that was to be determined by the thesis and its required action.

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[21] Alexandre Dumas, fils, Théâtre Complet (Paris: Clamann Levy, 1877), Vol. VI, p. 221. H. Stanley Schwarz translation.

[22] Ibid., VI, p. 220. Schwarz translation.

[23] Ibid., VI, p. 163.

According to this playwright, the foremost element was logic. Through logic, the author dominated and commanded his action. "Logic must be implacable between the point of departure and the ultimate goal which he [the playwright] must never lose from [his] view in the development of an idea or the fact."[24] Since the audience must be continually conscious of the progression of the thesis from its emergence to its conclusion, a form of logic, according to Dumas fils, was employed to keep the thesis constantly before the public. During the play's development, Dumas fils forced his dramaturgy to bow to the demands of logic rather than the demands of action, story, or character.

To warrant his employment of rapid action, Dumas fils stated that "concision and rapidity" were vital to maintain the audience's attention. Any distraction, reflection, or contemplation of the author's logic might allow the audience to discern a false note in the conflict. This driving rapidity of action forced the audience to follow the play's logic. In Le Supplice d'une femme, the rapid chain of events did not permit the audience to become aware of certain essential improbabilities of the action.

Many dramaturgical devices were employed by Dumas fils to sustain the action's swift movement. His theory of the "sciences of contre-parties" was a strategem to assist this impression of rapid action. This "science of contre-parties" was "the science of blacks, shadows, of oppositions in a work, which constitute equilibrium, ensemble, and harmony."[25] In the overstressing of this point, Dumas fils asked for

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[24]Ibid., VI, p. 214. Schwarz translation.

[25]Ibid., III, p. 211. Author's translation.

a juxtaposition of dramatic elements which would achieve his desired oppositions. To provide the contrasts of blacks and shadows, he felt that a careful character relationship was of intrinsic value. Feeling that the character should be manipulated as in a chess game, Dumas fils devised three methods to accomplish this objective: the raissoneur, the fore and aft arrangement of characters, and the triangle with an odd or unknown side.

In the Notes on Denise (published in 1892, seven years after the play's first production), he listed his raissoneurs; and in the preface to Visite de noces, Dumas fils acknowledged the fact that it was he who was speaking in these roles. To fulfill the purpose assigned by Dumas fils, the character of the raissoneur had to be developed to its fullest possibility; unfortunately, a similarity of raissoneurs became apparent after several plays, which eventually resulted in a seeming lack of characterization. Dumas fils displayed a certain skill in handling the raissoneur as part of the play through the raissoneur's interrelationship with the other characters. With a tight plot construction, the raissoneur had to appear as an intricate part of the dramatic struggle.

The fore and aft arrangement was another segment of this skillful interrelationship of characters. According to Dumas fils, the characters had to be divided into two groups with the more prominent ones being directly involved in the solution of the play's thesis. A second and older group of characters who had experienced a similar situation was introduced as a contrast. Dumas fils manipulated these contrasting groups to accentuate the solution of the problem. He felt that by utilizing the fore and aft groups, the problems of his thesis plays were

shown to be universal. This arrangement of characters also endeavored to double the action's interest besides constantly keeping the thesis before the public. Le Demi-monde and La Question d'argent are two notable examples of such an arrangement of characters.

A device to create suspense within this inter-relationship of his characters was a variation of the triangle. By sustaining an imbalance on one side which was not necessarily defined, a potential was created that could be useful according to the playwright's desires. In one of his last plays, Francillon, the two sides of the triangle were evident immediately. Lucien and Francine were seen as the romantic interest, but the third side was an enigma since either one of the leads could have been involved with a third party. The uncertainty of this odd side invited interest by the audience and propelled the action forward.

Another essential dramatic technique of Dumas fils was the development of a proper denouement. To achieve a powerful conclusion, he did not hesitate to employ a contrived ending. The terminal portion of his plays was planned and worked out prior to the construction of the action's framework. In the preface to Princesse George (titled To the public, 1872), the playwright stated: "I shall even add that one must begin the play by its denouement, that is to say, begin a play only when one has in mind the final scene, the final movement, the final word."[26] Without knowledge of the dramatic action's goal, the plot of the play could not fulfill the requirement of a thesis. Dumas fils

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[26] Ibid., V, p. 79. Author's translation.

also stated that "a denouement is a mathematic total. If your total is false, your entire operation is invalid."[27]

The denouement was the result of the sum of its parts, the raissoneur, the fore and aft groups of characters, and the rapidity of the action. The binding quality in the dramatic technique of Dumas fils was his "liaison of scenes." The utilization of the fore and aft groups and the momentum of the play kept the focus upon the thesis besides linking one scene to the next. Dumas fils did not hesitate to grease the grooves in which his characters would slide to their denouement. Such practices were anathema to the naturalistic theatre and André Antoine.

Possibly the greatest contributing factor to the action's pace was his dialogue. A basic requirement for this dialogue was that it be fluent, rapid, and colloquial. Since ideas had to be immediately comprehended by the audience, Dumas fils observed that an incorrectness of speech on the stage would pass unnoticed and would actually give an added naturalness to the character, therby achieving his aim. Such a contention was very vital to a naturalistic theatre and was Dumas fils' greatest contribution to the development of naturalisme.

> These inaccuracies, which shook us so greatly when we read them, not only pass unnoticed on the stage, in the intonation of the actor and in the movement of the drama, but even give life at times to the ensemble in the same manner that small eyes, a large nose, a wide mouth, or disheveled hair often give more grace, more features, more passion, more accentuation to a head than does Grecian regularity.[28]

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[27] Ibid., V, p. 79. Schwarz translation.

[28] Ibid., III, p. 25. Schwarz translation.

Dumas *fils* justified his theories, saying: "if we can therefore conciliate thought, the public taste, the interests of art and those of the director, everything goes well; but that is not easy, and in the struggle it is always truth that is condemned to concessions."[29] As his plays moved toward the thesis play formula, the observation of reality or truth appeared to be sacrificed more and more and as such his plays were in direct conflict with an increasing awareness of verisimilitude. In contrast, Antoine produced plays whose dramaturgy was not as obvious as Dumas *fils'*, for *naturalisme* did not admit any need for a formal dramatic technique.

Victorien Sardou

The last one of the three leading playwrights who were railed against by Antoine and the naturalists was Victorien Sardou. In a review of the dramaturgy of Sardou, it is obvious that of the three playwrights he appeared to be most unaware of social changes and their problems. This attitude can be clearly seen by Sardou's approach to the craft of the playwright.

From the first, Sardou was concerned only with the manipulation of the plots and its attendant parts. In the process of developing his dramaturgy, Sardou studied Scribe's plays by reading and analyzing them. In his analysis, Sardou might read the first act, and then, write the remainder of the play or reverse the process by reading the play from the second act and, then, reconstruct Act I. When this task

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[29] *Ibid.*, VI, p. 185. Author's translation.

was finished, Sardou compared the two versions to find the weakness or strength of his version.

After he became technically proficient, Sardou developed a method upon which he constructed his plays. Sardou explained his technique in the preface to La Haine. The explanation given by Sardou was precise:

> I will ignore how the dramatic idea is revealed to the minds of my colleagues. For me, the process is invariable. It appears to me in the form of a philosophic equation which acts to engage the unknown. Once the equation is formed, the problem asserts itself, besets me, and no longer leaves me in rest until I have found the formula.
>
> What is the greatest sacrifice that a man is able to make for the love of his country?
>
> When the formula was found, the play flowed by itself.
>
> For La Haine, and in virtue of what I have just said, the problem as a question is this:
>
> Under what circumstances does the native charity of a wife assert itself in a sparkling fashion?
>
> The formula found, and not without pain, was this:
>
> It will be when, the victim of an outrage worse than death, she will ask help from her executioner.
>
> We can well imagine that this is not only the embryo, the germ of the idea, but also its credibility. The play is not only born but also known. It has a soul! Now, it was only necessary to give it a body.[30]

The play's body of which Sardou speaks failed to support any truth or reality according to the naturalist's point of view. From the initial premise, Sardou failed to relate to any quality of contemporary life. Instead the plays became distended vehicles for actors who were considered to be of the old school. His plays relied upon themselves for their existence; and in the eyes of the naturalist, this condition was unforgivable.

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[30]Victorien Sardou, Théâtre Complet (Paris: Albin Michel, 1934), Vol. III, p. 9ff. Author's translation. Sardou's italics.

Antoine felt that the practices of Augier, Dumas *fils*, and Sardou did not consistently relate to the bourgeoisie and thus could not develop any of the theatrical aspects which were so essential to *naturalisme*. These three authors maintained their individual formulas, formulas derived from their most successful plays. Antoine felt that the duration of this dominance by these playwrights was too long and exerted such a force that minor playwrights had to follow their lead. This condition could only produce a stagnant quality that was harmful to any growth of theatrical ideas. Part of Antoine's revolt stemmed from his awareness of changing socioeconomic conditions and from his insistence that these conditions be reflected in the works of contemporary playwrights.

Painting

In Chapter I, the fact that the development of *naturalisme* began in painting was recorded. Now a more detailed narrative of this revolt in painting is necessary to supply the background for the mounting interest and acceptance of *naturalisme*. Between 1871 and 1879, Antoine became keenly aware of the turmoil in painting. During his lunch time and in his spare evenings, he visited the various museums and art exhibits around Paris. It is conceivable that Antoine visited the first exhibit of impressionistic painting on April 15, 1874 and subsequent exhibitions. At that time, Antoine was sixteen and had been exploring Paris since the founding of the Third Republic in 1871.

After his return from the army in 1883, Antoine continued his habit of visiting libraries, museums, and exhibitions of painting. It

was through an accidental visit to a lecture of Taine, the art historian, that Antoine was introduced to naturalisme. Painting was the first fine art to reflect the dissatisfaction caused by a changing social and political situation.

As the government from 1830 to 1848 appeared conservative, the seeds of discontent were sown by the admixture of Parisian artists and those from the countryside. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the painting methods taught at the L'École des Beaux-Arts ignored the socioeconomic conditions of the day. With the attendance of the bourgeoisie at this school, a discrepancy in subject matter and technique was noticed by them.

The Academy was a group of officially approved painters who controlled the L'École des Beaux-Arts. This school, as the official school, considered itself the only proper one to teach painting. Generally, a graduate could be assured a respectable income by his continuation of the Academy's methods. L'École reflected the painting techniques of the Academy whose leading figure was Jean Auguste Ingres.

To the pupils of the School and of Ingres, especially, drawing became an end in itself. There was much discussion of the "noble contour," for the pupils were shown silhouettes which the Academy teachers called outline drawings and were forced to copy them mechanically. One young adversary of the L'École said: "the eye . . . first of all begins by acquiring a bad habit, which is that of not taking account of the planes, and of seeing in the object to be interpreted nothing but a

flat surface surrounded by a contour."[31] When objects, particularly the male nude, were later introduced to the student, he was expected to duplicate the figure as it had been painted by previously official artists in their studies.

Generally, the methods of teaching painting were by rote rather than through thought. A technique was drilled into the students until objects (or subject matter) and methods merged into one universal style. The painters of the neoclassic school were not permitted to have any individual response to nature nor were their observations of life essential to their work. These teaching practices produced paintings which lacked any inspiration, evidenced by dry execution.

The final step to sterility came from the choice of subject matter and it was here that the painters' revolt began. The painters who controlled the Academy forced themselves and their students to paint only the "antique." The only contemporary subject matter approved was portraits of the aristocracy. For the neoclassic painters, the choice of subject matter prescribed specific procedures. After the idea of the painting had been formulated, the artist rationalized his composition; the models were arranged to fulfill his basic idea. In the execution of paintings, each individual model and portion of the painting was constructed separately and without regard to its relation to any adjacent parts. The neoclassic intellectual approach to painting regarded only the idea and perfect properties of the model to be

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[31]John Rewald, The History of Impressionism (New York: The Museumoof Modern Art distributed by Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 20.

painted. This carefully controlled development of the painting ruled out any emotion; an intellectual consideration of the idea and its execution was paramount to the artist.

Eugene Delacroix, an early antagonist to neoclassicism, said that the Academy and the L'École "taught the beautiful as one teaches algebra" and their paintings did not contain a "dash of truth, the truth which comes from the soul."[32] Gustave Courbet further rejected neoclassicism; he considered his paintings to be social commentaries upon reality.

Of the Academy painters, the dominating figure was Ingres. This was unfortunate, for Ingres was both a sterile teacher and a sterile leader. Reason, according to Ingres, was the motivating factor in neoclassic painting. In control of the Academy, Ingres dictated the conditions of painting. The infertility of Ingres' leadership was reflected by the evidence that he fought for line over color and was horrified by the fact the Delacroix permitted sentiment to replace reason in his paintings. Ingres was also distressed by Delacroix's abandoning the "perfect type of human figure." The systematic use of the nude and its antique draperies, an essential for neoclassicism, was not employed by Delacroix. For Ingres, reason also meant a careful and slow development of each element of the painting. Delacroix's paintings gave the impression of being quickly executed and this disturbed Ingres.

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[32] Ibid., p. 18.

In painting, the best example of neoclassic ideology was Thomas Couture; his principles and teachings did not differ from those of Ingres. His motto was "Ideas and Impersonality." The latter word became his chief preoccupation. His development of the impersonality concept reached the point where each figure of his painting was rendered individually and idealistically without consideration of its relationship to the other figures. Naturally, his paintings reflected the same dry execution common to most neoclassic painters.

Beginning about 1815 and extending into the 1850's, the constantly shifting forms of government placed the painter in jeopardy. It was not surprising that some artists were officially recognized by one regime but out of favor with another. These artists turned to the wealthy merchants for support. When the status of the nobility became unpredictable, the painters looked to the Salons as a means to establish a name in the art world. From there, it was possible to branch out on their own.

Neoclassicism, supported by the Second Empire, restricted the painters to such an extent that the rebellion was intensified. When this revolt began, Napoleon III had assumed complete and dictatorial control of the government in the 1850's. His political and social concepts of government were so conservative that they blinded him to any socioeconomic reality. This same attitude was also present in the arts, and especially in painting.

By 1862, the number of young painters from the country increased in Paris to such an extent that they gained courage to express their

discontent with the status quo in painting. During this decade, these artists created enough noise to cause the Emperor to find it necessary to placate them. In an attempt to pacify these youngsters and at the same time discredit them, Napoleon III with his Minister of Art decided upon having a Salon des Refuses which was to be held in conjunction with the regular Salon. Any painter refused by the regular Salon could exhibit in the Salon des Refuses. After the Emperor announced the rules of the Salon des Refuses, many of the young painters in revolt welcomed this showing. The political implications of the Emperor's decisions could and did have vast repercussions. The Salon stood for neoclassicism while the Salon des Refuses expressed the trend of realisme or naturalisme. Therefore, any public approval of the Salon des Refuses would disgrace the government. Among those permitting their paintings to be exhibited in the Salon des Refuses were Edouard Manet, Camille Pissarro, James Whistler, and Paul Cezanne. Probably the best known work today which was exhibited in this Salon was Manet's Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe.

From the very first day, the Salon des Refuses proved to be popular with the masses and was crowded with three or four thousand spectators on the Sunday showings. The exact popular reaction to these paintings is still being questioned, for the newspaper reports were not accurate in evaluating the response of the spectators. The newspaper censorship did not permit the expression of any reaction against the government.

At this time, Napoleon III was politically harassed and had to grant the Chamber of Deputies permission to freely discuss any laws he

proposed. The Emperor decided that the Salon des Refuses was a failure and through an imperial decree, published on November 13, 1863, reconstructed the regulations for future Salons. The new rules abolished the Academy's supervision of the L'École des Beaux-Arts by withdrawing their right to appoint the professors. But, most important, the Salon was changed from a biennial to an annual affair.

In the Parisian cafes, discussions that were generated by the conflict of neoclassicism and réalisme yielded a product which furthered réalisme and its implications. These cafe discussions served as a vital impetus for the new movement in painting. The old painters (such as Delacroix and Courbet) who had opposed the neoclassic school, were considered the realists, while the younger painters were considered to have extended into naturalisme or impressionism.

One of the painters making the final step in the transition from réalisme to impressionism was Jean Baptiste Corot. His motto was "Integrity and Confidence"; his complete emphasis was upon values. Pissaro recorded these instructions of Corot's: "this is no reason for you not to work at values; for that is the basis of everything, and in that every one may feel and express oneself, one cannot do good paintings without subjects that harmonize with their own particular impression." Corots insisted: "don't imitate, don't follow others, you'll stay behind them."[33]

In rejecting neoclassicism and its traditional painting techniques, the realists employed a uniform brown base on their canvas as

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[33] Ibid., p. 86.

the working surface. Gustave Courbet felt that here rested an improved method which could assist the artist in capturing nature. "Upon it [the somber brown base], you can dispose your lights, your colored masses; you immediately see your effect," he advised his students.[34] In contrast to Ingres, Courbet did not impose his will upon his students and offered suggestions which the students were permitted to accept or reject as they saw fit.

In the advancement of réalisme, Monet and Manet rejected this sombre brown base. Instead, these painters preferred a white canvas; they felt that it was a better surface upon which to conceive their observations in terms of light and dark masses and around which the intermediary values could be more readily constructed. By working with a white canvas, the naturalists were able to establish a scale of values without the consideration of predetermined effects.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon's posthumously published treatise on art criticism, Du principe de l"art et de sa destination sociale, suggested an awareness of the social implications of art and an element of social reform. In discussing the origin and development of this concept, Proudhon touched upon one factor which later both Charles Baudelaire and Émile Zola employed as one of the motivating factors of naturalisme. Proudhon stated that a work of art was perfected as a "bit of creation seen through the medium of a powerful temperament."[35] This idea of an

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[34] Ibid., p. 112.

[35] Ibid., p. 126ff.

individual's temperament being a controlling factor in the interpretation of an object was, at this time, shocking.

In 1863, Jules-Antoine Castagnary coined the word "naturalist" when speaking of the efforts of the contemporary painters. The importance of the need for a new term came from the limits of the word réalisme; for Courbet and Proudhon had narrowed the definition of réalisme to the point where it could be best applied only to subject matter. The younger painters had moved beyond the concepts and techniques of their teachers. The importance of Castagnary is derived from locating the source of energy which characterized the generation of younger painters.

> The naturalist school declares that art is the expression of life under all phases and on all levels, and that its sole aim is to reproduce nature by carrying it to its maximum power and intensity; it is truth balanced with science. The naturalist school re-establishes the broken relationship between man and nature . . . It has already brought back to their true role line and color, which in its works no longer was a part. By placing the artist again in the center of his time, with the mission of selection, it determines the genuine utility, in consequence, the morality of art.[36]

In turning to nature for inspiration, the naturalists abandoned the older methods of suggesting a third dimension--the so-called "local color" method--which showed each object becoming more somber as it receded from the source of light. From their own observations, the naturalist and impressionist experienced a profound revelation--the areas in shadow were not devoid of color nor were they darker as the

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[36] Ibid., p. 126.

neo-classicists had insisted. Color was simply not as bright. Through continued observation, shadow was found to contain the complementary color of its object with a predominate blue overcast. The search for detail was also important to the impressionist in application of the scientific method to art. The use and importance of detail which grew from observation was an aspect of naturalisme which was also vital to Antoine's work.

An important portion of this revolt in painting was the painter's awareness of the socioeconomic situation. For example, during the Commune, Courbet became the Minister of Fine Arts in Paris. In this position, he was connected with the destruction of the Vendome Column. When the Commune was suppressed by the Third Republic, Courbet was jailed; he was later freed when the authorities were unable to link him with this destructive act. The importance of Courbet's action stemmed from his awareness of art and the social and political conditions of the era.

In painting, réalisme and naturalisme (or expressionism were linked to the increasing participation in the arts by the bourgeoisie. This situation had a twofold aspect: more artists came from bourgeoisie families; and the bourgeoisie began to support art, which meant that the artist had to express a reality which this class could understand.

Antoine, in applying naturalisme to the theatre, appeared to understand all phases of réalisme and its multiple manifestations. Corot's dictum could be applied to Antoine's concept of theatre. One of the dissatisfactions which caused Antoine to break away from the Cercle Gaulois derived from the fact that this group tended to copy

Comédie-Française productions. Feeling that this was not a reality compatible to his concepts, Antoine tried to translate into theatrical terms the artistic revolt that was about him.

Music

Since music does not lend itself to verism as well as painting or theatre, the reality of opera can only be manifested through certain components. The expression of the opera's action in the arrangement of a succession of arias, ensembles, and choruses dictates opera's reality. Neoclassic opera[37] which employed reason and other neoclassic concepts for its own use defined a specific progression of types of arias, ensembles, and choruses while restricting ballet to the performance of early dance forms. Romantic opera introduced many equivalents of theatrical reality. The prime parallel between romantic opera and naturalistic theatre is seen in the relationship of the action to the employment of musical forms.

A similar revolt was felt in music during the first half of the nineteenth century. An example of these shifting trends was reflected in Rossini's work. Though an Italian, he felt it was necessary to move to Paris to achieve success. At the time of his move, he was writing Italian opera buffa for the Parisian theatre. The subject matter had little relation to the life of the day, for his characters and plots

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[37]The term neoclassicism is never employed in music. In dis-dussing musical works composed prior to 1810, musicologists speak of the classical composer. It is a broad and loose term. I have employed the term neoclassic to mean any opera composed prior to the advent of Mozart.

were primarily an extension of the commedia dell' arte tradition as distilled by the eighteenth century.

During the 1820's, Rossini like many composers became aware of a shifting relationship between subject matter and the musical structure of opera. His last opera buffa, Count Ory, indicated an awareness of this change. The use of some new harmonies was a form of evidence. His re-evaluation of the action centered it upon the chorus. In his last opera, Guillaume Tell (1829) Rossini took the final step to romantic opera (which was to slowly develop into the more realistic opera of Puccini). This opera was a drama of the people and was based upon the play by Schiller. Now, the progression of the action dictated the musical requirements.

A composer whose works paralleled Victor Hugo's and had many realistic aspects was Giacomo Meyerbeer. In 1831, his opera, Robert Le Diable, was the Hernani of the romantic opera. Though the music seems a bit grandiose today, it contains many elements common to romantic drama. Like Guillaume Tell, its outstanding achievement was a musical construction derived from the plot. Again, the action of the plot determined the placement of arias, ensembles, and dances. In Robert le Diable, the third act found dance furthering the dramatic situation. In Meyerbeer's last opera, Le Prophéte, the dance was assigned to Act V as a logical and realistic portrayal of the climactic action. Though shorter dances were employed in various parts of the opera, the fifth act contained an orgiastic dance which dramatized the downfall of the Prophet.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, opera reached its apogee in naturalisme. Here, the subject matter left the large scale action for a more humble field. For contrasting subject matter and action, the operas, Le Prophète and La Boheme, are good examples. Thus, a linkage of romantic opera to naturalistic theatre is possible.

The composer who best exemplified the romantic school in this awareness of the relationship of music to reality was Richard Wagner. His prose writings were influential in determining many musical aspects of the development of romantic opera. Since Antoine employed Wagner's choruses as an example of realistic crowds, it seems advisable to note Wagner's theories which produced his dramatic effects.

Though the prose works of Wagner have a tendency to be verbose and many times philosophically elaborate, their general ideas reflected the need to relate opera to a shifting society. The first prose work of importance was The Art Work of the Future. In this essay, short by Wagnerian standards, he coined the term gesamtkunstwerk as a means of explaining a return to nature. The gesamtkunstwerk theory sought a merging and unification of all opera components into one glorious totality. Vocal, and orchestral music, besides dance, were to be controlled by the dramatic action. Sometimes, they would be working in harmony with each other, and other times, singly or in pairs. The ruling factor in this combination was "the momentary need of--the purpose giver--the dramatic action."[38] The logic behind this reasoning

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[38]Richard Wagner, Prose Works translated by William Ashton Ellis (London: Kegan Paul, Trenche, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1894), Vol. I, p. 191.

was the fact that Man was "an integral factor in the totality of nature."[39] At no time was it possible to divorce Man from Nature without destroying the balance of force which comprised the dramatic art of opera.

> The purpose of the Drama is withal the only true artistic purpose that ever can fully be realized; whatsoever lies aloof from that, must necessarily lose itself in the sea of things indefinite, obscure, unfree. This purpose, however, the separate art-branches will never reach alone, but all together; therefore the most universal is at like time the only real, free, the only universal intelligent Art-work.[40]

In his other important work, Opera and Drama, Wagner, at considerable length, developed the theme of Man in Society and dramatic art as its reflection. In this inquiry, Wagner developed a concept of verism which suggested the dramatic action of an opera or play had a direct relationship to the setting of the action. It was the same relationship as Man in Society or in Nature. The equation which resulted in this comparison was to determine the dramatic action and its locale. Thus, drama and opera became social drama. The greatest work of Wagner, Die Meistersinger, was a social drama and fulfilled his concepts of the relation of art to nature.

After the Exposition of 1859, Paris began to specialize in a light-hearted entertainment and became, in the 1860's, the focal point for the artistic and amusement worlds. While opera was an art form popular with the intelligentsia of the day, the operetta was its

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[39] Ibid., I, p. 93.

[40] Ibid., II, p. 193 ff.

equivalent for the rising bourgeoisie and the indolent aristocracy. In this form, one man in France stands out above all the rest for the excellence of his work. Jacques Offenbach began his musical career as the conductor of the pit orchestra at the Comédie-Française. In 1859, he established his own theatre, having been granted royal permission to produce musical theatre with only three singers. Although his first pieces had an idyllic or rustic setting, Offenbach did not hesitate to draw a comparison with contemporary life. Though Orphée aux Enfers and La Belle Hélène were set in classical antiquity, they contained political satire. In his more fully developed works, Offenbach did not hesitate to reveal the corruption of the Second Empire. Though no moralist, Offenbach criticized as long as he felt the action was amusing. Even the people he attacked enjoyed laughing at the situations Offenbach contrived. The essential thing to remember was humor. The gaiety took precedence over the satire. At this time, the theatre audiences consisted of an increased mingling of social classes--the aristocracy found themselves seated next to the nouveau riche and those who had recently acquired the distinction of bourgeoisie.

As part of this gaiety, Baron Hausmann created in a swampy section of Paris one of the most lavish expositions of its time. Opening with the grounds and buildings unfinished, the 1867 Exposition had a brilliant life during the summer months. European royalty were drawn to the Exposition and, while in Paris, participated in the theatrical and night life which had been created seemingly for them. Foreign reporters perceived the uneasiness beneath this gaiety, an uneasiness

which culminated in the Commune and the Third Republic. It is during this latter government that naturalisme reached the theatre.

In the theatre, romanticism began the trend toward naturalisme by revolting from neoclassicism. In this development, a triumvirate dominated the Parisian theatrical scene for an extended period. The continued dominance of Augier, Dumas fils, and Sardou did not please André Antoine; for their techniques had become sterile and negated the impetus of réalisme. While acknowledging the contributions of Augier, Antoine felt the need to extend theatre beyond its present bounds. While romanticism freed the playwright from the restrictions of neoclassicism, the bourgeoisie were not completely satisfied with the artistic results. With the public acceptance of the naturalistic novel, naturalisme had affected all art forms except the theatre. Sensing divergent qualities in the theatre, Antoine was impelled to consolidate the gains made in painting and literature and bring them to the theatre. In accomplishing this goal, Antoine developed a theatrical reality endemic to the bourgeoisie.

CHAPTER III

THE THEATRICAL ENVIRONMENT FROM 1875 TO 1890

Before discussing the theatrical environment during Antoine's formative years, certain pertinent facts about André Antoine are needed to explain the reason for limiting this investigation to the years 1875 to 1890. André Antoine was born in Limoges on January 31, 1858. His parents moved to Paris within the first two years of his life, and there André grew up. His childhood was spent during the political and social turmoil of the second decade of the Second Empire. Beginning with the Commune and the Third Republic, he began to explore Paris. During the Third Republic, the naturalistic novel (typified by the de Goncourt brothers' and Zola's works) was popular and the first exhibition of impressionistic painting opened on April 15, 1874. As a child, Antoine had been introduced to the theatre by his mother. In 1875, when 17, André became a member of the claque at the Comédie-Française, and that year appears to be a useful initial date upon which to start this study. As a member of this claque, it was possible for Antoine to have seen the majority of the productions in their repertory at that time. Prior to being drafted into the Army, Antoine served as a supernumerary at the Comédie. After five years of military service, he returned to civilian life in 1883.

In his published account of Parisian theatre activity, called Le Théâtre, Antoine gave evidence of following very closely the

repertories of the theatres in Paris beginning in 1875. His record, during the army years and especially while in Tunisia from about 1880 to 1882, was very slender. The theatre coverage in Le Théâtre dealt with the vital statistics of the important new productions in the most prominent Parisian theatres besides containing personal comments about these productions and the theatres' repertory and personnel. While the details of the Théâtre-Libre were reserved for a special memoir, the contents of Le Théâtre indicate Antoine's familiarity with the theatre policies of all the Parisian theatres.

By investigating the theatrical policies and practices in Paris from 1875 to 1890, the theatrical environment of Antoine's formative years will become apparent. To understand fully the extent of the theatrical scene, this chapter will be concerned, first, with the Comédie-Française as seen through its promptbooks and, second, with the repertory of the boulevard theatres. Francisque Sarcey is included in this discussion, for he was, then, the leading drama critic. Antoine felt it necessary to bring the Théâtre-Libre and its policies to Sarcey's attention. The main emphasis in this chapter will be on the Comédie-Française. From a study of the promptbooks for the Comedie productions, characteristic theatre practices at this theatre will be formulated. An attempt will be made to ascertain the nature of their acting techniques, their directing principles, and their conventions of scene design. In discussing the boulevard theatres, the quality of their productions and the types of plays will be noted. After the opening of the Théâtre-Libre in March, 1887, any immediate influence of Antoine's work will be noted. Thus, the terminal date of this

investigation, 1890, has been chosen to indicate any possible reaction to Antoine's theatrical activity.

The Comédie-Française

In 1680, the Comédie-Française was founded by a royal patent. Since that time, there has been, in Paris, a theatrical company which has produced plays under this name. Regarding this longevity as a source of strength, the Théâtre-Française, as it is often called, relied upon various traditions for its stability. From the first, its patronage was derived from royalty; the Comédie relied upon an aristocratic attitude for its artistic policies and its existence. After the French Revolution, this theatre declined due to this overly refined quality. Beginning in 1803, Talma revitalized the Comedie. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the aristocracy of the Napoleonic Era and the following regimes continued to support the Théâtre-Française through their patronage and a governmental subsidy. When the aristocracy was in control at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Comédie continued to derive its support from them. When Talma rekindled the Comédie-Française, he aimed to please this group.

Both the Bonapartists and the Royalists, otherwise political antagonists, rallied behind the Théâtre-Française for almost three quarters of the last century. When the Second Empire was founded, Napoleon III rented a box as a form of a subsidy. Naturally, the nobility followed this practice. Arsene Houssaye, the administrator at the Comédie during the first years of the Second Empire, improved the financial condition of the theatre; actually, the theatre's

financial condition improved proportionally to France's great economic growth from 1852 to 1857. After the recession which began in 1858 and continued into the 1860's, Napoleon III increased his patronage of the Comédie-Française by inviting them to perform regularly at court when it was either at Compeigne or Fontainebleau. During the 1867 Exposition, the Comédie grossed the largest amount it had in its history.

With the fall of the Second Empire, the royal emblem was removed from the royal box; and this action began several difficult years for the theatre. During the Commune, the Comédie was opened and closed so many times by the government that Edouard Thierry, its administrator then, was forced to insist that the theatre be permitted to remain open and that the Commune give the theatre at least a token subsidy.

Emile Perrin became administrator in 1871. His background as a successful administrator at first the Opéra-Comique and then at the Opéra led the actors and actresses at the Comedie to be hopeful of a return to prosperity. While Perrin obtained a sizeable subsidy from the government, his artistic policy was very conservative.

Yet, the shift from an aristocratic to a more bourgeois dominance in the government was also reflected at the Comédie-Française. As the bourgeoisie became more prominent, they developed upper class pretensions by attending the theatre. During the Third Republic, this change in the composition of the audience was evidenced when the younger writers, influenced by this trend, signed and circulated a petition in 1879 demanding Perrin's removal. Unfortunately, the only change appeared in the increased attendance of the bourgeoisie and in the increased conservativism of Perrin. It was Perrin's belief that to

have a good theatre it was necessary only to produce plays by Dumas fils, Augier, and Sardou; each year he presented a new play by one of these authors. After the death of Perrin in 1885, Jules Claretie became administrator of the Comédie and his policy was only slightly more progressive.

With the rise of the bourgeoisie, the Comédie did not alter its artistic policies. By the time of the Third Republic, these practices were firmly established. The ordinances under which the company now functions were decreed by Napoleon I on his way to Moscow. Passing through an apprenticeship, the actor climbed to a controlling membership known as a sociétaire (a governing member). After twenty years of acting, the individual was pensioned. Since this organization meant security (uncommon in any theatre), a complacency logically resulted from the Comédie-Française's financial guarantee and its aristocratic patronage.

Another part of the decree of Napoleon I which affected the Comédie was the establishment of its Conservatoire de Musique et de Declamation. At this school, the leading actors taught and passed on to the next generation their techniques. In this school, as at the Comédie, the system of emploi was enforced. Both the school and the Comédie established the type of parts an actor or actress would perform (emploi) such as leading juvenile, soubrette, heavy lead, etc. At the Comédie, especially from 1875 to 1890, this policy was so strong that the actor with the most seniority in a certain type expected to perform in all the plays of the season's repertory which demanded his specific type.

From after the founding of the Third Republic through 1881, France experienced a surge in its economic growth. This condition was reflected at the Comedie; for example, the prosperity of the year 1879 was seen at this theatre's box office. "This year was a prosperous one which enabled us to call it a year of good fortune for the Comédie . . . The public led by a universal Exposition [a world's fair] demanded many successful works."[1] The sociétaries who profited by this situation were the actors Got, Delaunay, Febvre, Thiron, Mounet-Sully, La Roche, Barre, Worms, and Coquelin the elder, and the actresses Madeline Brohan, Fevart, Jouassain, E. Biguer, Croisette, Richenberg, Broisat, Barrette, and Sarah Bernhardt (who defected from the Comédie the next year). Primarily, this period was one of great acting personalities. Each of these actors were noted for specific roles--Got, for his heavy creations from the romantic period; Coquelin, for his de Musset roles; and Mounet-Sully, for his Hamlet. The Théâtre-Française's tradition seen through its use of the Conservatoire and its use of character types (or emploi) established a policy that was extremely rigid. The examination of the Comédie-Française and its traditional procedures will establish the cultural environment during Antoine's formative years besides suggesting the area of theatrical activity where Antoine felt a change necessary.

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[1]France, 1878 Comedie-Française Committee Report, OSUTC Film 1385, p. 51.

The Promptbooks

Deposited in the Ohio State University Theatre Collection are microfilmed copies of promptbooks for many Comédie productions from 1856 to the present. In this collection are twenty-nine promptbooks of productions in the repertory of the Théâtre-Française during the 1875 to 1890 period. Fourteen promptbooks were chosen as representative of the era according to the requirements stated above in Chapter I --the study of promptbooks for productions of plays written by contemporary playwrights. Three productions (L'Ami Fritz, Hernani, and Les Fourchambault) achieved so many performances during their premiere years that their success was more than outstanding. Here is the chronology of the productions examined:

1873 - L'Été de la Sainte-Martin by Meilhac and Halevy
1874 - Le Demi-Monde by Dumas fils
1876 - L'Ami Fritz by Eckmann and Chatrain
Le Mariage de Victorine by George Sand
L'Étrangere by Dumas fils
1877 - Hernani by Victor Hugo
1878 - Le Gendre de M. Poirier by Augier and Sandeau
Les Fourchambault by Augier
1880 - Mademoiselle de la Seiglière by Sandeau
L'Aventuriere by Augier
1881 - Mademoiselle de Belle Isle by Dumas père
1886 - Les Honnêtes femmes by Henry Becque
Hamlet by Shakespeare; translated by Dumas père and Meurice
1890 - La Parisienne by Becque

The promptbooks chosen for verification were characteristic of all promptbooks of the years 1875 to 1890. The common traits are: the amount of play script in the promptbooks, the amount of detailing of the action or positioning of this action, the ground plan and its detail, and the name of the individual making the promptbook.

In the case of L'Été de la Saint-Martin (the first play in the above table), the promptbook (signed by E. Valnay) was dated 1879. But, the Comédie records offer proof that this promptbook could have been the one of its premiere performance, 1873. From its first performance in 1873, L'Été de la Saint-Martin was constantly performed until 1886. Had there been a refurbished production of this play, it would appear that such a production would have been made the year the number of performances reached their peak. Since this play is a one-act play, the possibility of a renewed production does not appear to be very strong. It would seem unlikely that a revised production would be made during a year when this play received a limited number of performances. Therefore, the dates of 1873 or 1877 are the more likely ones. Since L'Été was a one-act play and in continued performance, the date of its premiere, 1873, seems to be the proper dating of this promptbook. Over this fourteen-year period, the number of performanoes were as follows:[2]

1873 - 31 performances	1880 - 16 performances
1874 - 12	1881 - 9
1875 - 3	1882 - 8
1876 - 1	1883 - 14
1877 - 26	1884 - 17
1878 - 14	1885 - 17
1879 - 4 (date of promptbook)	1886 - 4

The dating of the Comédie promptbook for Hernani is easier. After being out of the repertory for eight years, Hernani returned in 1877 and continued to be performed every year of this investigation with the exception of 1883. Since the promptbook was dated 1879, it can be said that this production was in effect at that time. Hernani

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[2]A. Joannides, La Comédie-Française de 1680 á 1920. Tableau des representations par auteurs et par pièces (Paris: Libraire Plon, 1921), n.p.

was performed twenty-one times in 1877 and ninety times the following year. In 1879, Hernani received thirty-nine performances. Its extreme popularity for the two years prior to the date on the promptbook suggest that the same production would have been in effect during this period. It seems unlikely that a refurbished production would have been done a year after it received ninety performances and during a year when it received less than half the number of performances of the preceding year. Thus, the 1877 date seems to be a more accurate one.

The title page of the promptbook for Mademoiselle de la Seiglière contained this inscription: "mise en scéne conforme á la representation en 1880." After checking its performance records at the Théâtre-Française and checking the form of the promptbook, this date, 1880, appeared to be an accurate one. While this play had been continuously performed from 1873, the possibility of a renewed production at this date should not be ruled out. In 1878, this play was performed only five times and the next year eight times. The year of the promptbook saw a doubling of its performances (sixteen performances in 1880).

Augier's L'Aventuriere was premiered in 1848 (the year of its composition) and remained in the repertory for three years. It was dropped until 1860 when it was returned to the repertory for the next two years. Then it was dropped for four years. In the period from 1869 to 1873, it received a minimum number of performances (at the most twenty-three and the least three). After three years out of the repertory it was revived in 1880, the date indicated in the promptbook. Thus, 1880 seems acceptable for the date of this particular promptbook.

The promptbooks of Hernani, Le Gendre de M. Poirier, L'Aventuriere, Mademoiselle de la Seigliere, Le Mariage de Victorine, and L'Été de la Saint-Martin bore the signature of E. Valnay. The format of each of these promptbooks is identical. Only the line on which the action was performed was given; the details of the blocking were similar. Extensive illustrations were used to indicate the poses assumed during the action. Only in the case of Hernani was there any perspective sketch of the set, though all the promptbooks contained detailed ground plans with the position of the furniture. While it is obvious that the similarities of each of these promptbooks indicated that they were compiled about the same time, the performance records of their production at the Comédie offers evidence that the exact date of this production could have been earlier in some cases.

The Henri Becque play, Les Honnêtes femmes (a one-act play), received its premiere performance in 1866 and immediately attained twenty performances. Eighteen performances were recorded the next year. The format of this promptbook suggests that it is the same as the date of its premiere. The ground plans and the manner of indicating the blocking in Les Honnêtes femmes are similar to L'Ami Fritz and Les Fourchambault which received their premieres in 1876 and 1878 respectively. While these three promptbooks were unsigned, their similar qualities tend to suggest that they were made by the same person, one familiar with their first production. The characteristics of the ground plans and blocking found in the promptbooks for these three plays are similar to the promptbooks whose dates can be established beyond question.

The Comédie-Française promptbook of Hamlet on microfilm in the Theatre Collection of Ohio State University, appears to be from 1886. Here is the record of its performances:

1886 - 42 performances
1887 - 34
1888 - 5
1889 - 28
1890 - 1

At that time, Hamlet was dropped from the repertory. As with the previously examined promptbooks, the ground plans and the style of staging appears to be consistent with those of the period.

The primary force which linked these fourteen promptbooks was the similarity of their ground plans. This similarity was supported by a detailed study of the staging characteristics (arrangement of the furniture, blocking, the use of identical terms to indicate stage areas); these common elements were found in all the promptbooks of this period. In the Ohio State University Theatre Collection, the promptbooks which had later nineteenth-century and twentieth-century dates were different in many respects: for instance, the later promptbooks had ground plans that were drawn to scale and tended to have an asymmetrical box set. These later dated promptbooks also included the full script. Therefore, it can be a logical assumption that the promptbooks in the above chronological table were performed at the Théâtre-Française between 1875 and 1890. It can also be assumed that the productions recorded in these promptbooks were the ones that Antoine witnessed as a member of the claque or studied as a supernumerary.

From 1875 on, Antoine, as a member of the claque, saw most of the productions at least once if not several times. Later as a

supernumerary at this theatre, he learned the details of acting and production through observation. In his book, Le Théâtre, Antoine discussed each year's new productions and repertory of the Comedie-Française before noting the activity at the boulevard theatres. From this book, it is obvious that he saw the majority of the new productions at all Parisian theatres until he went into military service. Even then, he followed the activity of the Paris theatres, for he continued to record the important productions but did not make personal observations as in previous years.

During the years after his release from military service, Antoine, through his theatre attendance, began to sense a dissimilarity between the play, its subject matter and its dramaturgy, and a bourgeois reality. In the 1880's, the feeling that the productions at the Comédie were outmoded began to become a more frequent topic of discussion among the minor drama critics. Émile Zola, as a drama critic between 1876 and 1880, began to stress a more realistic approach to the theatre.

As the leading French theatre, the Théâtre-Française dominated the theatrical situation in Paris. The practices and policies of this theatre were so strong and traditional that little change appears to have been made during much of the nineteenth century. The stability of this theatre, seen through its acting techniques, directing principles, and its scene design, was so great that it would appear that other theatres possibly would have followed its practices. Therefore, the detailed study of the acting, directing (especially the staging of

crowd scenes), and the scenic elements of the Comedie productions should indicate the theatrical environment which preceded the opening of the Théâtre-Libre.

Acting

To discover the theories and practices of acting prevalent during this period of investigation, the short pamphlet, The Art of Acting, by Coquelin the elder becomes of interest. While the pamphlet was first published in 1894, four years after the period of this investigation, it bears directly upon the acting of the Comédie-Française during the Third Republic, for Coquelin was one of the Comédie's greatest actors at this time.

Naturally, the methods of teaching at the Conservatoire varied with each teacher. Elsie Fogerty, in the introduction to her translation of Coquelin's pamphlet, commented that a teacher "insisted on the closest possible imitation of his own intonation, pace, and cadence. Worms had masterly power of drawing out from the student his [Worms'] own conception of the part by adroit questioning. Delunay . . . sat for a while pensively watching the young aspirant and then poured out a flood of reminiscence, criticism, illustrations which seemed to embody the whole tradition of the theatre from the dates of Molière."[3] Everything taught at the Conservatoire (with the exception of little and very unsatisfactory movement) was taught as though by rote.

Evidence of holdovers from the Age of Reason appeared in the dominant conception of type. As suggested in the discussion on neo

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[3]Coquelin, The Art of Acting, translated by Elsie Fogerty (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1932), p. 11.

classicism in Chapter I above, the importance of type and an universality in acting was most pronounced at the Comédie. The use of emploi is an excellent example. The system of emploi which stemmed from the idea or the typical characteristics of a role appears to be directly related to this aspect of type. Also related to type was the actor's emphasis upon enormous technical accomplishments during his performance. When a technical capacity becomes stressed, it raises itself to a level of consciousness that places too much of an emphasis upon the actor.

Coquelin stressed a dualism in his technique by dividing the actor into two parts: the performer or instrumentalist and the instrument to be played upon. The performer "conceives" the character which the author has created while the instrument "realizes" it in the actor's person.[4] Charm and physical beauty were important assets in this duality.

> One word more about the physiognomy of the actor on the stage. It is the eye that sums it all up. It is the light, the transparency, the life of expression. There the public watches you, and there it tries to read you. Let it then be your first care . . .
> . . . . . .
> The public will see it reflected there. That is why, by the way, you cannot make a narrative speech in profile. Start it like that, facing your listener. Good; but little by little turn, until at last you face your public; your eye fixes itself on a point from which it does not move because it is there that they see what you are describing. That fixture of your eye carries the public panting after your words. What you are about to say they see there, before you utter it, and speech in a measure does no more than drive home the impression which the glance has already fixed in the attention of the spectator.[5]

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[4] Ibid., p. 31.

[5] Ibid., p. 67ff.

Essential to this concept of acting is Coquelin's statement about art which was "not identification but representation."[6] Again, the representation of a type became an essential feature of an art. The actor's use of emotion was directly connected to the representation of type, for "terror and pity are the main springs of art, not disgust and horror."[7] As terror and pity were more important emotions, the increased awareness of the level of consciousness in acting became essential to the actor's technique. Coquelin complained that the "error of the naturalist" was found in their mumbled lines and in their disregard of their audiences as part of the theatrical experience; the naturalists, according to Coquelin, "always want to make real pigs squeal."[8] Since the naturalist did not consider "style" important to their technique, Coquelin emphasized style in a summation of his theories of action:

> It is the choice of the types and of expressions [by the actor], this diversity of colour and background --all that conforms to the innate constitution of their [the actor's] genius--which constitutes their style, their manner, and by that it is that their personality appears. The foundation is universal, the form belongs to each of them alone. Within the humble course of his powers, the actor must realize something similar to this.[9]

This statement appears to be a reiteration of neoclassic concepts from the Age of Reason.

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[6] Ibid., p. 72.

[7] Ibid., p. 8.

[8] Ibid., p. 82.

[9] Ibid., p. 96ff.

Since any further conjecture about the origin of any acting techniques was difficult, it seemed likely that the acting techniques were left-overs from a previous age. In turning to the evidence derived from the promptbooks, those of E. Valnay contained the best record of acting at the Comédie-Française from 1875 to 1890. His set of prompt-books contain detailed pictorial record of the poses which the actors assumed at certain moments in the play. There is a suggestion that these poses illustrated in the promptbooks could be related to the theories of Delsarte (which need a separate investigation outside of this one).

The aim of the Comédie production did not appear to be directly related to the author's intent. Instead, it was a means of displaying the actor; for the action was enlarged through a series of poses which equally emphasized each actor. The impression obtained from the prompt-books was that the actors moved from pose to pose. Many times, the pose was assumed for a considerable duration such as in the opening of Act I in L'Aventuriere and in Acts II and III of Hernani.

The arrangement of the furniture reinforced by Coquelin's acting theories suggest a performance quality which, today, would be considered as presentational in nature. Understanding the emphasis upon style and type, in the acting practices at the Comédie during the Third Republic, it appears that the actors exhibited their characters as the totality of the action. In contrast, Antoine felt, as will be discussed in Chapter V, that the actors enacted and assumed their characters as part of a totality which included all phases of the production.

Since the actors were able to be near the footlights and to face the audience as much as possible, the employment of the full front or three-quarter front positions best exposed the actors. The actors did not feel the need to face each other when carrying on a conversation. Examples of this acting (and/or directing) characteristic at the Comédie can be seen in the opening scene of Act I of Mademoiselle de la Seiglière and in Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle (which will be discussed at greater detail later in this chapter). The possibility that these practices were remnants of neo-classic or romantic production procedures should not be overlooked.

To suggest the nature of a scene enactment, several illustrations from various promptbooks were chosen. Plates I, II, and III are taken from L'Aventuriere while Plates V and VI and found in Hernani. Plate IV is from Le Mariage de Victorine. A detailed description of the progression of poses in a play, an act or a scene would be too involved and detailed to be worthwhile; the essential features can be summarized through the explanation of these six illustrations.

Plate I, the opening scene of L'Aventuriere, illustrates the usual manner in which two actors conversed about important matters. Here, two brothers discuss several proposed marriages. The gentleman touching the chair, Monte-Prade, a widower, wishes to marry a young lady, the adventuress of the title. The other gentleman is Dario whose daughter, Celie, is engaged to marry Monte-Prade's son, Horace. The gesture of either Dario or Monte-Prade amplifies the emotion which the actor hopes to express. The position of the feet and Dario's

PLATE I

Annibal boit à longs traits, et s'y reprend une seconde fois pour humer la dernière goutte.

Une profession tout à fait méritoire, Monsieur!

Tous deux mangent.

Moi qui vous parle, entre autres révérends Annibal se verse Qu'on l'eût canonisé s'il avait mieux vécu. Mais....

Annibal met la main droite contre sa bouche, comme pour parler en confidence.

Fabrice se lève et se penche sur la table pour écouter Annibal qui lui parle bas à l'oreille.

PLATE III

Quel regard étrange !

Fabius fecit. C.X.

pointed finger, Monte-Prade's hand on his chest with the elbow raised, illustrates the importance of theatricality in the Comédie-Française productions. From the indication of Coquelin's emphasis on "business," the actors appeared to be puppets performing remote actions rather than living their roles.

Above all, it should be pointed out that Plate I was executed center stage. The consistent use of center stage and all the down stage areas emphasized a pompous quality in the acting. The accentuation of the obvious action through its location in relation to the audience increased the apparent level of consciousness of acting techniques, a possible result of Coquelin's dualism.

Another acting effect which increased this detached quality appeared in the use of tables and chairs. A favorite acting and/or directing practice was to stage scenes near a table thereby permitting the actor to stress his "business" through the use of a series of movements and poses. An illustration of this practice is seen in Plate II. The objective of this scene (Act II, L'Aventuriere) was to have the character seated stage left reveal the true identity of his sister. By having a dinner as an inducement for excessive drinking, one actor was able to get the brother of Dona Clorine drunk enough to force him to reveal the fact that Dona Clorine was an actress currently playing the role of Cleopatra in one of the city's theatres. The placement of the chairs permitted the actors, first, to be seen clearly and, second, to exploit the maximum possibilities for stage business through a shifting of positions.

The third and fourth Plates were chosen as examples of the emphasis upon the formal arrangement of several actors and as an expression of the theatricality of the period. Plate III, from Act III of L'Aventuriere, illustrates the confrontation of Dona Clorine with the truth of her identity. Her drunken brother is asleep stage right; Monte-Prade is nearest the footlights while his disguised son is framed by the door up stage center; and Dona Clorine is seated stage left. The actors, placed evenly across the stage, are varied in depth and in facing position. Each actor receives the same emphasis and does not appear to be part of any common action. The placement of the actors paralleled aspects of composition found in neoclassic painting. Similar to Couture's approach (mentioned above in Chapter II), each actor was treated individually; their spacing and positioning indicates this neoclassic quality.

From Plate IV, a similar deduction seems possible. This time the illustration is taken from the promptbook for George Sand's Le Mariage de Victorine (Act I). Briefly, the scene's action was the presentation of wedding gifts to Victorine by Monsieur and Madame Vanderke with their daughter, Sophie. Watched by Antoine, her father, and Fulgence, the youth whom she really loves, Victorine opened the gifts. The actors, again, were arranged in a very formal manner with everyone facing either full front or only slightly turned toward Victorine. The watching figures, while carefully and evenly spaced, suggest a detachment from this action. Again the assumption can be made that here was an example of a level of consciousness which produced a separation between the actor and his involvement with the action and

PLATE IV

Position :

Mme Vand.

Vanderke

Sophie

Victorine

Antoine

Fulgence.

PLATE V

PLATE VI

En disant : Tu pleures ! Hernani se rapproche de Doña Sol qui se relève et s'écrie : Non, non, je ne veux pas, mon amour, que tu meures - en jetant ses bras autour du cou de Hernani.

his characterization. The interesting technique of this grouping is seen in Victorine's position. This figure, one of the rare instances of a character in profile, would be able to turn only toward the audience--a characteristic movement of this period.

The illustrations for the second act love scene in Hernani contain several poses that possibly are derived from a romantic tradition (see Plates V, VI, and X). After the exit of Don Carlos, Hernani escorts Dona Sol from the stairs, stage left, to a bench, stage right. The promptbook indicates that the scene was played with Hernani assuming a kneeling pose stage right of the bench. The impression received from the pose suggests an expression of unrestrained and heroic demonstration of love. Typical of romantic plays, this pose, as part of an acting technique which was derived from a previous theatrical era, bore little relationship to currently popular artistic theories of naturalisme.

The employment of awkward or discomforting positions was a noticeable tendency at the Comédie during the Third Republic. The apparent need of keeping the actor's face exhibited to the audience produced some strange poses or postures. Plate VI illustrates the beginning of the final scene of Hernani. The prompt script reads: "While speaking: You cry! Hernani approaches Dona Sol who rises and cries: No, no, I do not wish, my love, that you die, throwing her arms around his neck."[10] To perform this maneuver within romantic theatre practices, it was necessary for Dona Sol to throw her arms backward and

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[10]Victor Hugo, Hernani, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1782, p. 53.

upward--above her shoulders. In this position, both actors could face the audience. From a naturalistic point of view, this position was not only ungraceful but highly unreal. This pose fulfilled romantic, theatrical, and presentational concepts.

While there were other examples of couples with their arms about each other, they were not as completely unreal as in Plate VI. The normal pose placed the actors' bodies in an open or full front position touching the right shoulder of one actor to the left shoulder of the other. In this position, the opposite or outside hands were clasped together in the front. Sometimes the heads were inclined toward each other.

A scene from Act I of Le Mariage de Victorine demanded that the character Antoine kiss his daughter, Victorine. The stage directions indicated that Antoine immediately stepped back after kissing Victorine on the forehead. While the two actors had to face each other for the moment of the kiss, it was obvious from the directions that they resumed their three quarter positions immediately after the kiss. Unfortunately, the execution of this pose was not pictured.

The general impression of the acting technique gleaned from the promptbooks indicated that it was very studied and detached, for the gestures, poses, and movements were precisely and carefully planned. The movement the actors executed had a very theatrical quality characteristic of presentational theatre productions. The attitudes assumed by the actors were broad and never subtle, bordering at times on the ridiculous. The acting personalities at the Comédie-Française during this period were Got, Worms, Coquelin, Richenberg, and Bernhardt, who

seemed to rely upon their personalities for an acting technique. Such attitudes were in sharp contrast to the naturalistic theatre which Andre Antoine affected, for he made the first steps in having the actor become the character.

Directing

A study of the Comédie-Française promptbooks indicates the use of certain basic directing practices. These practices appeared to be utilized without regard to the inherent action or characterization of the play. The primary aim of these procedures was to focus the dialogue straight toward the audience and to bring the action down stage and center stage as much as possible. Many similar blocking movements kept appearing in the promptbooks, making it hard to ascertain the differences between directors or the presence of a director.

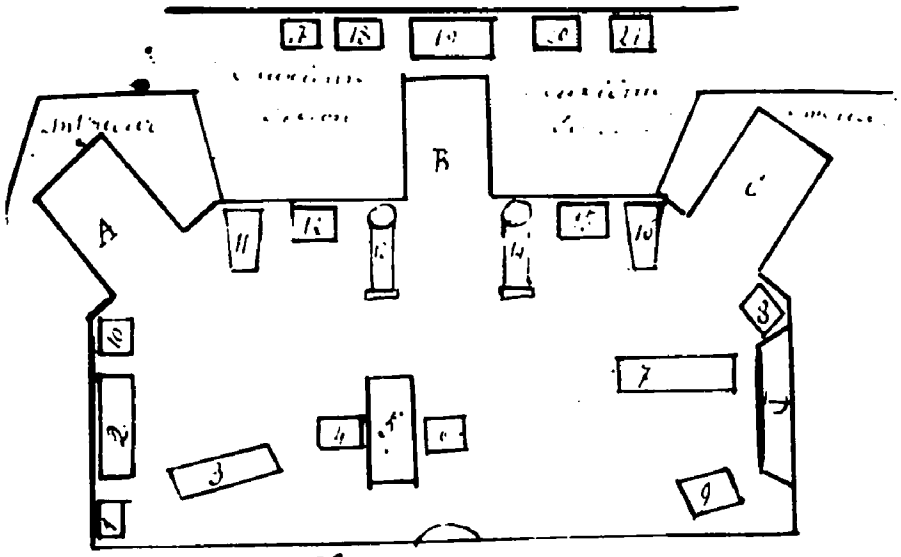
From the detailed examination of the Comédie promptbooks, three basic practices dominated the direction of a play. These general directing procedures kept the movement as simple as possible while centering the actor on the stage. Whenever possible, the policy of keeping the actor down stage near the prompter's box was practiced.

The directing rule which assumed the most importance was a manner of separating the actors on the stage. Understanding the above acting personalities at the Théâtre-Française at this time, it would seem that the division of the stage into sections permitted a freedom to the actor to "ad lib" movement within his portion of the stage. A canon grew out of this rule--actors never crossed in front of each other. In the fourteen promptscripts, the exceptions to this canon did not number

more than ten. Another rule which assumed secondary importance insisted that the dialogue be spoken down stage center whenever possible. Out of this second basic rule, the static scene developed through the habit of playing scenes down stage facing the audience and generally around tables. The usual action of a scene involving two actors had each actor advancing upon and retreating from the prompter's box. This movement was performed without regard to the placement of the furniture. A third basic rule which appeared to be a consistent practice in the promptscripts dealt with the preparation for entrances or exits. As the doors were generally placed up stage center and up stage right and left in the side walls, the practice of shifting the on stage figures to the opposite side of the stage prior to an entrance or exit was handled in such an artificial manner that it had an unnatural quality. This shifting called an undue or unnatural attention to the entrance or exit. The staging of crowd scenes contained similar qualities. In the scenes containing a multitude of actors, the movement was again kept to a minimum. For the most part, the movement was confined to either an entrance or an exit of the crowd. Frequently, an important character was supplied with an entourage to dramatize his appearance. The general movement pattern of this group scene tended to be simply symmetrical in the arrangement of actors and/or supernumeraries around the dignitary. Broadly speaking, all directing principles had elements of the heroic, the artificial, and the aristocratic and, thus, were far from the concepts of the naturalistic theatre.

PLATE VII

Premier et Cinquième Plafond.



Légende du Dessin.

A. Porte d'appartement.

B. Porte d'entrée donnant sur un 2me salon.

C. Porte d'appartement.

D. Grande cheminée.

Salon riche de 3 plans, à pans coupé

Légende des meubles.

1. à 6. 10. Grosse chaise.

2. Table bureau.

3. Canapé à deux places.

5. Table avec tapis, buvard et tout pour écrire

8 Petite chaise.

9. 12. 15. Fauteuils.

11. 16. Gaines avec un bronze sur chaque.

13 14. Petites colonnes, surmontées d'une potiche.

Meubles or et velours oreille d'ours.

Tapis de pièce.

Dans le 2me salon.

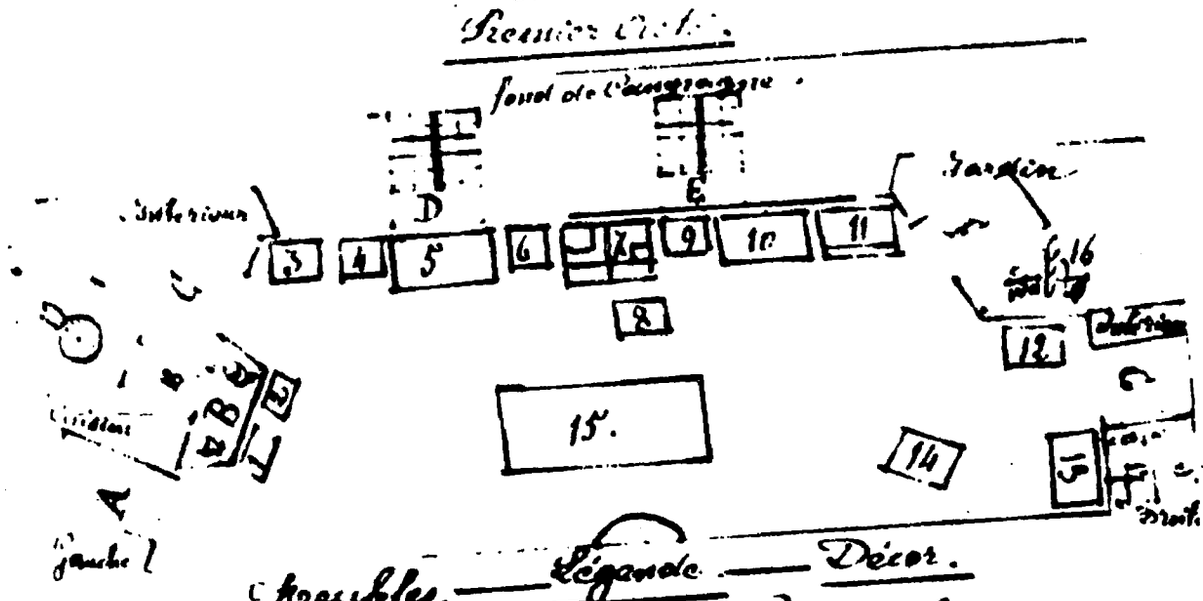
17. 21. Chaises.

18. 20. Fauteuils

19. Table carrée avec une coupe dessus.

Meubles en Damas.

PLATE VIII



Meubles. — Légende. — Décor.

N° 1. 2. 3. 4. 9. Chaises en chêne.
5. Table avec une nappe sur laquelle il y a la Corbeille à pain.
6. Grosse chaise.
7. Grand bahut ancien, dans le haut le linge. Dans le bas l'argenterie. (Chiffres)
8. Tabouret de bois.
10. Table avec une nappe. Cave à liqueurs. Carafes. Salières.
11. Dressoir, avec verres gobelets assiettes. Terrine de grès.
12. Grosse chaise en tapisserie.
13. Petite table, tout pour écrire.
14. Fauteuil en tapisserie.
15. Grande table à chevilles.
17. Porte manteau, râtelier de pipes.
17. Porte manteau avec canne.
18. Glace peinte.
19. Horloge coucou.

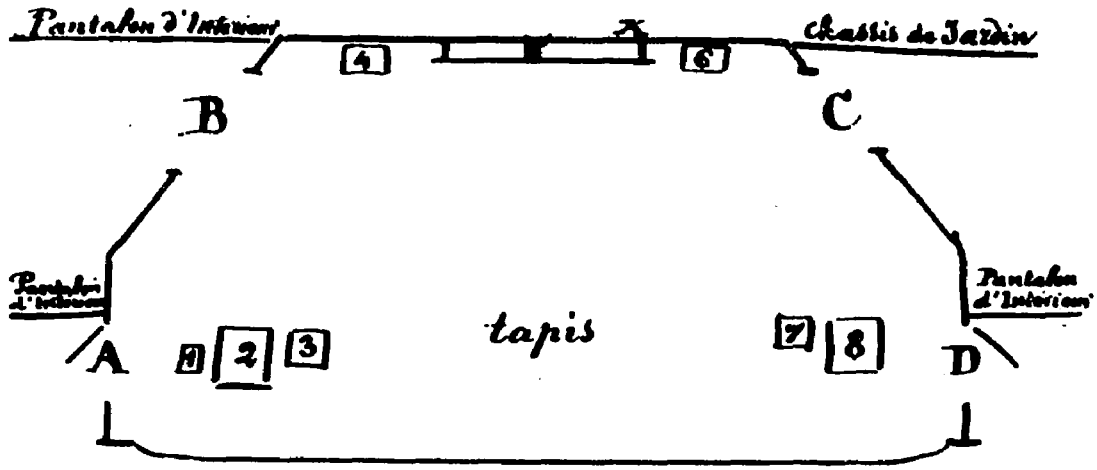
A. Porte de la cuisine.
B. Cheminée, avec deux vases.
C. Porte de la chambre de Fritz.
D. E. Fenêtres.
F. Porte allant dans le jardin
G. Porte d'entrée.

Belle à manger avec plafond à solives, 3 plans de profondeur.

Le Mariage de Victorine.

Deuxième Acte

Plantation et Mise en état.



A Petite porte s'ouvrant dans la coulisse.

B Grande porte à deux battants s'ouvrant dans la coulisse.

C Porte-fenêtre de plain-pied, ouvrant sur le jardin, à deux vantaux, avec volet de chaque coté, fermant à l'interieur.

D Petite porte s'ouvrant dans la coulisse.

3, 4. 6, 7. Fauteuils en bois blanc et or, recouverts en étoffes à raies grises et roses.

1, Chaise id

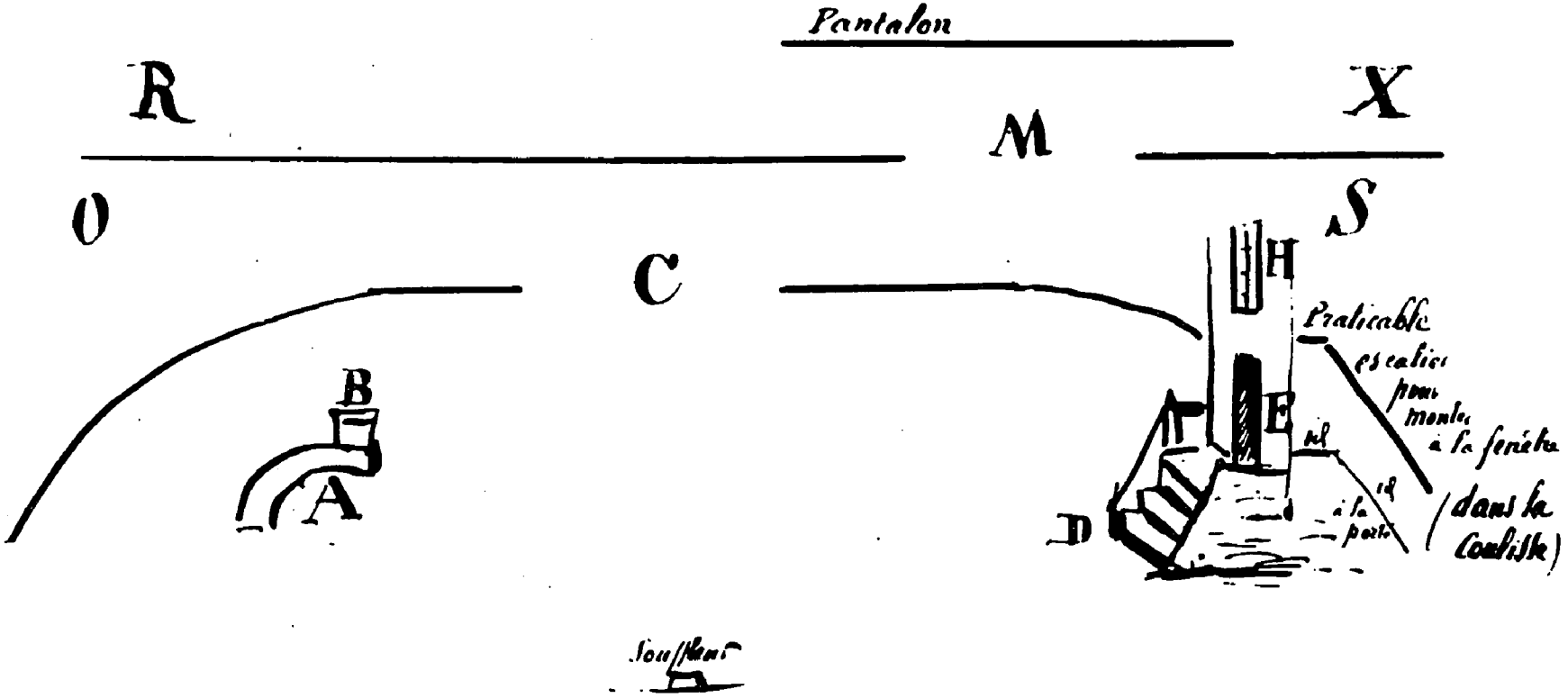
2. Table en bois de rose et ornements d'or

8 petite table id id id

5 Cheminée surmontée d'une glace — Pendule — Deux candélabres à cinq branches.

X. Cordon de sonnette.

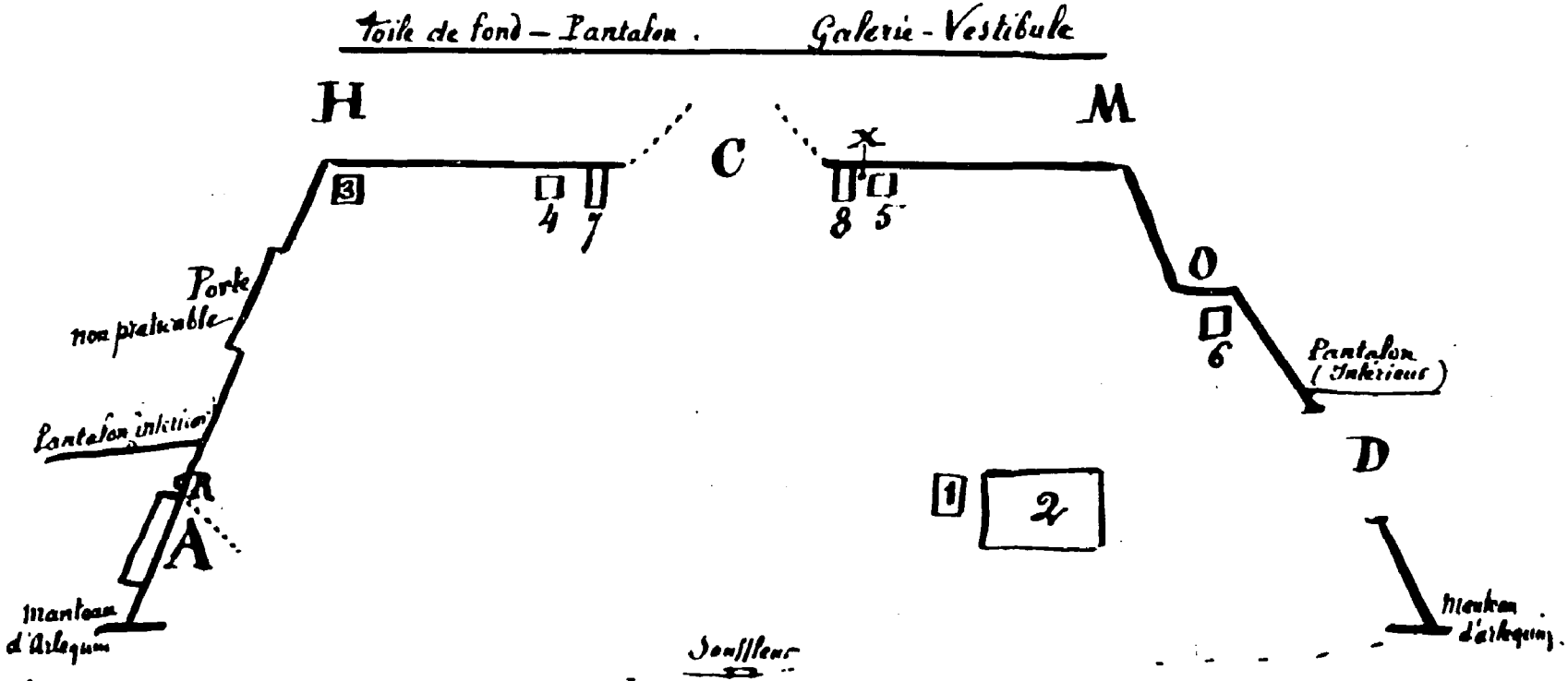
Hernani. Acte 2e. (Plantation.



A. Banc de pierre B Sorte de Socle Sur lequel D. Sol posera Sa lampe C Porte-ouverture
D Escalier praticable E. Porte praticable ouvrant dans la coulisse - H fenêtre - 4 battants ouvrant dans la coulisse
M Ouverture dans le chassis laissant voir le pantalon de fond. O.R.X.S. (coulisses)

PLATE XI

Hernani. — Acte troisieme. — Plantation et mise en état.



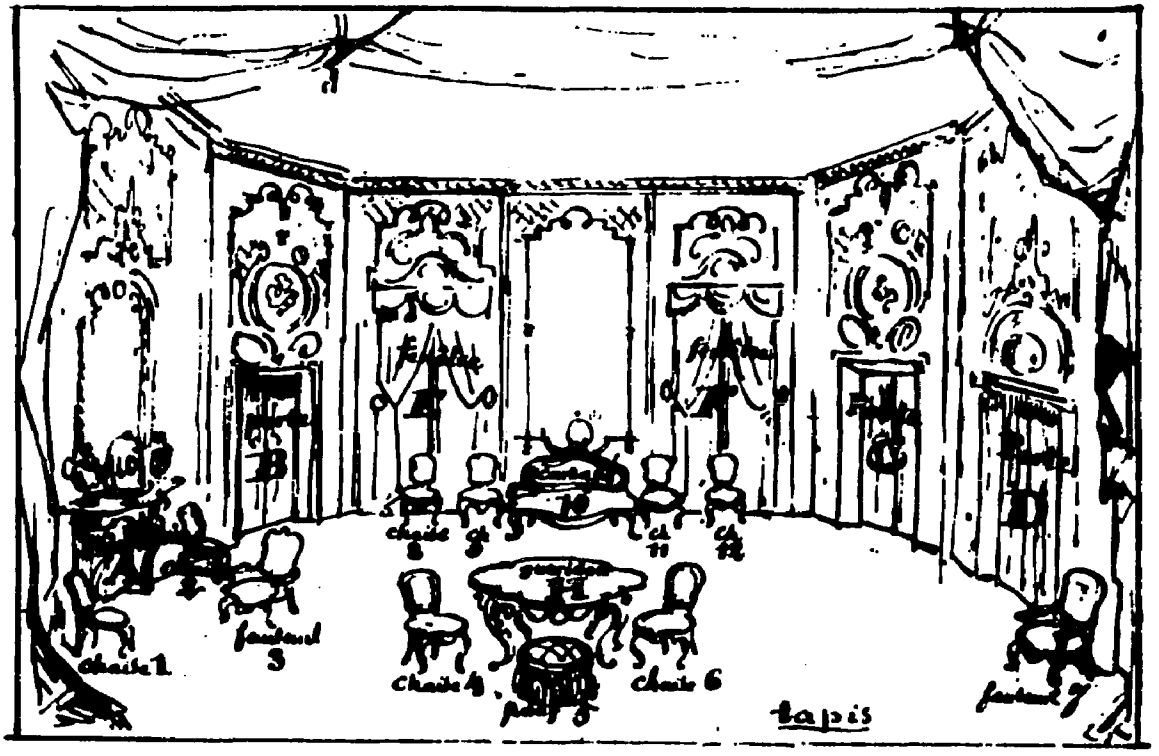
A. Porte secrète dans le mur, ouvrant sur la Scène et coupée dans le cadre du portrait, de façon à rester cachée pour le Spectateur. Cette porte a une large épaisseur. C. Grande porte à deux battants, s'ouvrant en dehors. D. Porte qui s'ouvre dans la coulisse. O Ravalement sur lequel un portrait. R Ressort pour ouvrir la porte A — X. 2 épées entre l'armure et la Chaise
1. Grand fauteuil. 2. Table recouverte d'un tapis. 3, 4, 5, 6 Grandes chaises. 7, 8. Armures.

PLATE XII

Mise en Scène

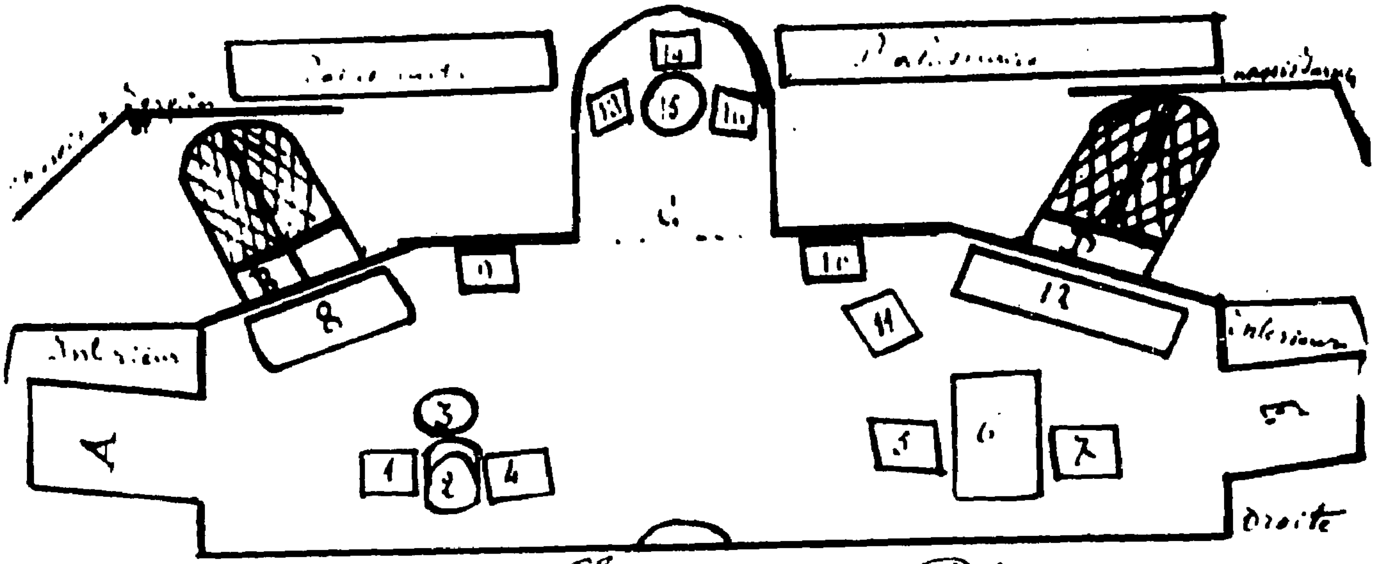
conforme à la représentation en 1879.
(Comédie française) (M. Emile Perrin, administrateur Général)

Plantation et Mise en état.



Toutes les indications sont prises de la Salle.
La gauche et la droite sont la gauche et la droite du public.

PLATE XIII



Meubles. — Légende. — Décor.

1. 4. 5. 7. 9. 10. Fauteuils.
2. Panier à ouvrage, sur pieds. Laines et tapisseries.
3. Pouff.
6. Table, avec tapis, journal et potiche.
8. Causeuse.
11. Chaise volante.
12. Grand canapé avec coussins.
13. 14 Chaise.
15. Guéridon
16. Fauteuil
} Meubles de jardin en jonc.
Tapis de scène.
Mobilier Louis XV en damas gris.

A. Porte d'appartements.
B. D. Portes en treillage, ne s'ouvrant pas.
C. Grande porte, donnant sur la terrasse.
E. Porte d'appartements.
Salon-serre, de 3 plans de profondeur. Tout le fond du décor, ainsi que les pans coupés sont en treillage.

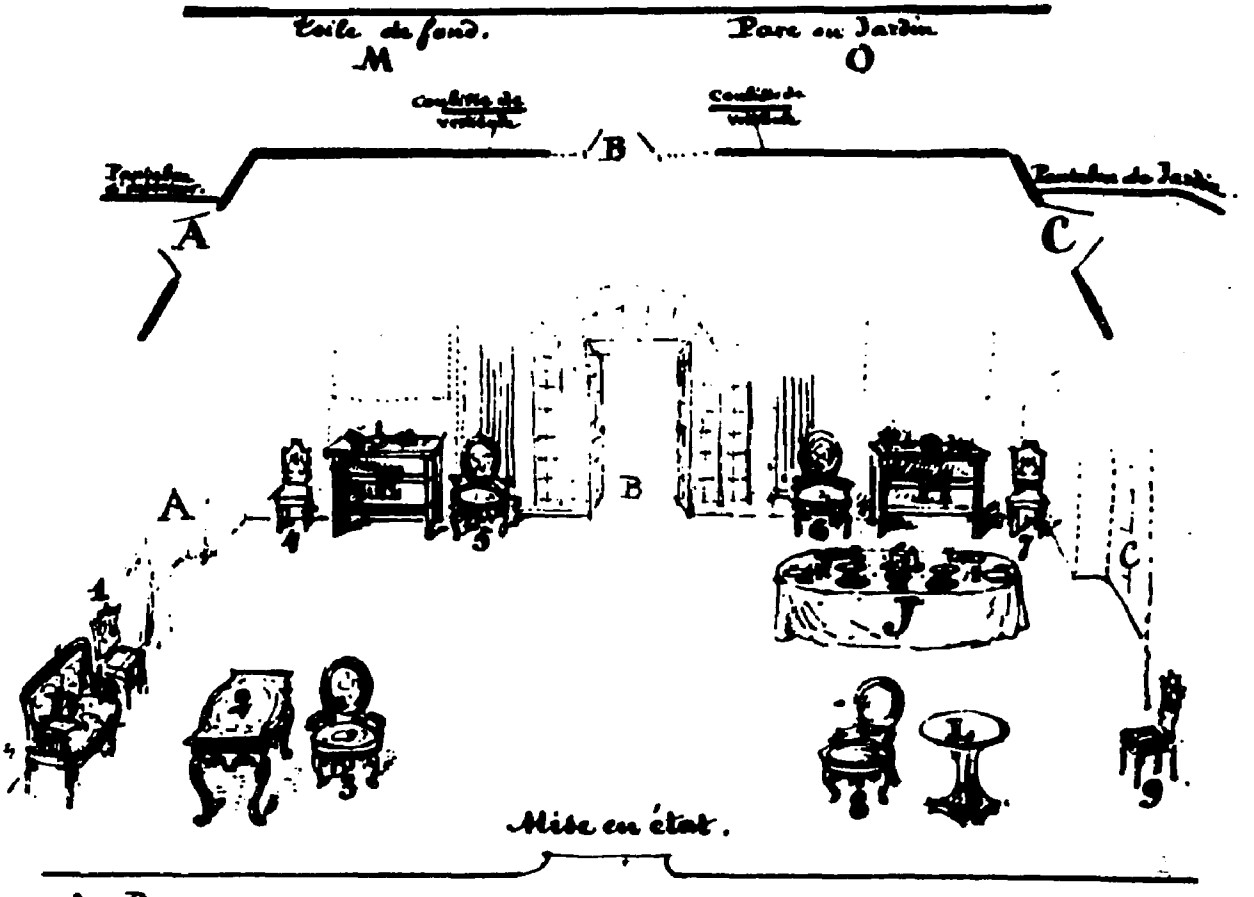
PLATE XIV

Mise en Scène

conforme à la représentation en 1880.

(Comedie-Française) *(M. Emile Perrin, Administrateur Général)*

Acte 1er: Plantation:



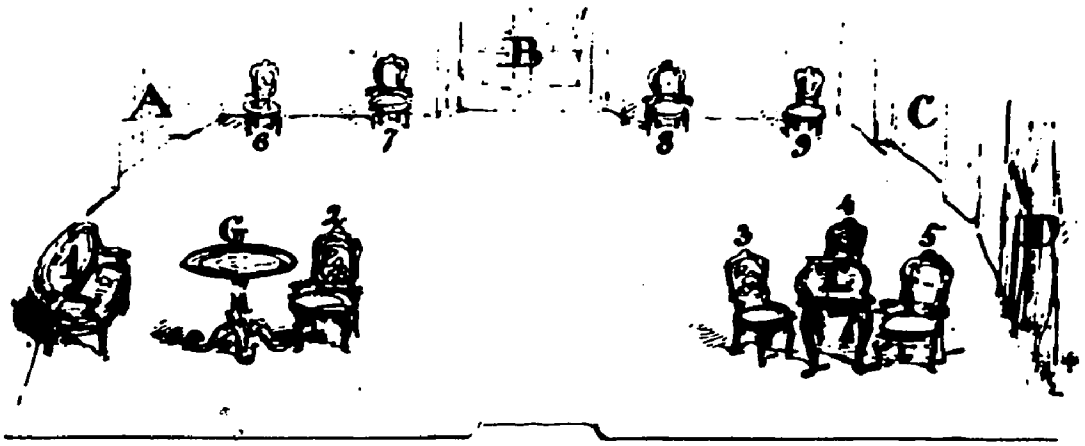
Mise en état.

A. Porte à deux battants — ouvrant en dehors.
B Porte-vitrée id. — id
C Porte-fenêtre, de plain-pied id — id
D. Canapé. E. Etagère ou étrelloir-console. H. idem.
J. table servie — Quatre couverts. L. Guéridon.
M. O. Entrées et Sorties au fond. (dans la coulisse
2. Table.
1. 4. 7. 9. Chaises.
3. 5. 6. 8. Fauteuils. (Tapis)

PLATE XV

Acte Croisième.

Plantation et Mise en état.

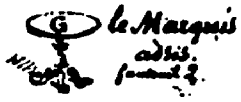


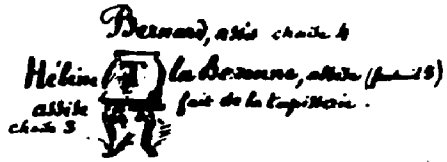
M B O

A.B.C. Portes à deux battants, ouvrant en dehors.
(Derrière chacune de ces portes, un Pantalon d'intérieur)
D. Fenêtre.
1. Canapé.
2. 5. 7. 8. Fauteuils.
3. 4. 6. 9. Chaises.
G Guéridon. T Table. Tapis.

Scène 1.ère

Position au lever du rideau :





monsieur Bernard dînait avec nous — En effet.

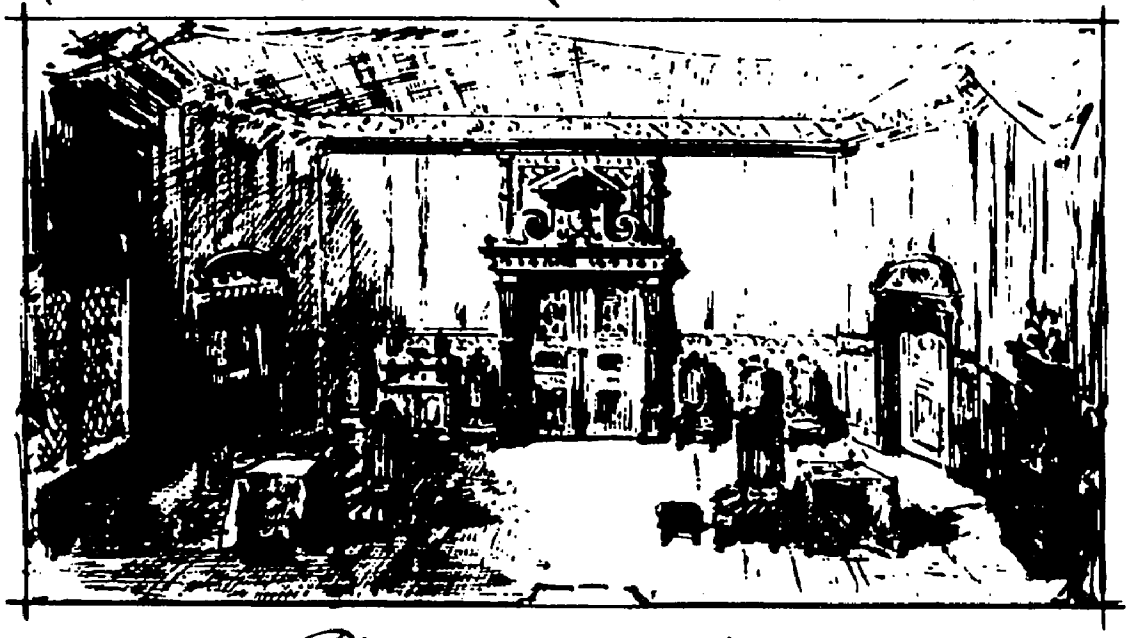
La baronne se lève ; puis, remontant et traversant le théâtre au fond, derrière Bernard, Hélène et le Marquis, elle gagne doucement la gauche, et vient s'asseoir sur le canapé 1.

PLATE XVI

Mise en Scène

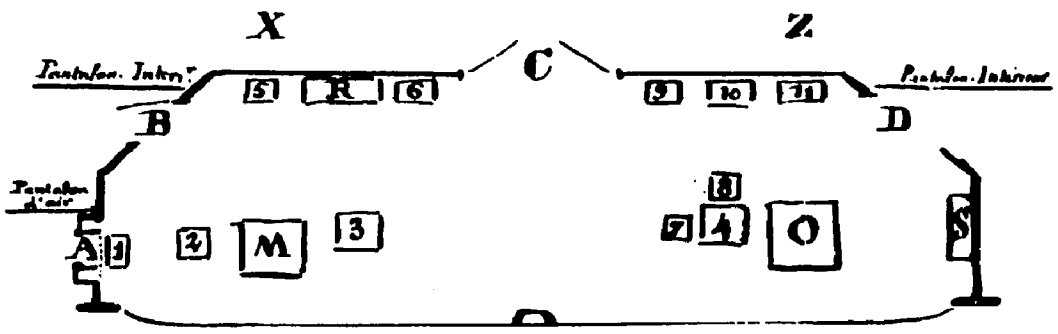
Conforme à la représentation — en 1880.

(Comédie Française) *(M. Emile Perrin, Administrateur Général)*



Plantation et Mise en état.

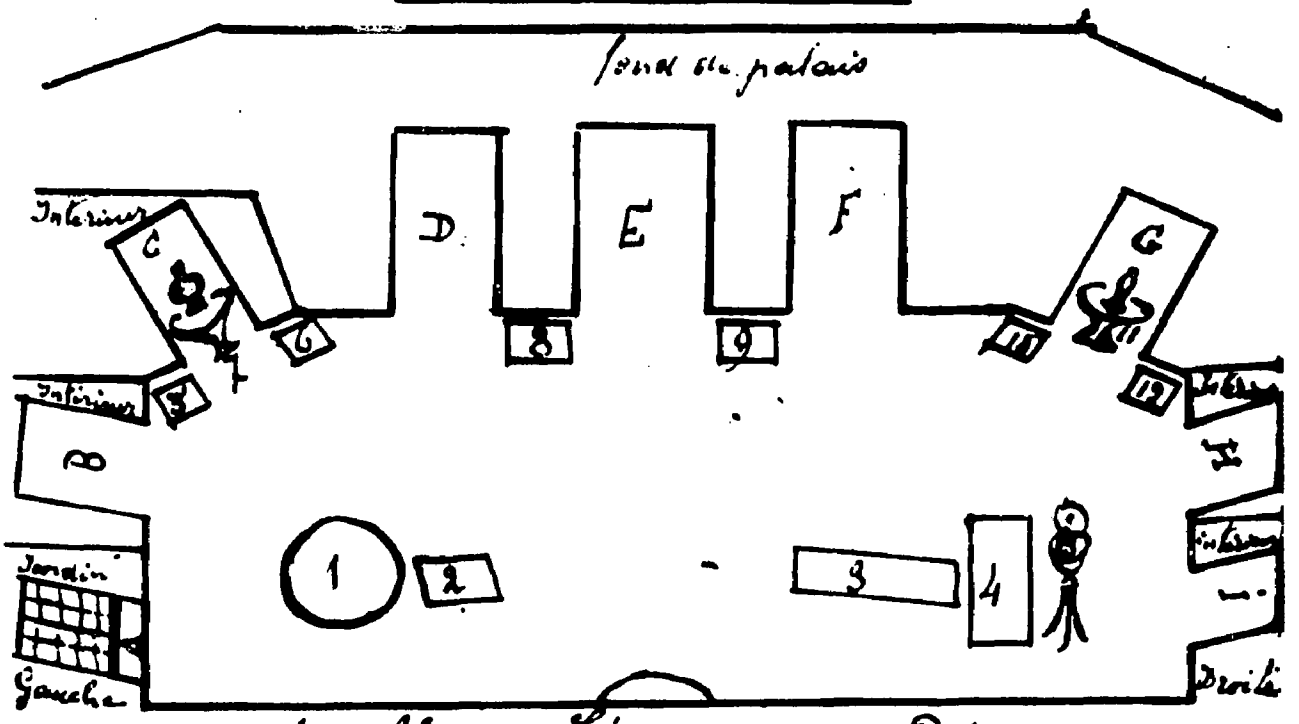
Toile de fond. — Intérieur. Vestibule.



A. Fenêtre praticable. Deux battants ouvrant en dedans, sur la scène.
B. D. Portes à un seul battant ouvrant en dehors, au lointain.
C. Porte à deux battants, ouvrant en dehors.
1. Petite banquette contre le bas de la fenêtre A., pour faciliter l'entrée et la sortie d'Horace, au 4e acte
2. 5. 6. 9. 10. 11. Chaises.
3. 4. Fauteuils.
M. O. Tables avec tapis. — Sur la table O, encrier, plumes et papier.
7. Petit tabouret ou escabeau.
8. Chaise masquée par le fauteuil 4.
R. Buffet avec étagère. — **S** Grand buffet à étagères avec faïences et potiches.

Toutes les indications sont prises de la salle. — La gauche et la droite sont la gauche et la droite du public.

1er 2me 3me et 5me Acte.



Meubles. — Légende. — Décor.

11 1. Guéridon, tout pour écrire.
2. 8. 9. Fauteuils.
3. Canapé à 2 places.
4. Table de toilette, avec glace.
5. 6. 10. 12. Chaises.
7. Console, avec pendule.
11. Console avec une potiche.
Tapis de scène.
Les 2 consoles, tiennent à la porte.
Meuble Louis XV, en tapisserie.

A. Fenêtre, avec volets intérieur.
B. H. Portes d'appartements à deux battants.
C. Porte secrète, ouvrant sur le théâtre.
D. E. F. Portes donnant sur le fond de palais.
G. Porte secrète, qui ne sert pas.
I. Petite porte.
Salon Louis XV, 4 plans de profondeur.

THE FIRST RULE: the separation of the actors

This practice appeared to be one of the major determining factors in blocking a scene. There appeared within the blocking a quality that suggested a division of the acting area, for the use of movement tended to keep the actor within prescribed bounds. As the actors never crossed in front of each other, this division of the stage emphasized the lack of a theatrical reality and the presence of detachment in the character relationship. To illustrate this principle, examples have been chosen which typified and indicated the extent of the rule and its dominance.

Le Demi-Monde.--In the first act of this play, Olivier speaks to Suzanne about their past affair. The scene began with Suzanne seated in chair six while Olivier was down stage right (see Plate VII). During the scene, Olivier crossed to Suzanne, and then returned to his former position. Olivier's initial position established his dominant area.[11] The crossing of Olivier to Suzanne did not appear to produce a reaction from Suzanne, for the next movement was the return of Olivier to his previous position. Their continued separation did not establish any character relationship between the two.

Le Mariage de Victorine.--The eleventh scene of Act II (Plate IX) was between the characters Alexis and Antoine, Victorine's father. As Antoine did not want to talk to Alexis about his daughter, he attempted to leave the stage by crossing up stage center to go out door B (up stage right). Being down stage left, Antoine crossed up stage behind

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[11]Alexandre Dumas fils, Le Demi-monde, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1732, p. 52.

the furniture. Alexis, stage right, stopped Antoine by also crossing up stage center. (Both actions were executed in a semi-circular path. These symmetrical movements were also controlled by the functioning of Rule Two.) As the scene progressed, the two actors moved from up stage center to down stage center bringing the scene to the prompter's box. Each actor remained in his portion of the stage throughout the scene. The scene concluded with Alexis' exit; from the center, he crossed behind the furniture and left by door B.[12] While facing the audience as much as possible, each character did not establish any relationship to the environment which the mise en scéne suggested.

Le Gendre de M. Poirier.--At the end of the second act, a first rule variant is seen which involved a major actor and two minor ones. Since the star system prevailed at the Comédie, it possibly affected the staging; the leading actor was placed center stage and the minor ones around the periphery or less dominant acting areas. This action involved M. Poirier and Gaston's valet and chef (see Plate XII). Poirier, center stage, instructed the valet and the chef (who were down stage left) to disregard Gaston's order and to substitute his demands.[13] This position was maintained during the four pages of dialogue. This variant, while allotting a specific portion of the stage to each actor, granted the majority of the stage to the star of the play.

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[12] Ibid., p. 23.

[13] Augier and Sandeau, Le Gendre de M. Poirier, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1720, p. 15.

Mademoiselle de la Seiglière.--The opening scene of this play, as did the majority of the blocking in this play, repeatedly demonstrated the first rule of staging. In the first scene, Bernard entered up stage center followed by Jasmin, the butler (see Plate XIV for the ground plan of this act). Their conversation immediately moved down stage center (see Rule Two below). Jasmin, as a servant, was placed somewhat up stage of Bernard. However, Bernard did not face Jasmin when speaking to him. This scene was performed with Bernard facing the audience and addressing his lines to them. Also, Bernard was to one side of center stage.[14] The lack of any personal reference to each other emphasized a haughty characteristic which was associated with the marked separation of social classes, but the blocking was nonetheless unrealistic.

The third scene of the first act brought the Marquis and his daughter, Hélène, on the stage. Jasmin remained in the same position which he had taken upon his first entrance (left of up stage center). The Marquis and Hélène entered from the up stage right door and immediately crossed down stage center with Hélène always being stage right of her father. Again, father and daughter addressed their lines straight front even when talking to the servant.[15]

The next scene was between Hélène and her father (Jasmin having exited). Expecting the arrival of the Baroness and her son, the Marquis (from just left of down stage center) crossed directly up stage center, looked out the door, and returned to his former position. Then, Helene

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[14]Sandeau, Mademoiselle de la Seiglière, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1783, p. 3.

[15]Ibid., p. 5.

crossed to chair three which was on her side of the stage (down stage right). From the first, the two figures were separated and maintained this state during their scene. Now, with one figure seated, the Marquis was permitted, in a moment of confidence, to cross to his daughter. After the information had been imparted, he returned to his position down stage left. Several speeches later, Hélène stood, crossed to her father, and returned to stage right, only to sit on sofa D (further stage right) instead of chair three. Now, the Marquis was able to move to stage right without crossing in front of Hélène.[16] This disposition of characters allowed the arrival of the Baronness and her son in accordance with the staging practices for entrances.

The symmetrical division of the stage which alloted equal portions of the stage to the characters gave the actors a dominance that emphasized their acting personality. When more than three characters of equal importances were on the stage, their arrangement across the stage also divided the stage into equal portions. This rule did not suggest the reproduction of everyday life in any house. The theatrical qualities of this sectioning of the acting area emphasized the type of the character which, in turn, produced a characteristic or tradition that was derivative of neo-classic or romantic precepts. This outgoing and audience-oriented trait tended to be divorced from any bourgeois qualities that appeared to be increasing at this time due to the attendance of the middle class at the theatre.

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[16] Ibid., p. 4.

THE SECOND RULE: the forcing of the action down stage to the footlights

After separating and allotting a portion of the stage to each actor, the next important directing principle brought the actors down stage. Since the prevailing practice of furniture arrangement placed it near the footlights, the furniture assisted in maneuvering the action down stage or center stage. After the action was down stage center and the actor wished to emphasize his importance, he walked to one side of the stage, then moved up stage center (behind the furniture) and then returned to the footlights.

The need of the actors to be near the prompter's box may have several explanations. This obvious theatricality stressed the personality of the actor. Too, each actor had a good number of roles in his repertory and memorization of infrequently performed plays may have entered into the situation. With the possible limited number of staging rehearsals, the need to be within earshot of the prompter may have been customary. Though this situation may have been true, the possibility that romantic and neo-classic staging practices insisted upon the actor being near the footlights should not remain unconsidered. The Conservatoire's affirmation of tradition might offer another explanation for this practice.

L'Ami Fritz.--Zola, in reviewing this play, felt that it had many qualities indicative of naturalisme. The subject matter was derived from the middle class and its environment and characters (not types) influenced each other. Yet, the Comédie-Française production belied many of these realistic aspects.

For instance, the first act of this play concluded with the drinking of toasts to Fritz on his birthday. Realistically, this action would have been performed around the table where the characters were seated at the moment of the proposal of the toast. Instead, the act was concluded in a rousing theatrical manner; the figures were brought before the footlights. The actors who were seated around the three sides of the table (table fifteen in Plate VIII) moved to a position in front of the table for the toast. (The current staging methods demanded the characters to be seated around only three sides of the table.) To perform the required movement without crossing in front of each other, the two people seated at the sides opened the stage by moving to the extreme stage right and left. The figures seated up stage and at the end of the table moved down stage and a little to the side. The single figure in the middle of the table (Fritz) moved around one side of the table to center stage, but only before one person was far enough to the side to permit this movement without blocking anyone. When Fritz was center stage, the other actors tightened the placement by moving toward center stage.[17]

Les Fourchambault.--The last scene of the first act illustrated another device that carried a scene to center stage (see Plate XIII). The scene involved the two Fourchambault parents and Rastiboulous. The latter character had entered through door C. Their conversation was staged at the center by placing Mme. Fourchambault in chair four while her husband was in chair five. Then Rastiboulous took chair

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[17]Erckmann and Chatrian, L'Ami Fritz, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1736, p. 69.

eleven and placed it center stage between the two. The three actors were seated in a straight line and conversed for three and a half pages until Rastiboulous replaced his chair before leaving through door C.[18]

Mademoiselle de la Seiglière.--Act II, scene v introduced Bernard and Des Tournelles when the Marquis and the Baroness were on stage (see Plate XIV). To permit a proper entrance up stage center under the theatrical rules defined by this period, the characters of the previous scene, the Baroness and the Marquis, had to place themselves, either separately or together, to the side of the stage. In this case, the two characters moved to stage right permitting Bernard and Des Tournelles to enter and occupy the left half of the stage. As the characters in the previous scene were standing down stage, it was a simple process for the entering figures to descend to the level of those already on stage.[19]

THE THIRD RULE: entrances and exits

This third basic practice during this era at the Comédie-Française concerned the preparation for the entrances and exits of characters. Even today, it is generally advisable to keep the entrances of characters unrestricted. The audience needs to have an unobstructed view of the doors and actors, and furniture is usually not permitted to block an entrance. Naturalistically, the maneuvering of actors about the stage demands great subtlety. At the Comédie, undue attention

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[18]Augier, Les Fourchambault, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1917, p. 35 ff.

[19]Sandeau, Mademoiselle . . ., p. 20.

was called to the entrances by sudden movement away from the entrances by the on stage characters.

In the following examples, it will be shown that near the conclusion of a "French" scene, the on stage characters shifted to the side of the stage opposite the proposed entrance or exit. The location of the movement within the context of the play appeared to be sudden, arbitrary, and unmotivated, and its execution placed undue emphasis upon both the entrance and the actors' shifting.

Le Gendre de M. Poirier.--A typical preparation for an entrance can be found in Act I, scene ii. At the end of the first scene, Gaston was left alone on stage and moved to the fireplace. This movement announced the next entrance. Poirier entered from door C and immediately crossed to chair six and sat.[20] Gaston crossed to the table and sat in chair four.

Another obvious preparation for an entrance is found in the third scene of this play. In it, Gaston introduced his friend, the Duke, to his father-in-law, Mr. Poirier and to Verdelet, the business partner of Poirier. To prepare for the entrance of Poirier and Verdelet, the Duke and Gaston played their scene down stage right. The Duke was seated in chair one of Plate XII. Gaston sat in armchair three. At the end of the scene, the two seated figures stood and moved toward the footlights. The promptscript directed the "duc descent au No. 1."

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[20]Augier and Sandeau, op. cit., p. 16ff.

while Gaston "descend au No. 2."[21] With Gaston and the Duke stage right, Poirier and Verdelet entered from door C (left stage). Poirier was directed to enter first and to descent to "No. 3" and his business associate followed him descending to "No. 4."

From a naturalistic point of view, the impression received from the actors' movement in the opening scenes exemplified an unnecessarily contrived practice. Through the acting and directing, this play, a humble attempt to capture a form of verisimilitude, became stilted when the actors descended to the footlights for the entrances and introductions. The separation of acting and directing style from the style of the play was noticeably marked.

Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle.--The first act contained two examples of arranging the on stage actors in such a manner as to minimize movement while permitting an effectively theatrical entrance. Both instances involved the Duc Richelieu. His first entrance was made through door E of Plate XVII. As the Marquise was seated on sofa three, the Duke simply descended to her level for their conversation.

Attention should be called to the placement of the Marquise. A person of high social standing, the Marquise was positioned in such a manner as to emphasize the decorum of the first three characters seen on the stage. The maid, being in a lower social strata, entered and

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[21]In contrast to current usage which considers the area immediately behind the footlings as "in One," the Comédie-Française number their areas across the stage from stage right to left. When the promptbook indicated a person descended to No. 1, it meant that the actor moved downstage right assuming a position in the middle of an area considered to be No. 1.

exited from down stage left in less dominant acting areas. The Duke, being from a higher social level, entered up stage center.

While these examples did not require any movement prior to an entrance, the very position of the Marquise called attention to the entrance. In this case, her immobility was accentuated by the appearance of her maid. The location of the sofa provided the Marquise with a down stage position while permitting her to maintain an open position for both the scene with her maid and that with Duc Richelieu.

The next example involved three people. D'Auvray (who had entered from door B) and D'Aumont (from door D) talked at the prompter's box. For the Duc Richelieu's entrance, these two gentlemen separated. By moving to the sides of the acting area, the central area was opened for the Duke's entrance.[22]

Broadly speaking, the directing practices of the Comédie-Française from 1875 to 1890 appeared to be derived from time-worn procedures which had lost their basic meaning. In the French theatre, the introduction and growth of naturalistic directing methods was made by Antoine as a reaction to these conventions. During this period, the apparent motivation for stage action at the Comédie grew from a tradition which tended to specify the required stage movement regardless of the play's dictates. While the neo-classic concept of type could have supplied a motivation for stage action that would have described a character in his environment, the tradition of stage business, the arrangement of furniture, and above all, the acting techniques placed an emphasis

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[22]Alexandre Dumas père, Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle, Promptbook OSUTC Film No. P 1730, p. 6.

upon the theatricality of the production which stressed the lack of any consideration for the dramatic and emotional content or conflict of the play. The examination of the promptbooks indicated that the characters never moved to emphasize an emotional state or to emphasize the emotional relationship between the characters on stage.

An example of this highly individualistic and theatrical condition appeared in the opening scene of Act III of Mademoiselle de la Seiglière. When the curtain opened, the Marquis was seated stage right in chair two of Plate XV. Around table I, stage left, were found: Hélène in chair three, Bernard in chair four behind the table, and the Baroness in chair five. In the opening dialogue, Hélène spoke to Bernard of the companionship which he had brought to the house. During this scene, the Baroness stood on Hélène's line and crossed behind Bernard and the Marquis to sofa one. Before her move, the Baroness did not participate in the conversation of Hélène and Bernard. It was not until the end of the scene that the Baroness spoke several words to the Marquis. While this example of unnecessary movement which called attention to the moving actor stood out in the study of the promptbooks, it was not an exception to the rule. Rather, this practice was dominant enough to appear frequently in each act of all the plays examined. The impression received from this practice was that it was an attention-getting device for an actor not directly involved in the scene. Actors constantly began movements several lines before their speeches or when they did not have anything to contribute to the action.

The Staging of Crowd Scenes

Another facet of directing which disturbed Antoine was the unrealistic staging of crowd scenes at the Comédie-Française. Antoine complained about the manner in which the Hamlet court scenes were staged at the Comédie; his aim was to find a more natural or realistic manner of arranging the actors in a crowd to express their relationship to the principal actors. The Comédie practices seen through the examination of the promptbook for Hamlet are a prime example. (In Chapter IV below, a discussion of the comparison Antoine made between the Comédie-Française and the Meiningen Players will illustrate the beliefs of Antoine.)

Plate XVIII indicates the distribution of the actors as the curtain opened for the first court scene (also see Plate XIX). The promptbook tells us that the majority of the supernumeraries were crowded up stage center in front of door B while a few were around the throne of Claudius and Gertrude. Polonius stood above and to stage left of the king and queen. Hamlet, seated opposite his mother and stepfather, was surrounded by three courtieres, Laertes, and Woltiman. During this scene the only movement was performed by Polonius and Laertes.[24]

After the court ceremony, an extended fanfare was played as everyone except Hamlet left the stage. All the supers around door B were directed to leave by it. Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, and the people around Hamlet left by door C. The king and queen, who left through door A, were preceded by four mace bearers and followed by two

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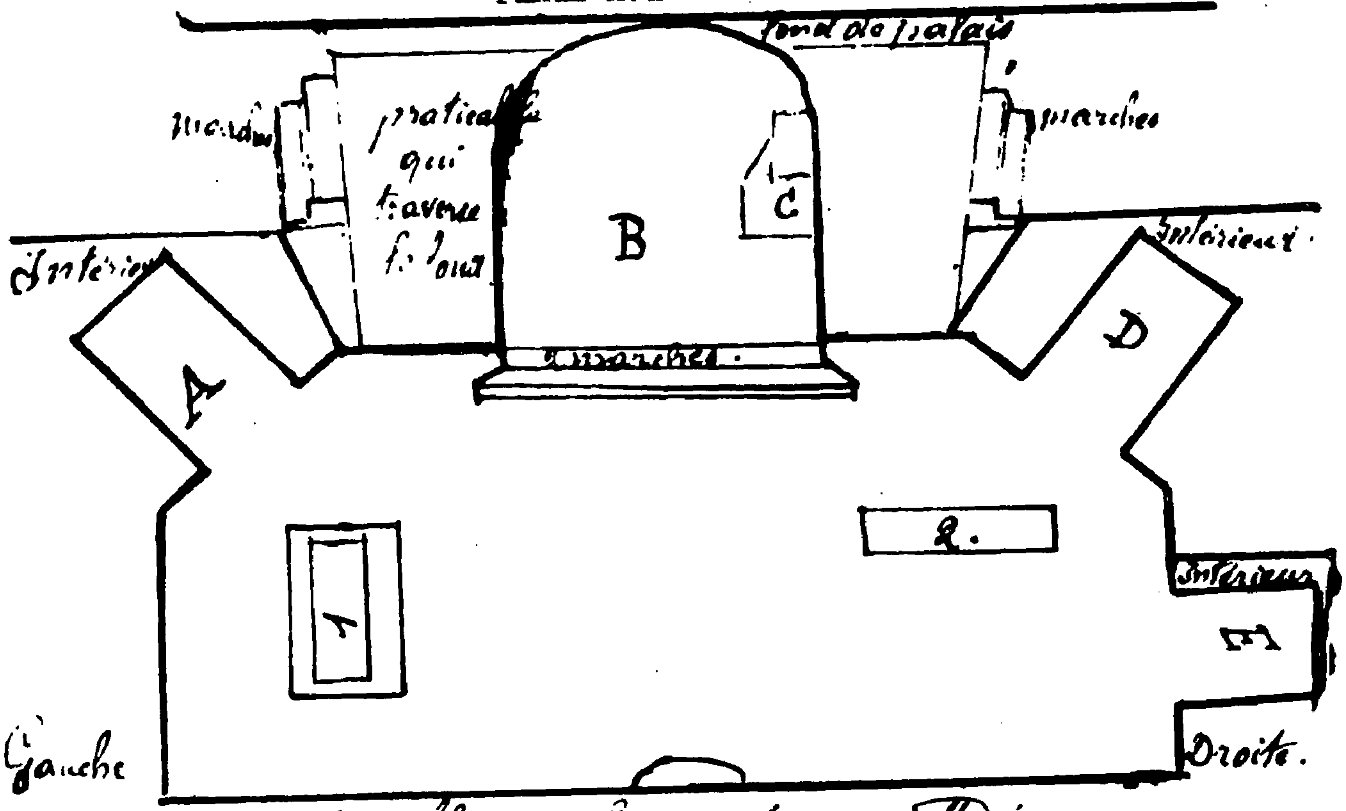
[24]William Shakespeare, Hamlet translated by Dumas pere and Maurice, OSUTC Film P 1731, p. 12.



Meubles — Légende. — Décor.

Nos 1. Trône à 2 places, sur une marche.

2. Canapé.

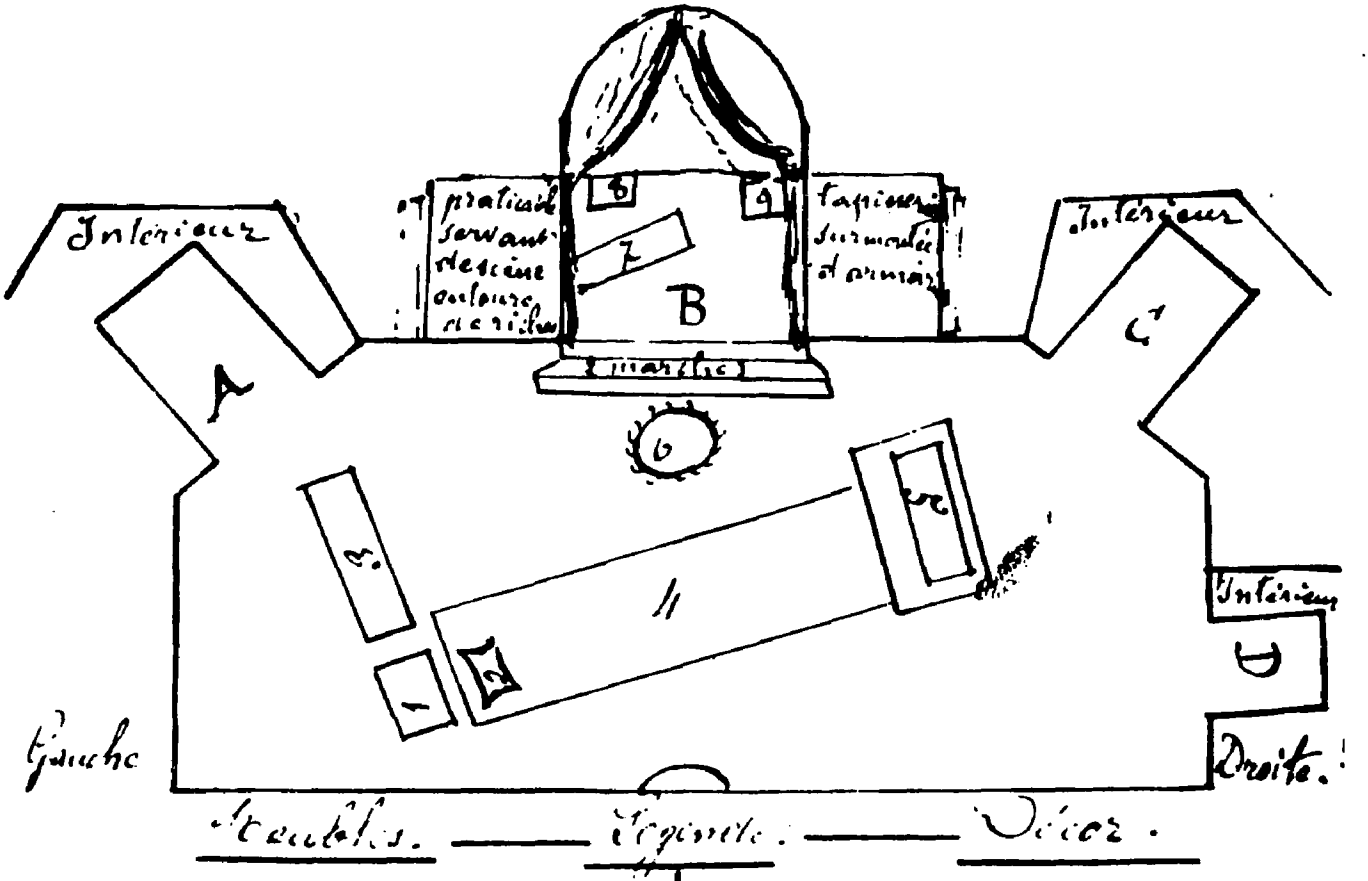
Figuration, au lever du rideau

4 Hallebardiers.
30 Seigneurs.
4 Pages.
6 Dames d'honneur.
2 hommes d'armes avec l'épée à deux mains, sur l'épaule.
6 Gardes
8 Serviteurs.

A. Porte.
B. Grande baie, donnant sur le fond de Palais.
C. Statue peinte se perdant dans la coulisse.
D. E. Portes.

Grande salle du Palais
Panoplies, Statues et tentures peintes sur le Décor.

4 plans de profondeur



1. Fauteuil X.
2. Coussin de pieds.
3. Banquette en tapisserie
4. Bande de tapis.
5. Trône à 2 places sur une marche.
6. Lustre allumé
7 Canapé sur le théâtre
8.9. Sièges X, sur le théâtre.
Meubles au 2me tableau.

Même décor, qu'au 2me tableau - La Scène C est supprimée -
à la baie B, de grands rideaux en tapisserie fermant hermétiquement.
Le praticable du fond, entouré de tapisseries surmontée d'armoiries d'Etendards

PLATE XX

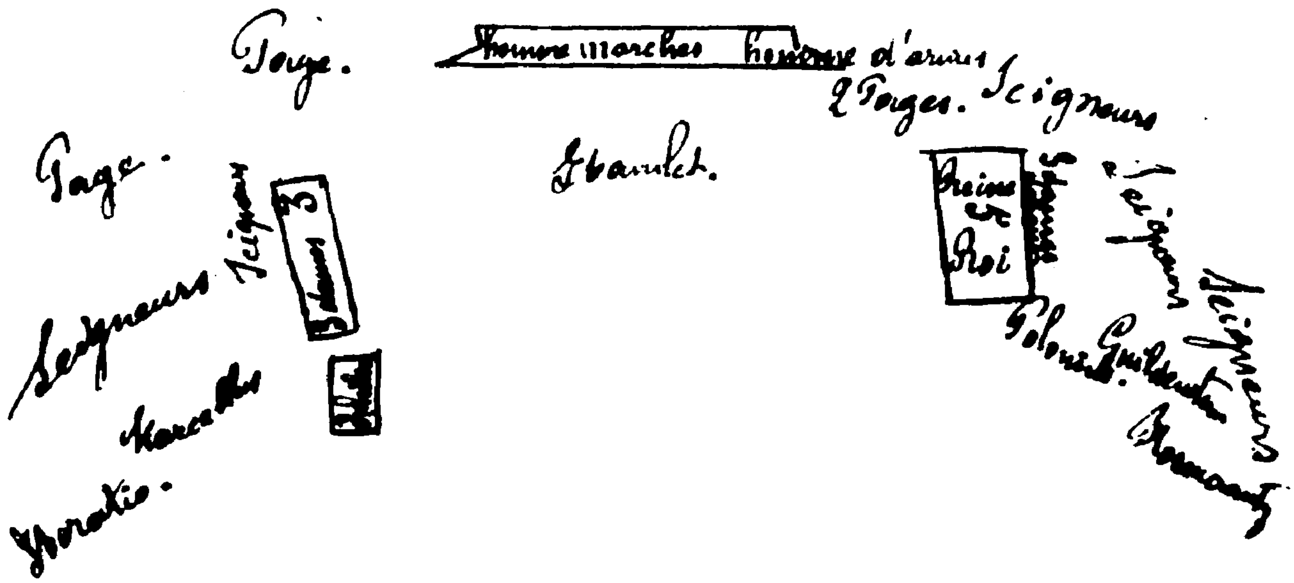

Page.
Page.
Hamlet.
d'armes
2 Pages.
Seigneurs
Reine
Roi
Horatio.

PLATE XXI

Don Carlos entre le premier. Il est suivi de deux pages ; puis de 8 gentilshommes qui descendent à droite et à gauche.
De M viennent des hallebardiers qui garnissent le fond.

Position :
Toile de fond.
Hallebardiers
page *chef* *page portant, sur un coussin, le casque du roi.*

Serviteurs – Seigneurs
Gentilshommes armés
Gentilshommes
chef
chef
Serviteurs.

Don Carlos

Roy Comte

pages and the women around the throne. In the exit of the actors and supernumeraries, two hallebardiers (placed at the extreme sides in down stage areas) were the last of the court to leave; they marched to center stage, turned their backs to the audience, and marched up stage center to exit.

For the play-within-a-play scene, the same setting was employed. The only scenic change was the placement of a curtain across the opening marked B. The location of the throne was reversed from its place in the previous court scene. The arrangement of the actors on the stage emphasized a formal quality in its picturization. Of the courtiers, only Polonius and Hamlet moved during the scene. Plate XX indicates the location of the actors as the scene begins. After Claudius called for lights, the scene quickly terminated as the actors were instructed to head for the nearest exit.[25]

An example of another crowd scene at the Comedie can be found in Hernani. While there are many crowd scenes in this play, Act III contains a typical crowd staging. Don Carlos entered Ruy Gomez' house. The instructions direct Don Carlos to enter first followed by two pages who preceded the men of the court. These courtiers arranged themselves in a semi-circle on either side of the center door. The scene between Ruy Gomez and Don Carlos was placed center stage. The up stage position was given to the king, forcing Gomez to one side. Plate XXI depicts this crowd arrangement.[26] Again, the placement of the supernumeraries was formal.

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[25] Ibid., p. 34.

[26] Hugo, op. cit., p. 32.

As can be seen by these examples from Hamlet and Hernani, little if any, characterization was permitted within the crowd. The apparent function of the crowd scenes was to add the splendor of numbers to a scene. The concept which organized the grouping of actors and supernumeraries appeared to be based upon traditional staging practices. In examining the qualities of these practices, it is evident that the careful grouping of the pictorial forces suggests a possible theatrical utilization of neo-classic painting practices. The dominant feature in the direction of these and other crowd scenes was its static quality.

André Antoine, disturbed by the lack of an understanding of the behavior of a group of people in everyday life, felt that no court would have been as coldly formal as the ones seen at the Comédie-Française. In the development of naturalisme, the importance of each actor or supernumerary as part of the action was stressed; one of the theories of naturalisme insisted that to obtain a reality in art, the inclusion of individual and characteristic details served as a means of giving a vibrant quality to the art form. In its application to the theatre, there needed to be more emphasis placed upon each supernumerary as a character, thereby adding an excitement to the scene. In the attempt to bring a semblance of everyday life to the theatre and especially to the problem of crowd scenes, Antoine found an obvious contrast between the practices at the Théâtre-Française and what he had observed in reality.

Scenery

In the plays listed at the first of this chapter, a standard set seemed to appear. The beginning essential was the box set; doors were

placed up stage either at the sides or at center back. All possibilities of variations in these openings were evident in the ground plans of the Comédie promptscripts--only one side door or three doors across the back wall, etc. Of the twenty-six sets for the fourteen plays examined, fifteen sets combined both the up stage center door with the two up stage doors in the side walls. The number of times this arrangement of entrances appeared implies that it tended to become the standard for most productions.

A very noticeable similarity of all sets accented the fact that the scenery contained an unlocalized quality. This abstract quality was intensified by the lack of identification of the doors. Even the directing did not establish a specific locale; generally, naturalistic theatre practices logically, consistently, and easily identify the on stage and off stage areas.

The best example of an unlocalized scene was found in Le Gendre de M. Poirier. The use of the side doors as a specific entrance was never established by the action. An indication of the possible confusion which could result from an unidentified door was found in Acts II and III of Le Gendre. Gaston and his wife, Antoinette, asked the maid to bring a wrap for Antoinette before leaving for the theatre. The maid brought the wrap from the stage right door, and Gaston and Antoinette departed for the theatre through the same door--door B of Plate XII. The first scene of the following act found these characters returning from the theatre. This time the promptbook indicated that they enter

from door C, opposite from the one through which they left.[27] Yet, within this same play, a specific locale in the house was identified beyond a certain door, door D, which led to the servant's domain.

In all the promptbooks, the only modification to the standard box set appeared in Le Gendre de M. Poirier. The impression received from the design reproduced in the promptbook was of a circular room. The back wall appeared to be curved. Each door, window, or fireplace flat seemed to be arranged in a semi-circular manner. A down stage left door was balanced by a fireplace down stage right. The scenic elements across the back were an arrangement of doors and windows symmetrically balanced against each other. Actually, the set's appearance suggested an adaptation of the usual box set.

The apparent standardization of the box set also developed a model arrangement of the furniture. In the plays illustrated, two groupings of furniture were placed on the stage--one down stage right and one down stage left. The composition of these groupings varied greatly. One of the most customary furniture arrangements called for two chairs and a table; and many times, one of these two chairs was an armchair. The size of the tables indicated in the ground plan varied from the small table used in L'Été de la Saint-Martin to the large one in Le Gendre de M. Poirier. Some times, only a table and chair were employed such as on stage left in L'Été, in the first act set of Le Mariage de Victorine, and in Act III of Hernani.

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[27]Augier and Sandeau, op. cit., p. 41.

This furniture was arranged across the stage in a straight line near the footlights. To keep the stage from appearing empty, additional furniture was employed by arranging it along the walls of the set. A fireplace with its elaborate mantle could be found in any of the obvious locations--center stage, down stage right or left.

The spatial arrangement of the down stage furniture and the furniture placed next to the set separated the actor from his environment. The scenery and the furniture grouping tended to give the appearance of being unrelated to the action. Thus, it can be said that at the Théâtre-Française one of the controlling factors in the stage movement was the placement of the doors and the furniture (as it is in all productions).

The need for a setting indigenous to the action was understood by both Émile Zola and André Antoine; for them, a person's actions were related to and controlled by the environment. The scenery at the Théâtre-Française did not contain any environmental qualities which suggested the character or controlled his actions. In addition, the acting and directing practices for these Comédie productions were incongruous to the play and its style.

The general practices of acting, directing, and scene design which the Comédie-Française employed fulfilled the conditions common to presentational or audience-oriented productions. The acting was large, open, and forward; the action was brought to the footlights or to the prompter's box. The scene design and directing principles assisted in this objective. In totality, a negation of the play's tone resulted. Generally, these practices satisfied the aristocracy, the

audience for which these conventions were designed. When the bourgeoisie became a dominant portion of the audience, these traditional qualities proved to be alien to the audience's middle class background. The need for a change in these theatrical productions arose.

As the prosperity of the bourgeoisie increased during the nineteenth century, their demands for theatrical entertainment grew. After a brief recession temporarily slowed this activity, the Second Empire began a period of keen theatrical competition especially among the boulevard theatres. With the theatres relying upon the public for support, the managers and their policies shifted to meet the demands of the audience. The policies of the boulevard theatres from 1875 to 1890 should expand our understanding of the theatrical background which led Antoine to his development of naturalistic theatrical theories and practices.

Antoine also followed the Parisian theatres and their policies in an attempt to understand the significance of theatrical trends. Finding a conflict between current theatrical concepts and procedures, Antoine tried to apply naturalistic theories to theatrical method in his productions at the Théâtre-Libre. After the opening of his theatre, Antoine continued to watch the publicly supported theatres to ascertain any reflection of his work. Beginning in the fall of 1887, Antoine pointed out the plays produced by the boulevard theatres which reflected his work.

The following chronicle concerns itself with the Odéon and the boulevard theatres and their performance policies during the period of our investigation. The intent of this survey is to show another phase

of the theatrical environment during Antoine's formative years. A theatre's policy was determined by the popularity of the play or by the type of production. This attitude was a reflection of the bourgeoisie attendance at the theatre.

The Odéon

A consideration of the Odéon will amplify the theatrical background of our era of investigation. Built in 1821, the Odéon became a state-supported theatre about 1830. Just prior to the beginning of 1875, the Odéon produced La Maîtresse legitime, a comedy in four acts by M. Davyl. It was so successful that it played well into 1875.[28] La Maîtresse legitime was a play characteristic of the type produced at the Odéon. It was a "well-made" play. With the financial improvement due to the success of this play, the Odéon consented to develop a classic repertory as a justification of its subsidy. Unfortunately, the quality of their classics was very poor, and La Maîtresse legitime was revived until another attraction could be prepared. In 1875, the Odéon began its policy of including unknown playwrights' works; the consensus of public opinion was that these productions were the Odéon's greatest asset. From this policy of producing works by budding authors came a production of Un Drame sous Philippe II (on April 4, 1875), a four act drama by George de Porto-Riche (who later became an important author of the Théâtre-Libre). After Un Drame opened, a debate developed as to its theme and theatrical implications; "Porto-Riche had the

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[28]Edouard Noel and Edmond Stoullig, Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique (Paris: Charpentier et Cie, 1876), Vol. I, p. 127.

satisfaction of seeing his drama discussed from all points of view--political, religious, dramatic, and literary."[29] The playwright's handling of the form and content of the theme differed from the traditionally accepted legends of Philippe II; this difference upset the critics and the public to such an extent that a controversy over its qualities ensued. In commenting upon this play, Antoine felt that its chief asset was the interpretation of the leading role by Gil Naza.[30]

The production of Porto-Riche's play was followed by La Demoiselle á marier (on May 15, 1875) which alternated with La Maîtresse legitime. By June 6 of that year, the Odéon was forced to close its doors for two reasons. First, the box office receipts were extremely poor; and second, the physical condition of the building was the same. Taking advantage of the anniversary of the birth of Corneille to effect a brilliant closing, M. Dequesnel, the manager of the Odéon, hoped that a performance of Corneille's Horace would be a fitting climax to the season.

As the physical condition of the building required extensive repairs, the Odéon remained closed well into what was considered the fall season. For the reopening of the Odéon on November 19, the bill included the play, La Vie de Boheme (its premiere performance), a drama by Theodore Barrier and Henri Murger taken from the latter's novel. This play was followed by Otello with the Italian actor, Ernest Rossi, in the leading role. The remainder of the year contained a mixture of

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[29]Ibid., I, p. 135.

[30]Andre Antoine, Le Théâtre (Paris: Les Editions de France, 1932), Vol. I, p. 48.

contemporary successes and a few classics. According to the Annales du théâtre et de la musique, the Odéon in 1875 presented twenty-seven works of which La Maitresse legitime achieved 122 performances and Un Drame sous Philippe II was second with 55 performances.

In the following year, 1876, the season's hit was Les Danicheff by Pierre Newski, which was performed 189 times. The 1877 season, shaped by the illness of one of the Odéon's leading actors, Dalis, returned La Maîtresse legitime and La Vie de Boheme to the boards until the company could ready La Secretaire particulier (a comedy in three acts by M. Paul de Margallier). While this play achieved a quick popularity, it did not last beyond twenty-one performances. The most popular play of this year was L'Hetman, a five act drama in verse by M. Paul Deroulede. Set in Poland about 1645, it dealt with the reign of Ladislas IV, the king. Its decor (by Zarat and Cheret) was praised for being historically accurate and the costumes (by Thomas) were also considered very spectacular. Revivals of two plays by George Sand completed the year 1877. The judgment that "there is nothing new under the sun" was made by the Annales du théâtre et de la musique in summarizing the year at the Odéon.[31] For the year, Antoine remarked, in a general way, that he enjoyed the acting of Geoffrey, Maria Laurent, Gil Naza, and Marais in these productions.[32]

During 1878, Les Danicheff was revived and achieved 172 performances.[33] The only play of any literary interest was Nid des autres of

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[31]Noel and Stoullig, op. cit., III, p. 174.

[32]Antoine, op. cit., I, p. 71.

[33]Noel and Stoullig, op. cit., IV, p. 194.

Aurielien Scholl and Armond Dartois. (The first author was later represented at the Théâtre-Libre with L'Amant de sa femme, scene de la vie Parisienne on November 26, 1890.) Porto-Riche provided Les Deux fautes to conclude the season.

Before the resignation of the director, Duquesnel, the critics complained that he was turning the second national theatre into a boulevard theatre by relying upon spectacles. According to the critics, the goal of the Odéon was to perform only classics and plays by new authors.[34] The year 1879 (at the beginning of an economic recession) was filled with pot boilers such as Le Voyage de M. Perrichon which achieved 150 performances.[35] Charles de la Rounat assumed charge of the theatre's activities on February 15, and Noces d'Attila, a four act drama in verse by Henri de Bornier, was his first production. The critics considered Noces d'Attila a success; and the public stayed away. As the title implied, the play was a spectacle of colorful scenery and costumes. In opening the fall season 1880, the new director who hoped to fulfill the critics' desires for this theatre installed a more classic repertory, and produced such pieces as Charlotte Corday (Ponsard), George Dandin (Molière), and Les Fausses confidences (Marivaux).

Jack, by the contemporary and realistic author Alphonse Daudet, had a moderate success the following year, 1881. Generally, the new administration devoted the year primarily to a mixture of the classics

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[34] Ibid., V, p. 217.

[35] Ibid., V, p. 246.

and modern plays to become successful with "popular performances at a reduced price."[36]

The next year, 1882, saw the revival of a play from the School of Good Sense, L'Honneur et l'argent, a comedy by Ponsard. Several contemporary comedies and farces, generally of the well-made-play variety, preceded the appearance of Othello, le more de venise (translated by Louis de Gramont), which was only a moderate success. In a year marked by a good economic growth, the director's policy no longer attempted to achieve outstanding successes, for his only wish was to offer good theatre. More and more, M. de Rounat balanced the season with classics and modern plays of a good quality, and this policy became fruitful.

In the year 1883, the Odéon continued its policy of balancing the repertory with older plays and contemporary ones. That year the Odéon produced Formosa (a four act verse drama by Auguste Vacquerier) and Severo Torello (a five act verse drama by Francoise Coppee) at the Odéon. The Annales du théâtre et de la musique considered that the first play's interpretation was very fine.[37] The second play, which had been declared "not for the public" by the Théâtre-Française and its administrator, Perrin, was found to be ideal for the second national theatre. The critics classified it with Haine by Sardou, Lorenzaccio by de Musset, Lucrece Borgia by Hugo, and Hamlet.

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[36] Ibid., VII, p. 157.

[37] Ibid., IX, p. 91.

Though 1884 was only an average year in its economic stability, the Odéon had established a definite following. The critics felt that the public acceptance of the Odéon was due to M. de la Rounat and his assistant and collaborator, Porel. The outstanding success of that year was Macbeth.

After taking over the administration of the Odéon in 1885, Porel's policy appeared to sense a trend toward naturalisme; his first success was the de Goncourts' Henriette Maréchal. Twenty years after being written, Antoine felt that the public had become educated enough through the naturalistic novel to accept the unusual quality of the opening scene. Above all, Antoine found this production of the de Goncourt play "a very human work."[38] But, the outstanding success of that year was L'Arlesienne which employed Bizet's music. L'Arlesienne was written by Daudet, considered a naturalistic writer. Porel's third success of 1885 was an adaptation from Shakespeare called Conte d'avril. Dorchain, the adaptor, returned to Shakespeare's source of inspiration. This play bore only a slight resemblance to Twelfth Night, its Shakespearean source. An element of this production which increased its popularity was the scenery designed by the theatre's director, Porel. As in previous years, Porel continued his policy of mixing the old and the new with excellent results both artistically and with the public.

For the 1886 season at the Odéon, a production of Midsummer Night's Dream with Mendelssohn's music was mounted. But the biggest

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[38]Antoine, op. cit., I, p. 178.

success was a production in the naturalistic mode; Henry Ceard (a popular adaptor for Antoine) made a play out of the de Goncourt novel, Renée Mauperin. Antoine believed that this adaptation was very discomforting, thus making its success uncertain. A second naturalistic play was also produced the same year; it was Becque's Michel Pauper. "It is, in total, a victory for the new theories," Antoine claimed.[39] According to the Annales du théâtre et de la musique, this play was a well-made play which pleased the audience.

The next year (1887) was marked by a decline at the box office for all theatres. According to Antoine, this condition was the result of the Opéra-Comique fire on May 25, 1887. Shortly after the performance of Mignon began, sparks fell on the stage; the panic which resulted killed over 150 people and wounded over 200. Several nights after the fire, the performance of George Sand's Claude (generally a popular play) found only a handful of people in the Odéon. This theatre, together with the boulevard theatres, closed for the summer almost immediately. The Odéon reopened on September 5, 1887. On September 22, Marquis Papillon by Maurice Boniface (another author connected with the Theatre-Libre) saw its premier; on the same bill was Jacques Damour adapted from a story by Zola. The significance of Jacques Damour is great. After refusing to stage this play, Porel found it necessary to include it in his repertory. Antoine had produced it on the opening bill of the Theatre-Libre. Its success at the Théâtre-Libre forced Porel to

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[39] Ibid., I, p. 192.

reconsider the play thereby making the first acknowledgement of Antoine's success in the naturalistic theatre.

After 1887, more and more plays of Shakespeare were produced by Porel at the Odéon. The plays produced were Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, Measure for Measure, and Romeo and Juliet. This same period also was marked by an increased number of productions of foreign classics, Goethe's Egmont being the most outstanding.

Beginning in 1888, the influecne of the Théâtre-Libre began to appear more consistently at the Odeon. While they produced the French classic and romantic repertory, Porel increased the number of naturalistic plays. On December 19, 1888, the production of Germinie Lacerteux, taken from the de Goncourt novel, was presented. The debate (dealing with the pros and cons of naturalisme in the theatre) which stemmed from this play sustained its popularity much longer than the administration had anticipated. The Annales de théâtre et de la musique stated that the novel was excellent but its stage version was neither "this nor that."[40] According to Antoine, "all the reactionary forces were grouped together to fight the increasing influence of the disciples of Zola and Daudet."[41]

While 1889 was not a theatrically eventful year, it saw the production of Grand Mere by George Ancey and Amour by Léon Hennique; both of these playwrights had been introduced to the public through the Théâtre-Libre. Generally, the year was noted for its revivals of former

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[40]Noel and Stoullig, op. cit., XIV, p. 199.

[41]Antoine, op. cit., I, p. 214.

Odeon successes such as La Maîtresse legitime. Still, Porel hoped to continue his policy of mixing the classics and the moderns.

The Boulevard Theatres

The commercial theatres in Paris are generally referred to as boulevard theatres. The term may have originated (1) from the fact that most of the commercial theatres are on a prominent boulevard and (2) from an area known as Boulevard du Temple (torn down in 1862 by Hausmann's renovation of Paris) which broke the monopoly of the Théâtre-Française after the extinction of the Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent fairs. Four boulevard theatres were chosen for this survey--the Gymnase-Dramatique, Vaudeville, Variétés, and Porte-Saint-Martin. According to Antoine and the Annales du théâtre et de la musique, these theatres were the most outstanding ones of the boulevard theatres. Only the most important successes of each theatre will be chronicled. Generally, the theatres established a format which was derived from a type of play or production. This format was employed until it was no longer successful; then a new one was sought.

The Gymnase-Dramatique

At the Gymnase-Dramatique, the 1875 season began with the revivals of Sardou's Nos Bons villageois and La Perle noire. On November 17, 1875, the theatre revived his Ferreol. This play continued to draw an audience well into 1876. Antoine remarked that the ensemble at this theatre was beginning to deteriorate. He believed that this theatre had long passed its prime of a decade earlier during which time it was a popular theatre and produced such first productions as Le

Demi-Monde and Le Gendre de M. Poirier.[42] In fact, 1876 was such a poor season that Montigny became the director of this theatre the following year. Even then, the box office receipts did not improve greatly.

Finally on March 10, 1877, the theatre was saved by the production of Bébé, a three act comedy by Émile de Najac and Alfred Hennequin. This play, a typical pot-boiler, achieved 201 evening performances. Pierre Gendron, a three act drama by La Fontaine and George Richard, followed. This play was derived from a pattern defined by Zola's L'Assommoir. Pierre Gendron, a drama about the working class, ran a month and was followed by a series of three act comedies of the well-made play variety.

In 1878, the theatre's policy became one of reviving older comedy hits. The plays of Bayard, Scribe, Duvert, Lausanne, and the team of Émile de Najac and Alfred Hennequin were revived. But the novelty soon wore off. It was not until August 29 that success returned to the Gymnase; on that day, a five act comedy, Froufrou of Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy was produced. In October 1878, the Gymnase opened an unfortunate production of La Dame aux camelias with Lucien Guitry in the Armand Duval role. The next production was a comedy by Edouard Pailleron which served as an interim attraction. With the opening of Nounou (by the team of de Najac and Hennequin), the Gymnase had a success which was as popular as their Bébé of 1877.

On the first day of 1880, the Gymnase revived its old custom of giving matinee performances of unpublished works. The first of this

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[42] Ibid., I, p. 55.

series was Becque's Les Honnêtes femmes. It scandalized the public and the critics; but it created enough interest in these matinees of unpublished plays to assist the Gymnase during its troubled period. Generally, that year was devoted to revivals of its previous hits such as Bébé and L'Age ingrate (from the era before 1875).

The season of 1881 contained various comedies. The year's most interesting event at the Gymnase took place on August 17 when Elections by Robertson (translated by Gustave Haller) was produced. As the French audiences did not understand the English humor of the play, it was fortunate that the run of Elections was to be only a limited one. This is one of the very few examples of imported contemporary plays during the period of 1875 to 1890. Now under Koning's direction, the Gymnase introduced comédie-vaudevilles, and the first work of this genre was Armes de Richelieu by Boyard and Dumanoir.

> The destiny of the Gymnase, for a long time undecided in the hands of M. Koning, saw the end of its public indifference. Prosperity was now the law of the house. Today, the acting troup, stronger with new recruits, was more homogenous and consistent. The director broadened the scope of this theatre's activities by assisting dramatic authors old and new. The theatre had to have a renewed repertory as the director intends to return this theatre to its former prominence.[43]

In fulfilling this policy, the Gymnase produced, on January 5, 1882, the play Serge Panine, a five act drama in prose by Georges Ohnet. "It was, in truth, a familiar story with the spectacle being the major portion of this memorable evening."[44] The play achieved 123 evening

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[43]Noel and Stoullig, op. cit., VIII, p. 215.

[44]Ibid., VIII, p. 215.

performances and 16 matinee performances. With Serge Panine, the theatre recovered its status by producing only works which would have a considerable run.

From 1883 to 1890, the Gymnase produced a long series of comedies. The major portion of these plays were by Georges Ohnet, Jules Claretie (who became director of the Comédie-Française in 1885), and Edmond Gondinet. This theatre also continued to revive its previous hits like Serge Panine and Froufrou.

Antoine considered the production of Porto-Riche's La Chance de Française (in 1889) as another indication that the boulevard theatres were following the practices of the Théâtre-Libre.[45] After 1888, the production of plays similar to those produced by the Theatre-Libre now increased greatly at this theatre.

The Vaudeville

At the Vaudeville, during 1875, the success of Les Proces Veauradieux by Delacours and Hennequin forced the director of the theatre to revive it after its initially short summer run. Les Scandales d'heir by Théodore Barrière became the Vaudeville's next success. During the year 1876, Madame Caverlet by Augier was added to the success list. André Antoine felt that this production of Augier's play was well planned. The play's literary quality aided its popularity and it achieved 65 performances. Beginning in 1877, the theatre began a series of Sardou revivals beginning with Dora and Le Bourgeoisie de Pont-Arcy. Dora caused Zola to attack the Vaudeville for its time-worn productions.

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[45]Antoine, op. cit., I, p. 226ff.

The next successes at the Vaudeville were Les Lionnes pauvres by Augier, Le Père prodigue by Dumas fils, and Odette by Sardou; these revivals extended from 1879 to 1882.

After the retirement of Deslandes, Albert Carée took over the management at the Vaudeville in 1885. Substantially, the new management did not change the theatre's policy for the remainder of the decade. There were revivals of proven successes like Bébé, L'Age ingrate, Voyage de M. Perrichon, and Celimare le bien amie.

The Variétés

The policy of the Varietes from 1875 to 1890 limited production mostly to farces and vaudevilles. The year 1875 was typical with its production of Trente millions du gladiators by Labiche and Gille, and Le Chapeau de paille d'Italie, La Vie Parisienne, and Les Trois Epiciers (the last two were operettas). In 1879, La Femme á papa, a vaudeville in three acts by Hennequin and Albert Millaud, became a staple of this theatre. The following year, 1880, saw the revival of Grand Casimir which was a most popular vaudeville; its periodic revival continued at this theatre during the 1880's. When Monsieur Betsy, a four act play by Paul Alexis and Oscar Métênier (two prominent exponents of the Théâtre-Libre's naturalisme) was presented in 1890, Antoine proclaimed another penetration of naturalisme into the boulevard theatres.

The Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin

The policy of the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin was devoted to the production of spectacles. The year 1875 saw the introduction of one of its most popular spectacles: Le Tour de mond en quatre-vingts

jours (adapted by Dennery and Jules Verne from the latter's novel of the same name). Immediately, the mise en scéne created a sensation. This spectacle, in 1875, was performed 360 times. The following years this theatre continued to produce plays of a similar genre. Its most outstanding successes were La Reine Margot (in 1877, a five act drama with Taillade in the leading role) and Les Exiles (in 1878, a five act drama by Eugene Nus and Prince Lubomirski). Until 1880, the policy remained essentially the same.

After an extended run of Froufrou in 1883, Porte-Saint-Martin presented Jean Richepin's Nana Sahib. This play had been written for Sarah Bernhardt who now shifted her activity to this theatre. Beginning in January, 1884, the production policy was constructed around the talents of Sarah Bernhardt. On the 26th of that month, La Dame aux camelias was revived for her. This play was followed on May 21, 1884, with Macbeth. Sardou's Théodora was revived after Macbeth. Only two plays were produced during 1885--Théodora which ran for 258 performances and Marion Delorme. While the latter play opened on December 30, it ran for 61 performances during 1887 and was replaced by Fedora which continued until Patrie! could be readied for performance.

Porte-Saint-Martin closed the year 1887 by alternating two plays by Sardou, Le Crocodile and La Tosca. While both plays were in the repertory of this theatre in 1888, La Tosca, the more popular play, was given an extended run. When Bernhardt became indisposed, La Tosca was closed March 31, 1888. The remainder of the decade saw the production of plays by Sardou and Dumas père.

During this time, Antoine was keenly aware of naturalisme in art and the novel, and its few appearances in the theatre. In his book, Le Théâtre, Antoine noted Zola's objections to productions and the appearance of young writers reflecting Zola's attitude. Antoine, an intelligent bourgeois, became excited about the theatre through his exposure to it at an early age. After his military service, he felt more keenly about an acting career for himself. Being unable to enter the Conservatoire and unhappy with a small drama study group, he founded the Théâtre-Libre; in this step, he was expressing his desire to become an actor as well as the desire of the bourgeoisie to make a comment in all the arts. To his theatrical practices, Antoine brought his observations of earlier theatre attendance and his ideas of naturalisme developed during his impressionable years. To gain a theatre audience in Paris, Antoine attempted to get a favorable response from the individual who dominated the field of dramatic criticism during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Francisque Sarcey

Repeatedly, Antoine wrote to Francisque Sarcey to express his concept of theatre and, in turn, Sarcey published these letters in his column. Sarcey considered himself the protector of the Comédie-Française and the French tradition. The inclusion of Sarcey serves to illustrate another portion of the theatrical situation prior to Antoine's appearance in the Théâtre-Libre.

As the critic of Le Temps, Sarcey wrote constantly about the Parisian theatre. In his collected works (Quarante ans de théâtre),

the reviews and articles were arranged according to subject matter to assist in pin-pointing Sarcey's views and theories. As an example of the conservative French tradition, Sarcey's importance to this study originates in the fact that Antoine felt it necessary to have Sarcey review the Théâtre-Libre productions. By involving Sarcey in a discussion of theatrical theories and practices, Antoine felt that he would be able to call attention of the public to his theatre. As a means of getting publicity, Antoine addressed letters to Sarcey expressing his views on current theatre practices. Besides, a Sarcey review of a Théâtre-Libre production would indicate the significance of Antoine's work in relationship to other Parisian theatres.

Appearing during the rise of scientific positivism, Sarcey made only a nominal bow in that direction. He felt the need to rationalize his conservative views. According to Sarcey, a national prejudice resisted any theatrical change. This recalcitrant condition developed from the national philosophical and neoclassical education which was overly concerned with a tradition and a view of beauty derivative of the Age of Reason.

> We have, since infancy, been persuaded that there is an idea of beauty which exists by itself, which is a live emulation of the divine, which each man carries inside himself. It is a concept more or less clear or an image more or less good according to the manner in which the world of art approached or departed from a type of perfection.[46]

This idea of the beautiful, a remnant of the neoclassic age, permitted Sarcey to feel comfortable in his prejudices; Sarcey insisted that the

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[46]Francisque Sarcey, Quarante ans de théâtre (Paris: Bibliotheque des Annales, 1901), Vol. I, p. 121ff. Author's translation.

French public follow a similar line of reasoning. Not wishing to define the nature of ideal beauty or the archetype of absolute perfection, Sarcey claimed that it was outside of his domain.

Commenting upon the field of criticism, Sarcey said: "aesthetics is a true science; and like all sciences, it only rests on some well-made observations."[47] He believed that the scholastic and scientific fields arrived at their views after a long and patient analysis of their elements. "He [the investigator] distinguishes the parts of his composition, the organs [the composition] of which it was gifted, and searched [for] the foundation of these organs."[48] Since the apparent motivation for a search of any knowledge stemmed from an individual curiosity possessed by all men (a neo-classic concept), Sarcey "wished to know and to be pleased to have known it [theatrical knowledge, theories, or practices]."[49] Thus, Sarcey, the critic, became the justification of Sarcey, the teacher.

Above all, Sarcey hoped that his critical comments would formulate laws which would be instructive to the public and to the theatre profession. Superficially turning to science for his figures of speech, Sarcey felt that his examination of dramaturgy, theatre and its concepts, would be similar to "chemistry applying its process of analysis to the kinds of being that we call works of the theatre."[50] The general

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[47] Ibid., I, p. 122.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., I, p. 124.

[50] Ibid.

practices of naturalistic criticism, after assembling the facts, did not permit conclusions to be drawn by the examiner, for the scientific approach emphasized a complete and unemotional examination of facts. It is difficult to understand Sarcey's concept of applying science to literature, for it was his belief that the goal of theatre was to moralize. "The goal of all artists in general, and the dramatic writers in particular, is to make beautiful works. Their ultimate objective was naturally to moralize."[51]

Sarcey wished to arrange his reviews in a "most beautiful fashion." In order to do this, he had to justify his seemingly objective point of view.

> From scientific laws and from the rules of good writing and good judging are found completely different ideas which are, at the moment, encroaching upon our studies; thus, I will supply the reader with the amazing step [to assist in understanding the theatre].[52]

According to Sarcey, there was only one essential condition of the theatrical art which established the different between drama and other art forms. This distinction was "the presence of the audience . . . We cannot conceive a theatre without an audience."[53] For example, painting and writing did not depend upon an assembled group to communicate its artistic qualities. The audience permitted the author and the players to act upon its emotions.

To the theatre, Sarcey felt that the audience brought its emotional prejudices and its emotional responses. The playwright was

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[51] Ibid., I, p. 170.

[52] Ibid,, I, p. 124.

[53] Ibid., I, p. 126.

required to involve the imagination of the spectator and then moralize. This emotional involvement by the audience, according to Sarcey, was his primary justification of the position of a critic in recording and evaluating a play.

In his discussion of "les conditions de l'art dramatique" on July 3, 1876, Sarcey stated that le drame est la representation de la vie humaine.[54] Yet, to represent human life before a crowd, Sarcey informs us that "certain trickery was necessary and they define theatrical conventions."[55] The degree of success with which the playwright employed these tricks was a measuring device Sarcey employed to determine the success of a play and it was through the audience reactions that, many times, Sarcey obtained his appraisal. Thus, the control of the crowd was a primary factor by which Sarcey placed his measurement.

The aim of Sarcey was to define these stage rules.

> Nature and human life were impartial before joy and sadness, before laughter and tears and when passing from one emotion to another . . . Since the theatre is not the representation of human life, it is a gathering of conventions destined to give that illusion to an audience.[56]

The theatre conventions were divided by Sarcey into two parts: the eternals and the temporary or the variables. Of the eternal conventions, Sarcey felt that they were so self-evident that they did not need to be mentioned. A specific listing of these eternals was never made by Sarcey. Only a guess of what the eternal conventions were can be made.

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[54] Ibid., I, p. 124.

[55] Ibid., I, p. 151.

[56] Ibid., I, p. 142.

Sarcey appeared to be more interested in variable conventions which rose, were felt, and were replaced by every generation of artists. The variable conventions were the ones which gave the appearance of truth to the theatre.

> We have often remarked that laughter still continues for a long time after the cause of laughter has ceased which is similar to the continued flow of tears after the goodness has dried our eyes. The human soul is not agile enough to pass easily from one extreme emotion to a contrary one.[57]

> In real life, there is a mingling of tears and laughter that is difficult to understand and especially sadness which does not always leave any inconvenience. We have already and repeatedly said a hundred times, nature is indifferent and life is the same. We cry, that is good; we laugh, next that is easy. You laugh when it is necessary to cry; you cry when it is better to laugh. That is your affair.[58]

If the author's object was to excite laughter, the actions of the play must contain only those conventions which will produce this result. For tragedy, the reverse was true. When the audience was moved to sadness, some belief that hope or joy still existed had to be present. For Sarcey, the last emotional impression which the author created was the dominant one; therefore, any sudden juxtaposition of laughter and tears was impossible. Sarcey felt that the audience would be unable to feel one emotion and then quickly move to a more opposing emotion. Such a contention was reinforced by Sarcey's conservativism and what he called "the French tradition," which can be considered his euphemism for a neo-classic attitude.

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[57] Ibid., I, p. 143ff.

[58] Ibid., I, p. 147.

It was unfortunate that Sarcey dominated the French theatre for such a long time--forty years. Becque and Antoine kept complaining about his rules of the theatre. Yet, Antoine understood Sarcey's theatrical power and took advantage of it by addressing letters to him. Antoine hoped that these letters would create an interest in the Theatre-Libre. Two of these letters play an important part in determining the theories of Antoine.

Though Ferdinand Brunetière was active beginning in the 1880's, his impact upon the theatre did not appear until after this investigation period. As a literary critic practicing prior to Antoine's Theatre-Libre, it should be noted that Brunetière's literary campaign, his first and most important one, was a protest against the naturalistic doctrines and against Zola in particular. In Le Roman naturaliste (1883), "he took special pains to demolish the scientific pretensions of Zola and his followers, especially the cult of the 'human document.'"[59] Irving Babbitt considered Brunetière to be "the champion of the classic tradition and [that Brunetière] proclaimed the supremacy of reason in an epoch when art was given over to every form of morbid subjectivity."[60] Brunetière objected to the fact that the naturalists reduced man to the plane of animal instinct.

Brunetière's interest in the theatre came from an evaluation of the French classics. Les Époques du théâtre français was the published notes of fifteen lectures he gave at the Odéon between November 5, 1891

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[59]Irving Babbitt, The Masters of French Criticism (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1912), p. 306.

[60]Ibid., p. 304.

and February 25, 1892. While this work was concerned with the previous attainments in the French theatre, there ran throughout the lectures a theory of drama, evident only in a rather shapeless form. Brunetière clarified this theory in his preface to the Annales du théâtre et de la musique for 1893. Unfortunately, during the last decade of the nineteenth century, his argument "excited little or no discussion either in France or elsewhere."[61] In the preface to the English translation, the notes stated that it was not until 1903 that attention was paid to this work and then it was through Brander Matthews. Thus, only a brief reference needs to be made to Ferdinand Brunetiere.

The total picture obtained from this survey of the Comédie-Française's promptbooks and the boulevard theatres appears to be one of emphasizing well-worn conventions long after their usefulness had ceased. The acting and directing techniques employed at the Comédie were derived from the neo-classic and romantic eras. Little or no attempt was made to adjust the Comédie practices to any evolution of theatre styles. Augier, Dumas fils, and Sardou continued to dominate the Parisian theatrical situation. Sarcey, a conservative critic, did not help the situation, for he seemed to be content in keeping the conditions of the theatre the way they were. The bourgeoisie through their socioeconomic position began to exert an increasing influence in the arts and politics, and, in turn, they began to exert pressure upon the theatre through their attendance. In the 1880's, the conflict between naturalisme and romanticism and/or neo-classicism reached the

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[61] Ferdinand Brunetière, The Law of the Drama (New York: Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, 1914), p. 90.

theatre. André Antoine's importance arises from his transfer of naturalistic concepts to the theatre in such a manner as to achieve an artistic reality which was identifiable with the bourgeois audience.

CHAPTER IV

VARIOUS IMMEDIATE NATURALISTIC INFLUENCES UPON ANDRÉ ANTOINE

In the last chapter, the establishment of the theatrical environment during the period from 1875 to 1890 was made. Now, it is necessary to examine the philosophical and cultural thought which exerted a direct influence upon André Antoine himself; for obviously these attitudes shaped the form and content of André Antoine's theatrical concepts. It may be best to permit Antoine to describe the theatre conditions of his youth in his own words:

> In 1887, the French scene was completely in the hands of the illustrious trinity: Augier, Dumas fils, Sardou, who had reigned for twenty years, more or less, at the Comédie-Française. Perrin, who had just died, willingly said: "I have no need for new authors; one year Dumas, one year Sardou, and a third Augier; that is sufficient."[1]

Bearing in mind the practices of "the illustrious trinity" (as discussed in Chapter II), it is now possible to turn to the contemporary influences upon Antoine. Born in 1858, Antoine summarized his childhood and its theatrical experiences in the introduction to "Souvenirs" sur la Théâtre-Libre.

> I wish to relive and look into the source of that singular fever which, at that moment, transformed me into a kind of meteor that fell upon the theatrical plain. Neither my origin nor my very simple culture prepared me to be the equal of this adventure . . .

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[1]Andre Antoine, "Souvenirs" sur le Théâtre-Libre (Paris: Artheme Fayard & Cie, 1921), p. 6.

> My first impression of the theatre dates from Bata-clan, where my mother sometimes took me for 50 centimes with certain green cards which I still see; we had the right to a seat and a cherry brandy! Happy times! There we saw small comedies, some operettas which starred the young singer, Lucien Fugere. In the Marais where we lived, there was the Théâtre Saint-Antoine, Boulevard Richard-Lenoir, a miniature scene which represented the glory of 1850; Tacova played and so did Duvert and Lauzanne. But it was certain presentations of Beaumarchais which fired the brain of a brat with its most profound impressions. I still resee very well the melodramatic astonishments--Les Dix degrees du crime, La Dame de Sainte-Tropes, Atar-Bul ou la Vengence d'une negre and Richard the Third . . .
>
> One other memory is added to this. The pretty daughter of a neighbor played small roles at the Gaietie; led by her hand, one evening, I helped in the box of the prompter where she had placed me during the performance of La Chatte blanche. That epoch, the féeries were still living and adored by the youngsters; every evening, I saw the magnificent trunks unfold and the changement du vue. With my eyes rooted to the floor of the stage, I saw the silent trap door open to permit the machinist to pull the string for the stupifying changes. That initiation, through the underworld of the theatre, did not destroy the illusion; on the contrary, it had probably awakened within me a passionate taste for the mise en scéne.
>
> Outside of two or three chances, I never had another contact with the theatre [until I was more financially independent]; however, I followed the posters and my imagination worked with the help of the spectacles which I had been able to assist.[2]

Coming from bourgeois parents who were part of an industrial migration to Paris, Antoine grew up in a changing economic and political situation which has to be reviewed.

In commenting upon the political and economic environment of the era, it can be said that many conditions caused the insurrection which produced the Third Republic: the national humiliation of the defeat at Sedan was intolerable to the French people; the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War and the continued success of the Germans created

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[2] Ibid., p. 9ff.

an unfavorable impression on this proud nation; after the National Assembly had signed a peace treaty granting Alsace-Lorraine and five million francs indemnity to the Germans, the Parisians were determined to take action. As the war had upset the economic structure of France, the situation was well prepared for a revolt.

Coming out of both a foreign and a civil war, The Third Republic was, from the first, a prolonged experiment in the reconciliation of the opposing forces current in the French governments since the Revolution of 1789. The first act of the Third Republic was to restore popular sovereignty by making the open ballot obsolete. After 1871, a continued separation of the executive and the legislative was felt to be essential to this new government. As the economic life of France was based upon the small town or village, the new constitution organized the majority of the bourgeoisie into small governmental units. In the first years of the Third Republic, the peasantry by controlling the local and provincial government was able to dictate to the national government. After the depression of 1873, the peasantry made some badly needed economic improvements when they found themselves able to exert indirect control.

> The social bases of the Third Republic had its centre of gravity in the middle classes. Whereas the peasantry, from the first, gained solid advantages from the Republic in the form of consolidation and protection for their property; and the industrial workers gained freedom to organize themselves for collective bargaining and direct action; the middle class found, in the parliamentary Republic, an avenue for a career, power and wealth which gained them ultimate political predominance.[3]

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[3]David Thompson, Democracy in France: The Third Republic (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 53.

During the period from 1876 to 1914, the middle class began to dominate and maintain a position in shaping the political scene; and at the same time, the greatest industrial expansion France had witnessed took place.

From 1875 to 1881, France experienced an economic recovery which rivaled that of 1852-57. Unfortunately, a depression began in 1882 and France did not fully recover from it until 1897, though some temporary gains were made in 1887 and in 1889. The increasingly strong position of the bourgeoisie was due to two conditions: the helplessness of the aristocracy and the placation of the peasantry with their economic gains of the first years of the Third Republic. Now the French society had become bourgeois, and the arts and literature reflected their tastes. The shifting of subject matter and its expression of reality was a direct result. Commenting upon this upheaval which preceded the Third Republic, Antoine wrote:

> I saw . . . some real tragedies, the war of 1870, the Siege, the Commune, some escapades which terrified my poor mother who conducted me everywhere, to the ramparts, behind the national guard, across the insurrection walls, to the two spots of the firing on the rue Haze, to the trials of May on the Place de Bastille.[4]

As the first years of the Third Republic seemed charged with an intellectual, artistic, political, and socioeconomic excitement, it is not surprising to find that André Antoine acquired an education without the benefit of the then available formal schooling. The eldest of four children, he was sent to work after the Franco-Prussian War. With a little money in his pocket and an inquisitive mind, Antoine discovered the popular publication Les Bons Romans, which reprinted the better

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[4]Antoine, op. cit., p. 11.

current novels by such authors as Dumas père, Eugene Sue, and George Sand. For a job, Antoine found work in the Library Firman-Didot on the rue Jacob near the left bank.

> In my office, a young man had taken me to be his friend; it was an escapade from Murger--our pockets always running over with books and newspapers and with a beard and the romantic hair of all the intellectuals of the epooh. This lad, kind and studious, opened the horizons of thought and art [to me]. After leaving the office, we passed a small library on the rue Saint-André des Arts where my companion stocked himself. It was still a feat to go on Sundays to the rue Saint-Benoit, to buy the Republic des lettres which Mendes founded and published L'Assomoir.
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> Then, during the two or three years I was guided by my comrade, I familiarized myself with the realistic movement . . . . . .
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> The Library Didot was only two steps from the L'École des Beaux-Arts. Saving all my money for newspapers and books, I did not lunch of course. Each day, between noon and one o'clock, I occupied my leisure by going to the quais and putting my nose in the boxes of second hand books . . . In that period, I passionately explored the Louvre, the Luxembourge, and all the other Parisian museums. By chance one day, I entered the lecture of Taine on the History of Art and then no longer missed a lesson.[5]

The excitement of making the rounds of the libraries--the Nationale, the Mazarine, and especially the Sainte-Genevieve which was open in the evening--and the museums opened a creative world for Antoine; during his adolescent years, the freedom of earning his own living gave him a new independence. During the late 1870's, Hugo returned from exile and was honored by the Odéon with a revival of his Ruy Blas and by the Comédie-Française with Hernani. Performing then at the Comédie were such actors as Bressant, Got, Delaunay, Coquelin

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[5] Ibid., p. 11ff.

the elder, and Thiron besides Mmes Plessis, Madeline Brohan, and Favart. Writing of his theatre attendance during these impressionable years, Antoine commented:

> Since I went to the theatre every evening, my expenses were large and I was soon out of resources; so I became a member of the claque [in 1875]. . .
>
> As I wished to view the great actors from a nearer vantage point, Father Masqueiller, the head of the supernumeraries at the Comédie, enlisted my services. For several years, I was in all the repertoire and kept both my eyes and ears open to what passed in the theatre. Yet, I did not neglect attending the Gymnase, the Vaudeville, the Porte-Saint-Martin, the Ambigu, and somehow the vocation of being an actor mysteriously appeared . . .
>
> About this time, I enrolled in a course at a diction school on the rue Vaugirard . . . I had achieved the taste for the theatre and engaged in the study of the classics . . .
>
> I presented myself, uselessly of course, at the examination for admission to the Conservatoire; then, like today, it was a visionary hope to enter the door without any particular recommendations . . . After that setback, I renounced this career. Besides, the military service had arrived and those five years were an eternity.[6]

> Around 1886, I returned from service and joined the Gas Company. Life was monotonous and laborious as a 150 franc a month employee, but it was a chance to live. Supplementary work at the Palais du Justice helped . . . At the Gas Company, it meant working thirteen or fourteen hours a day. I became an excellent employee but without any vitality and without any dream of adventure.[7]

After serving in the army, there was nothing vital in his life since he had been unable to achieve his hope of becoming an actor. To ease this boredom, André Antoine joined the Cercle Gaulois which produced plays occasionally. These productions, essentially copies of popular Comédie-Française works, were reconstructed by a retired military

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[6] Ibid., p. 13ff.

[7] Ibid., p. 15.

man known as Père Krauss who managed this group and owned its small theatre.

It has been shown that the intellectual atmosphere which affected André Antoine during his formative years was derived from the Second Empire while his intellectual maturity was reached in the Third Republic. Antoine, as an intelligent bourgeois, was dissatisfied with his form of existence and felt the need to fill this vacuum. Being exposed to the artistic tumult of the era, Antoine could not help but be aware of the marked contrast between the old theatrical theories and practices and the new concepts of naturalisme. Consciousness of this paradox led Antoine to leave the Cercle Gaulois in an attempt to seek a theatrical expression which was relative to his background. Now the promulgators of naturalistic concepts which directly effected Antoine became essential to our investigation.

Briefly, the derivation of concepts of naturalisme which Taine (considered by many to be the prime philosopher of the naturalistic school) held must be traced. Beginning with the second quarter of the century, Jules Michelet dominated French historical research and influenced literary criticism as well. While Michelet, unfortunately, was very opinionated, his influence upon various later forms of literary thought and scholarship was significant. Michelet's work was expanded by Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve's more rational study of history and literature. Sainte-Beuve's conservative re-evaluation of Michelet's method modified the tendency toward a too emotional approach to criticism and permitted the proper development of critical and philosophical thought.

Hyppolyte Taine and Ernest Renan were considered Sainte-Beuve's heirs and were important to the artistic maturity of André Antoine. While they explored different areas of thought--Taine in literature and art and Renan in religion--their attitudes directly influenced Antoine and his essence of naturalisme. Antoine found in their theories a means to apply a form of scientific positivism to the theatre.

Hyppolyte Taine and Ernest Renan

On the death of Taine, Antoine wrote in his memoirs on March 5, 1893, that Taine was "one of the men to whom I owe the most."[8] To ascertain the reason and extent of Antoine's statement, a review of Taine's pertinent ideas is necessary. This investigation of Taine's principles will show a perspective that is applicable to Antoine's intellectual development.

To understand the lineage of Taine's ideas, the ideology of Sainte-Beuve needs to be summarized. While accepting a theory of neo-classicism, Sainte-Beuve felt that his own era was on a descending curve in relation to idealism and protested the violence and the excess of Hugo's romanticism and Balzac's réalisme. On the rise of réalisme, he stated: "I believe to [my] great regret (and I held out against the belief as long as I could) that literature is on the high road to corruption."[9] Though an elderly gentleman at the time of the manifestation of réalisme, Sainte-Beuve felt that the disillusionment of the Second

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[8]Ibid., p. 289.

[9]Irving Babbitt, The Masters of Modern French Criticism (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1912), p. 136.

Empire would find its philosophical and artistic results in the future--in the Third Republic, and in naturalisme.

Possibly the most important facet of Sainte-Beuve's method was his examination of literature as a "document" of a previous age. Sainte-Beuve began his network of relativity by establishing a relationship of the document to its creator. This bond linked the author to his family, his race, and his age. The final step in this examination connected the author's era to the preceding one.[10] Sainte-Beuve, a particularizer, stressed the essential details which were relevant to the area being examined; and thus, Sainte-Beuve chronicled the artist and his milieu. The distinctive part of Sainte-Beuve's method was his humanistic approach which was completely in contrast to the trend of the era. While admitting his indebtedness to Sainte-Beuve, Taine was most influenced by the critics which Sainte-Beuve found unacceptable to his idealistic nature. Taine appeared to revel in a rampant naturalisme.[11]

The naturalist movement in the second half of the nineteenth century contained a strongly dispassionate element which was derived from the application of the scientific measurement and its mechanical approach to nature. The objectivity of réalisme was in sharp contrast to the highly emotional examination of the romantic school as exemplified by Michelet's study of the French Revolution.

According to Taine, literature was forced to become a "mechanical problem" when a materialistic quality grew out of the impartial

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[10] Ibid., p. 151.

[11] Ibid., p. 220.

exploration of reality. "The only difference which separates . . . moral problems from physical ones, is that [of] the magnitude and direction [which] cannot be valued or computed in the first [the moral problem] as in the second [the physical ones]." Taine concluded, like a scientist, that "if these forces could be measured, we might deduce from them a formula [which would] characterize the future civilizations," for "each [element] has his moral history and his special structure, with some governing disposition and some dominant feature."[12] Taine examined these "structures" which modified the "governing dispositions" and their "dominant features."

In his increasing awareness of naturalisme, Taine sought to discover Man as a unit. He desired to examine the inner quality of Man which was concealed beneath the outer one.[13] "The man who acts, the man corporeal and visible" were vital to Taine's image; for man was composed of "faculties and feelings" through which "every action which we see involves an infinite association of reasonings, emotions, sensations new and old which have served to spring it to light."[14] Through the study of this "underworld" of the individual, Taine broadened and developed his "levels" of understanding. Moving from the particular to the general on a grander scale than Sainte-Beuve, Taine determined the generalities which established a place for the work and its creator. By arriving at these conclusions in an anticipatory manner, Taine

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[12]H. A. Taine, History of English Literature, translated by H. Van Laun (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1904), p. 23ff.

[13]Ibid., p. 6.

[14]Ibid., p. 5ff.

distorted the true value of his work. Taine's scientific method stated: "Let us, then, seek the simple phenomena for moral qualities, as we seek them for physical qualities; and let us take the first fact that presents itself."[15] In justifying these generalities, Taine said:

> There is . . . a system in human sentiments and ideas; and this system has for its motive power certain general traits, certain characteristics of the intellect and the heart, common to men of one race, age, or country.
> . . . . . .
> Images or representations of things, which float within him, exist for a time, are effaced, and return again, after he has been looking upon a tree, an animal, any visible object. The subject-matter, the development whereof is double, either speculative or practical, accordingly as the representations resolve themselves into a general concept of an active resolution.[16]

Thus, Taine summarized through implication that the whole Man was only an abridgement of the previous era and society.

In his preface to History of English Literature, Taine explained the division of his method into three steps--the race, the surroundings, the epoch. The document was understood when the race which produced it was delineated. Race, according to Taine, was interpreted to mean "the innate and hereditary dispositions which man brings with him into the work, and which as a rule are united with the marked difference in the temperament and structure of the body."[17] In the search for racial generalities, the key words which designated the race were character and temperament.

> Man, forced to accomodate himself to circumstances, contracts a temperament and a character corresponding to them; and his character, like his temperament, is so much

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[15] Ibid., p. 11. Author's italics.

[16] Ibid., p. 13.

[17] Ibid., p. 17.

> more stable, as the external impression is made upon him [by] more numerous repetitions, and is transmitted to his progeny by a more ancient descent.[18]

In defining his second step, Taine felt that man did not act independently, for "nature surrounds him."[19] These surroundings were "prolonged situations" and contained "persistent and powerful pressures," which "molded and modeled" the race from generation to generation.[20]

The third and final phase of Taine's method was the investigation of the epoch. Being a result of the race and surroundings, the epoch illustrated the interaction of these two phases. In a cycle of changing epochs, there was a fluctuation in the predominance between race and surroundings. The epoch "which follows must spring from its [predecessor's] death."[21] To summarize the ideas of race, surroundings, and epoch, Taine declared that the race was the "permanent impulse" while the surroundings were a "given quality" which produced an "acquired momentum" of the epoch.

Turning to art, Taine sought to define art and its field. Since he felt that definitions had to be reborn each day to assure any progress, his definition has an enfolding quality. As this progress was a seemingly rapid one, the documentation of any definition had to indicate

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[18] Ibid., p. 18.

[19] Ibid., p. 19.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 21.

this constant evolution. Taine's definition of art attempted to combine these elements.

> It is the object of a work of art to manifest some essential character, and to employ as a means of expression an aggregate of connected parts, the relationship of which the artist combines and modifies.[22]

In stressing the general through the particular, Taine's influence appeared in naturalisme; for the importance of the details in reality played a dominant part in completing the totality of race, surroundings, and epoch. Antoine's interest in the specific character in his exact surroundings might be rooted in these concepts.

The other important heir of Sainte-Beuve who affected Antoine was Ernest Renan. Renan's importance emanated from the fact that he applied a scientific analysis to religious thought. While studying for the priesthood, Renan developed a growing skepticism which was the result of his historical and philosophical research. From this study, Renan felt a need for scientific explanations or justifications of many of the dogmas of Catholicism.[23]

Several of Renan's important philosophical discussions were cast in the form of dialogues. The collected works were titled Dialogue Philosophique, and was published in 1876. The contents of these dialogues examined Christian dogma in order to justify a scientific hell and inquisition besides examining the resurrection from a scientific perspective. Renan, in these dialogues, developed a theory of

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[22]H. A. Taine, Lectures on Art, trans. John Durand (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1901), p. 81.

[23]Babbitt, op. cit., p. 259.

immortality through science. From the general tone of his works, Renan had a remarkable gift for surrounding science with a very religious atmosphere.

The intention of this scientific examination of religion was to substitute its results for religious doctrine. For Renan, "God appeared to be universally in the process of becoming" which grew from man's continued and blind striving "toward the full consciousness."[24] God was an emergent God who developed as the individual and society matured. The evolution of God was to be "achieved as some far-off, inscrutable, and divine result" of this new interpretation of old dogmas.[25] According to Renan, immortality could never be an individual matter.

The reflection of these concepts in Antoine's theatrical policies at the Théâtre-Libre was seen in his request for permission to produce Renan's The Abbess of Jouarre. Unfortunately, he wrote to Renan after the scandal of Antoine's production of La Fin du Lucie Pellegrin. The conditions which Renan demanded could not be met by Antoine even though he tried; Renan had insisted upon an established actress playing the Abbess. Antoine attempted to interest Sarah Bernhardt in this venture only to be rudely dismissed by the actress after a short interview. The climactic step in the transfer of Renan's ideas into theatrical terms was temporarily delayed.

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[24]Lewis Freeman Mott, Ernest Renan (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1921), p. 445.

[25]Ibid.

THE DE GONCOURT BROTHERS

Antoine, by constantly producing plays derived from the novels by the de Goncourt brothers, displayed his admiration for their work as an important contribution to naturalisme. To locate their position in the literary development, it may be stated that the de Goncourt brothers were an important link between Balzac and Zola in the development toward the naturalistic novel. Had it not been for the de Goncourts' continued application of a more advanced form of réalisme to the novel, Zola would have found it even more difficult to be accepted by the public.

The de Goncourt brothers, Jules and Edmond, were a study in paradox for their work contrasted their life with their ideas. Their journal recorded their sensitivity to all the details of life by describing events, friends, and various surroundings. When the de Goncourts were unable to reconcile a prominent figure's style of writing to his bourgeois existence, the brothers became disillusioned with this individual as a thinker. For example, the de Goncourts had been greatly impressed by the philosophical writings of Sainte-Beuve; but they became completely disappointed with him and his work when they saw that his apartment contained the most disagreeable elements of bourgeois life. The brothers reasoned that one's work was a reflection of one's life; therefore, the writer and his work had to contain common elements. Thus, the bourgeois portion of an individual's living conditions were in conflict with his cultured ideas and writings. But, the brothers de Goncourt did not completely follow their own dictum.

In contrast with their assumed culture, the de Goncourt brothers did not explore their own social milieu. The majority of their works examined the middle class or the lower-middle class. In their examination of reality, a fascinating portion of their novels was devoted to an attempt to reform the middle class. By studying the needs and their germination in the decline of the middle class individual, the de Goncourts hoped to illustrate the need for the reformation of the social system.

While the brothers possessed different writing assets, they were tightly knit into a single writing unit. Jules appeared the more clever and witty; Edmond, not as quick, achieved great quantities of work through persistence. When working together, Jules supplied the brilliant reproduction of everyday conversation of the middle class. Edmond furnished the ideas and appeared to be the one who pulled the novel into shape. Since Jules was the stylist, Edmond usually bowed to his judgment in the final stage of their work.

In working as a team, they developed a standard procedure. It was their policy to discuss the plot and its action in a detailed manner. Then, each wrote the same small section. It was compared and the best portions were assembled into one unit. As a result, their subjects "decomposed into a number of distinct tableaux, the work come to life with its various parts." "It appears that a list of required tableaux were drawn up for each novel, the beginning and the end pieces written first, the remaining passages fitted in later--or as [Alidor] Delizant [their first biographer], puts it, 'the rest of the book was put together haphazardly, in no particular order, until the whole framework was covered

with threads.'"[26] Their plays, Henriette Maréchal and La Patrie en Danger, contained evidence of a similar technique.

Actually, the employment of a series of tableaux as a plot device conveniently suited their subject matter. In the portrayal of the deterioration of the mind and body, the isolation of specific phases of this decay dramatically and effectively illuminated this decline. The brothers' interest in degeneration defined a pattern of subject matter which became increasingly popular in the naturalistic novel over the following three decades.

The journal which the brothers kept served as an excellent record of the life in the nineteenth century and illustrated their oneness in thinking and writing. Within this journal was found discussions of their associates and the many sources of their writings. The journal, a frank discussion of their life and idiosyncrasies, was a record of their observations. The entry on Sunday, December 23, 1860, is an example. That day was spent at the Charity Hospital in observing its activity. These observations, needed for the novel Soeur Philomène, emphasized the importance of reality in the novel. In reading the resultant novel, the critics were amazed to learn that the brothers had been in a hospital for only ten hours. According to the standards of that day, the atmosphere of the hospital was conveyed in a powerful manner; for the authors projected a seemingly thorough knowledge of a

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[26]Robert Baldick, The Goncourts (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1960), p. 13.

hospital. The brothers were very proud of their ability to observe details of life and apply them to the action of their novels.[27]

The use of the journal was only a small part of their research techniques. The brothers also read many books analogous to their projected subject. For a novel on religious mania, works on various cases of religious conversion besides works on mysticism and philosophy were read. For the portrait of a child, convulsive and dumb, the de Goncourts read Brachet's Memoire sur le convulsions des enfants. For their portrait of Charles Demailly, in Les Hommes de Lettres (1860), they resorted to Esquiol's monumental treatise on insanity. Les Hommes de Lettres was considered one of the great works of réalisme; however, in reviewing this novel today, it is evident that many types of insanity were compounded into a single one. These illustrations serve to reveal how the scientific approach had touched the de Goncourts. Though they had assumed an aristocratic attitude toward life, the brothers were continually being touched by bourgeois trends.

To justify their writing of the realistic novel, the brothers said, in 1860, "the present day novel is based on documents taken from hearsay or from life, just as history is based on written documents. Historians are storytellers of the past, and the novelists are storytellers of the present."[28] Expanding this thought, the brothers believed that

> There is left in our life nothing but one consuming interest--the passion for the study of reality. Apart from

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[27]Edmond & Jules de Goncourt, The Goncourt Journals (1851-1870), trans. Lewis Galantiere (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937), p. 94.

[28]Ibid., p. 17.

> this there is only tedium and emptiness for us. Indeed, we have galvanized history as far as it was possible to do so, and galvanized it with the truth, a truth truer than that of other historians, and we have rediscovered reality. But now the truth is dead and is no longer of interest to us. We are like men for whom, following years of drawing from a wax model, the academy of the living has suddenly been revealed--or, rather, life itself with its entrails still warm and its tripe still palpitating.[29]

An essential part of de Goncourt's naturalisme is their fascination with the ugly and, many times, the repulsive. It was through the observation of and the description of the most elementary aspects of life that they felt naturalisme approached its goal in the expression of reality. Therefore, the last sentence in the above quotation epitomizes their goals in the novel; for the de Goncourts subscribed to the fact that writing could become realistic only through the research of the psychology of the individual. Thereby, art and truth were combined.[30]

The unfortunate incidents surrounding the production of the de Goncourts' first play does not permit an accurate evaluation of their remarks. After writing the novel, Germinie Lacerteux, the brothers wrote the play, Henriette Maréchal. After the machinations which occurred at the rehearsals had discouraged the sensitive brothers, the public reception of this play further disheartened the pair. After a few performances at the Théâtre-Française (the first being on December 5, 1865), Henriette Maréchal was removed from the repertory due to the

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[29] Ibid., p. 200.

[30] Edmond & Jules de Goncourt, Prefaces et Manifetes Litteraires (Paris: G. Charpentier et Cie, 1888), p. 22.

violent demonstrations which it provoked. While the brothers felt the demonstrations were directed toward them and their play, the demonstrations were primarily political. The students of Paris chose this play as a protest to the Imperial regime. While some critics wanted to consider this demonstration as the "battle of Hernani of Réalisme," this comparison contributed too much importance to the mediocre play, besides placing undue emphasis upon the political nature of these demonstrations.[31]

Prior to writing their second play, Le Patrie en Danger, political pamphlets published and written during the French Revolution were read by the brothers. This fact was recorded in their journal on December 21, 1866.[32] The play, written during the following year, was not published until 1873. Antoine's production of this play was an important part of his naturalistic concepts of staging. When this play was produced by Antoine, the critics lamented its apparent lack of plot saying that Le Patrie en Danger was just a series of seemingly unrelated tableaux. This episodic method, similar to the one employed in the de Goncourt novels, was still not completely accepted by the audience. Yet, Hennique's La Mort du duc d'Enghein (performed by Antoine three months earlier) also employed this technique.

Antoine recognized the de Goncourts' influence upon the naturalistic movement. The acknowledgment of this fact can be seen in Antoine's production of their two plays and three other plays that were adaptations

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[31]Baldick, op. cit., p. 40.

[32]de Goncourt, Journals . . ., p. 230.

of their novels. The apparent success of the de Goncourt plays at the Théâtre-Libre pleased Edmond de Goncourt; he said that the effectiveness of these productions came "from the combination of delicate feelings, style, and actions with theatrical realism" which Antoine captured in his theatre.[33]

The essential importance of the de Goncourts in naturalisme was derived from their subject matter. The degeneration of the mind and body used as thematic material opened a new avenue for naturalistic art forms. The degenerative aspect which fascinated the de Goncourt brothers and the bourgeoisie was the minute detailing of reality to such an extent that truth almost depended upon this type of subject matter. This truth was obtained by the de Goncourts in their observation and recounting of "life itself with its entrails still warm and its tripe still palpitating." After the de Goncourt brothers, the descent of the naturalistic writer into the bowels of his subject became one of the characteristics of naturalisme. Similar subject matter was employed by the playwrights whose plays Antoine produced at the Théâtre-Libre.

Émile Zola

In France, Émile Zola was the primary link between the literary and theatrical phases of naturalisme. Prior to founding the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine felt it necessary to associate Zola with his enterprise. While having written extensively about naturalisme in the theatre,

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[33]Edmond & Jules de Goncourt, Pages from the Goncourt Journals, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 333.

Zola is primarily known for his application of naturalisme to the novel.

In an interview with Louis Trebor, published in Le Figaro on March 6, 1893, Émile Zola pointed to the precursors of his ideas.

> About the age of 25, I read him [Taine] and in reading him, the theorist and positivist developed within me. I am able to say that I utilized in my books his theories on heredity and on the milieu and that I have applied them to the novel.[34]

Many years before this interview, Zola, in an 1861 letter to a childhood friend, Jean-Baptistin Baille, alluded to the fact that he was writing an essay entitled "On Science and Civilization in their relations with Poetry." This article, only recently published (1949), confirmed Zola's conversion at an early age to an aesthetic creed which would remain for the duration of his life. Zola was devoted to the observations of nature and its injection into literature through the employment of recent scientific theories concerning natural phenomena.

The influence of Taine upon Zola is outlined in his essay H. A. Taine, artiste, first published in La Revue Contemporaie on February 15, 1886. In this article, Zola considered Taine's masterpiece to be "L'Histoire de la litterature anglaise." Taine's introduction to this work, as has been illustrated, was the expression of his scientific examination of literature while the body of this work was devoted to its application.

Zola, in this article, frequently alluded to the writer or critic as a doctor or a scientist. Like the scientist, the artist made notes

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[34]F. W. J. Hemmings, Émile Zola (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 39.

of his observations and gradually began to combine these notes. The proper utilization of these notes meant that they had to be assembled in a detached manner. Neither to conclude nor to pose any precepts was an essential feature in the application of scientific positivism to literature.[35] According to Zola, the literary scientist, as he liked to consider the novelist, had to expose, examine, and dissect the life around him without commenting upon his findings.[36]

Zola drew constant inspiration from the works of Taine, especially the History of English Litterature and Philosophy of Art (the published notes of Taine's lectures as "professeur le cours d'ethetique" at the "École des Beaux-Arts"). From Taine, Zola synthesized a method that believed "art is the product of man and his times":

> It is part of history; the works are no longer the eventual result of diverse influences, like war or peace. They are made neither of this nor of that; it is made from life, from the free personality; a good work is a living and original work which man draws from his flesh and from his heart; a good work is a work to which the people have contributed, the result of their taste and their manners during the entire epoch.[37]

Zola's definition of "a work of art" is a combination of romantic and contemporary elements. From the romantic era and from Proudhon, Zola extracted the power of each individual artist as a medium for examining nature. From Taine and contemporary thought, Zola became oriented toward the scientific and determinist objectivity of the

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[35]Émile Zola, Les Oeuvres Complete, Vol. XXX: Mes Haines (Paris: Francois Bernouard, 1927), p. 163. Author's translation.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., p. 165. Author's translation.

naturalistic trend. By incorporating these aspects of his literary heritage, Zola could define "a work of art" as "a corner of creation seen through a temperament."[38] Zola balanced the individual's emotional reaction with his analytical reaction as a means to achieve creativity.

Zola emphasized the fact that reality and the needs of the artistic personality were vital parts of the art work. An unrestricted use of the artistic instincts did not tolerate any regimentation; laws which governed the ideas of beauty and form hampered the artist's expression. Zola insisted that any laws restricting the artistic liberty were fatal to the artist and to humanity. Taine placed the artist, according to Zola, before nature which permitted the artist to render nature in accordance with what he had observed with his eyes and his mind. The artist "has a mission to render and use the objects as he sees them, holding up their details as a new creation."[39] Zola reaffirmed Taine's goal--to develop the artist as an individual instead of one who rationalized the content and shaped a painting before producing it.

Zola typified the current movement as one "d'enquête et d'analyse" and informed us that it was an investigation of "l'experience."[40] Logically, literature should be an investigation of man in his surroundings. Now, man could no longer be divorced from either himself or his environment; for man influenced man and this reaction had to be reflected in literature.

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[38] Ibid., p. 24. Author's translation.

[39] Zola, op. cit., XXX, p. 176. Author's translation.

[40] Ibid., XXXII, p. 16. Author's translation.

Zola's greatest impact in the theatre was provided by a series of articles from 1876 to 1880. Years after writing his weekly critical theatre articles for Bien Public (from April 10, 1876 to June 24, 1878) and Le Voltaire (from July 9, 1878 to August 31, 1880), Zola collected and published them in two volumes--Le Naturalisme au théâtre (1881) and Nos Auteurs dramatique (1881). For some unknown reason, several of his weekly critical articles were not included in the above two volumes; and only recently have these articles been republished.

The first articles in the first volume contain the general argument for naturalisme. Here, Zola stressed the demand and the need for various theatrical studies molded in accordance with Taine's monumental work. Of prime importance, according to Zola, was a work dealing with the history of the French Theatre. This history would portray "the slow development, from the medieval mystery play to the modern comedies, of the naturalistic evolution," and the departure "from the most wounding and the most cruel conventions and how little by little, they [the conventions] diminished from year to year, until they approached the advantage of the natural and the human realities."[41] This proposed history would include a discussion of the "decors, the costumes, the acting style, the plays, and the results of the battle for naturalisme.[42] Zola had assumed that the result of any theatrical development was naturalisme.

Zola's definition of naturalisme contained a mixture of Rousseau's return to nature and the spirit of inquiry characteristic of the

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[41] Ibid., XXXII, p. 89. Author's translation.

[42] Ibid., XXXII, p. 89. Author's translation and italics.

Age of Reason. Naturalisme was part of an artistic evolution which returned art to nature and became "the study of the body and other phenomena that have been grounded on experience and proceeds by analysis."[43] A vital part of this definition is the fact that, for Zola, it was an attack upon romanticism.

In attacking romanticism, Zola also attacked neoclassicism. Admitting that romanticism was necessary for any evolution toward naturalisme, Zola felt that romanticism, like neoclassicism, had become sterile. Zola believed that romanticism helped naturalisme by the destruction of some neoclassic concepts; neoclassicism had given too much attention to the decoration and "figurations," thereby forcing the action to the perimeter of the scene. Zola stressed the fact that the romantic era achieved one great and glorious reform. He said, "it made us what we are, that is to say, free artists."[44]

In applying Taine's principles, Zola studied the theatre by moving from a brief survey of drama to specific requirements which naturalisme demanded of drama. To establish his ideas of naturalisme in the theatre, Zola explained the apparent need for a change in the theatrical status quo.

> For an understanding of the necessity of a revolution in the theatre, it is necessary to establish clearly where we are today. During the classic period, tragedy reigned absolute mistress. Tragedy was rigid and intolerant, not enduring any deliberate whim, holding the best minds to its

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[43] Ibid., XXXI, p. 91ff. Author's translation.

[44] Ibid., XXXII, p. 14. Author's translation. It should be noted here that in his critical articles of 1876-1880, Zola interchangeably e employed the words "nature," "creation," and "reality" without changing their meaning.

> inexorable laws. When an author attempted to remove any of these laws, he was condemmed as an unhealthy mind, incoherent and bizarre; he was regarded almost as a dangerous man. However, in this very narrow formula, the genius builds the same monuments of marble and brass. The formula was born in the Greek and Latin renaissance; its creators accommodated it and found the framework sufficient for large works. Later, with the arrival of imitators, the stalk grew more and more slender and weak. The faults of the formula appeared; we have seen them, ridiculous and untrue, uniformly untrue, continuously declared but unsupportable. Besides, the authority of tragedy was such that it took two hundred years for it to become unfashionable. Little by little, it had endeavored to retain its subtleness without achieving it; for its principal authorities prohibited, under pain of death, all concessions to a new spirit.[45]

Zola came to the conclusion that plays written under specific restriction were mediocre, for they could contain only a slight relationship to contemporary life. Normally the evolution from one generation to another produced some modification of artistic rules; yet, a just evolution was not permitted under the dictates of neoclassicism. Zola called for a revolution, violent if necessary; a change had to be achieved in the development of art forms.

While Zola's principles of dramaturgy were never clearly defined, the assumption can be made that he believed a play's action evolved from the direct observation of people in action. In the discussion of characterization and the mise en scène, his most positive statements are made on naturalisme in the theatre. Zola's discourse on characterization contrasted the neoclassic and romantic writers and their means of obtaining characterization. According to him, romantic characters

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[45] Ibid., XXXII, p. 12. Author's translation.

were only "pasteboard dolls" filled with "enormous silliness." Moving toward the essence of naturalistic characterization, Zola believed

> that their characterizations were no longer living beings, but some sentiments, some arguments, some passions deduced and argued. This false framework made heroes of marble or pasteboard. A man of flesh and blood with his own originality was out of time with the fashion in a legendary epoch. Thus, we see some characters of tragedy or of the romantic drama walking and stiffening in an attitude as a representation of power, another of patriotism, a third of superstition, and a fourth of maternal love and the following; all are abstract ideas that pass in a row. Never the complete analysis of an organism, never the character of which the muscles and the brain work as in nature.[46]

In enlarging this argument, Zola related action to the mise en scéne. The life of modern individuals was under an "empire" of environmental influences. "Vivant notre view sur la scene!"[47] Zola reasoned that the employment of the seventeenth-century stage decor for action with contemporary characters was idiotic. Since a person's actions were influenced by his environment, the arrangement of the furniture in the mise en scéne had to observe and duplicate nature. Disposing the furniture across the stage near the footlights was now out of the question. The setting had to be a facsimile of a room.

> Do we not feel more interested when an exact decor adds to the action? An exact decor, a salon for example with its furniture, its garden, its knick-knacks, placed in a true situation says where we are at and speaks of the habits of its characters. The actors are at ease for they live there the life which they ought to live! It is an intimate, natural, and charming corner. I know that it is necessary to see the play instead of seeing the theme played.[48]

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[46] Ibid., XXXII, p. 23ff. Author's translation.

[47] Ibid., XXXII, p. 76.

[48] Ibid., p. 77. Author's translation.

Zola believed that there was a direct relationship between the actor and the decor. When the decor concerned itself only with defining the environment of the play rather than being an independent design, the actor would then be able to turn his attention upon his proper responsibilities--the technique of acting or the becoming of the character. By asking the actors to observe life, he meant that they had to notice the alternating voice qualities which were employed at various times and to study the actions of people. Each artist involved in a production must make his own observations directly from "nature" and assimilate them into his craft.

Though his plays were unsuccessful as expressions of naturalisme, Zola was able to distill the essential naturalistic ideas of Taine and other critics of neo-classicism and romanticism and to suggest their application to acting, playwriting, and the mise en scéne. During the period from 1876-1880 as a drama critic, Zola served as the fundamental link between the literary and the theatrical in naturalisme when he defined the theories and practices of naturalisme in the theatre. Believing the individual personality of the artist was the screen through which reality was transmitted to the art, Zola asked the playwrights to observe nature before writing; he told the actor to observe and study life before attempting any characterization; and he felt that the designer should achieve a unifying effect by creating on the stage the environment of the specific locale for each play. Through his definition of a work of art as a corner of creation seen through an artistic personality, Zola endeavored to apply scientific objectivism to the theatre. The relationship of Zola's ideas to Antoine's Théâtre-Libre

will be seen in the next chapter, which discusses the features of the Théâtre-Libre. From the first, Antoine sensed the necessity of forming an association between his work and Zola as the foremost propagandizer of naturalisme.

HENRI BECQUE

Since Henri Becque was the first theatre personality to affect Antoine directly, it is necessary to relate the nature of this contact and investigate its possible influence. Becque's effect upon Antoine was derived from their association during the rehearsals of a play by this playwright. Thus, the need to understand the background which led to this contact besides the contact itself is important.

The Comédie-Française, two years after having produced Les Courbeaux in 1882, refused La Parisienne. This refusal was a rather bitter blow to Becque; the administration of this national theatre had asked Becque to write a play for them, and it seems that La Parisienne was the play. After the Comédie production of Les Courbeaux, Perrin indefinitely postponed the production of La Parisienne. The relations between Becque and the Comédie, which were never very strong, now became bitter. In 1885, when the Comédie changed administrations from Perrin to Claretie, the relations did not improve greatly, though Claretie considered Becque to be his friend.

The delay in the production of La Parisienne at the Comédie prompted Sarcey to suggest, in Le Temps, that it might be interesting to see Gabrielle Réjane (the leading lady of the rival national theatre) perform Clotilde. The leading literary salon was held by Mme Aubernon

de Nerville; in May 1888, she decided to have this play performed at one of her gatherings. Rejane, being cordial with Mme de Nerville, accepted an invitation to appear in this projected private performance.

André Antoine was suggested to Mme de Nerville as an excellent person to portray LaFont. Le Corbeiller, who frequented both Mme de Nerville's salon and the Théâtre-Libre (he later wrote a play for Antoine), made this suggestion and it was up to him to persuade Antoine to join this endeavor. While reluctant at first, Antoine eventually accepted the invitation when Becque approved of Antoine in the role.

In his memoirs, Antoine stated that he was very uneasy at the first rehearsal. His restive attitude was of a twofold nature. First, on that evening, the Théâtre-Française was giving its premiere performance of Le Baiser--a Banville play first produced at the Théâtre-Libre. Antoine probably was anxious to evaluate the Comédie's production of this play. Second, some of Antoine's reluctance may have stemmed from having to perform with a professional, Réjane; Antoine considered himself an amateur. (The remainder of the cast was made up of minor professionals and Mme de Nerville's friends.) Yet, to neither Becque nor Rejane would Antoine indicate his dilemma.[49]

The rehearsals which began about the tenth of May were attended by Becque and it was during this period that Antoine became influenced by Becque's concept of theatre. From the memoirs of both Becque and Antoine, it was evident that Becque maintained a controlling hand in these rehearsals. Alexandre Arnaoutovitch, Becque's principal biographer,

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[49]Antoine, op. cit., p. 93. Also see Henri Becque, Souvenirs d'un auteur dramatique (Paris: Bibliotheque artistique et litterature, 1895), p. 169.

believed that Réjane sensed Antoine's reluctance to appear with her and, therefore, relied upon Becque for suggestions for characterization.[50] At the first rehearsal, Antoine recorded in his memoirs that Becque waltzed Réjane around the room in an attempt to develop a more relaxed rehearsal atmosphere. This action apparently succeeded for no record of a personality conflict has been recorded during this endeavor. As the rehearsals progressed, Réjane invited Antoine to her apartment for additional work on their scenes.[51]

The single performance of La Parisienne was well received. One of the critics present commented, at a later date, upon the results. Jules Lemaitre was enchanted with the play and the performances of Rejane and Antoine. In his newspaper column in Journal des debats, on December 17, 1890, he wrote: "I have seen it [La Parisienne] played two years ago, in the salon of a friend of letters, [performed] by Réjane and Antoine . . . It was thoroughly [well] performed and its success was not, I assure you, due to politeness and complaisancy" of myself or the audience.[52]

The exact extent to which this production affected Antoine's development can only be guessed. While Becque's concepts of theatrical naturalisme would have been revealed to Antoine at this time, neither Becque nor Antoine state them in their writings.

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[50]Alexandre Arnaoutovitch, Henri Becque devant ses contemporains et devant le prosterite (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1927), p. 62.

[51]Antoine, loc. cit.

[52]Arnaoutovitch, op. cit., p. 68.

From comments recorded about Becque's rehearsals of his plays at the Comédie-Française, it is assumed that Becque closely supervised all phases of the production. Becque's technique of the acting did not coincide with that which the Comédie actors held and conflicts quickly arose from Becque's demands upon the Comédie personnel. Leading actors and actresses at this theatre refused to appear in his plays after he had rehearsed them. Both Perrin for Les Courbeaux and Claretie for La Parisienne were needed constantly to placate and ease the tension between the playwright and the Comedie company in order to achieve a production of his plays. Apparently, the trouble arose from Becque's dictatorial views on acting. Sarcey, in his review of Becque's plays at the Comédie, commented upon the naturalness of the acting.[53] The discussion in Chapter III of the Comédie-Française, its personnel and its policies, would lead a person to believe that Becque and the Comedie were worlds apart. The naturalistic quality of which Sarcey spoke could have been only the result of Becque's constant control of the actors. The examination of the La Parisienne promptbook in Chapter III confirmed the fact that the blocking of the actors appeared to have a more realistic quality than the other productions at this theatre at this time.

Assuming Becque gave a similar attention to the mechanics of acting for this special performance of La Parisienne, his work with Réjane and Antoine would have naturally produced an influence upon Antoine. Antoine, while acknowledging Becque's influence, never stated

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[53]Francisque Sarcey, Quarante Ans de Théâtre (Paris: Bibliotèque des Annales, 1902), Vol. VI, p. 345.

its exact nature. After this performance and his summer trip to Brussels in 1888, Antoine appeared to be concerned with an increased naturalistic approach to acting, directing, and the mise en scéne.

As to acting techniques, Becque felt that the actors never worked hard enough to develop a characterization; in obtaining their effects, little differentiation was made between their various characters. According to Becque, almost nothing was attempted by the Comédie actors beyond memorizing their lines and blocking. Unfortunately, Becque never stated in any form his concepts of acting.

In examining his memoirs and his plays for theatrical concepts, it is difficult to find a precise statement of any of Becque's theories. In attacking previous theatrical practices, Becque sensed that "all the world is free except the playwright."[54] For creative stimulation, Becque depended upon the artistic curiosity of the individual rather than upon the scientific observations of Zola which Becque did not believe beneficial to the writer; Becque claimed that he did not feel the need to copy nor to take notes about reality.[55] Above all,it is evident from the subject matter of his plays that Becque was more interested in bourgeoisie society than in the lower depths. With his interest in the middle class, he probed their mind, heart, and soul rather than their flesh as most naturalistic writers did. Feeling that each artist had to be an independent being, Becque concluded that "our progress and our

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[54]Lawson A. Carter, Zola and the Theatre (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), p. 161.

[55]Arnaoutovitch, op. cit., p. 442.

acquisitions, when we have done well, come only from ourselves; from the critics, there is nothing."[56]

In discussing his theatre, Becque did not record his opinions in detail. Unfortunately, his comments in his memoirs were only caustic and superficial statements of a general nature. But, Becque greatly admired the work of Antoine, claiming that as a director Antoine had "restocked the theatre and delivered the theatre from the crocodiles which for the last thirty years had controlled the theatre."[57] Becque, the first noted naturalistic theatre personality with whom Antoine came in personal contact, seemed to open Antoine's eyes as to the naturalistic possibilities of the theatre. This interaction pointed a way for Antoine to extend the qualities of naturalisme in the theatre; from this experience, Antoine began to unify many diverse naturalistic details which could be applied to the theatre.

The Meiningen Players

In the summer of 1888, André Antoine with several actors from the Théâtre-Libre journeyed to Brussels for a series of performances. The trip, arranged by Catulle Mendès, was to improve the financial conditions of his theatre. In the two weeks of performances in Brussels, this aim was achieved. Enough money was made to pay off the debts of the previous season and have a small fund to begin the next one. Antoine stated that in one night he earned more money than he had earned working a month for the Gas Company.[58]

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[56]Becque, op. cit., p. 150.

[57]Ibid., p. 137.

[58]Antoine, op. cit., p. 107.

Beyond this financial aspect, the trip led to additional reforms that were derived from Antoine's reactions to the performances of the Meiningen Players. This group was in Brussels at this time and Antoine attended as many performances as he could.

In a long letter (July, 1888) addressed to Sarcey, Antoine explained his reactions to the Meiningen Players and their productions. This letter served a twofold purpose. First, it kept the name of Antoine and his Théâtre-Libre before the public, and second, it expressed Antoine's views on staging crowd scenes in a more naturalistic manner. According to Antoine, the effect of the crowd in the Meiningen productions was "amazing." "I have never seen anything which gave the sensation of a multitide before." Antoine wished that Mr. Claretie of the Théâtre-Française could profit from seeing this group, and thereby improve the crowd scenes at his establishment. Referring to a recent production of Hamlet at the Comédie, Antoine wished that the "court of Hamlet would have resembled that of Leontes from The Winter's Tale of the Meiningen."[59]

The key to this situation was the employment of the supernumeraries. The supers were not "composed of elements assembled by chance . . . poorly dressed with little exercise in wearing costumes." The Meiningen group contained supers who had "to play and to mime their characters."[60] Part of their acting responsibility was to listen to

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[59]Adolphe Thalasso, Le Théâtre-Libre, essaie critique, historique et documentaire (Paris: Mercure de Paris, MCMIX), pp. 164ff. This is a very well known letter. In French, it may be found in Sarcey's reviews and Antoine's memoirs. Part of it has been translated into English and can be found in Waxman's book, Antoine and the Théâtre-Libre.

[60]Ibid., p. 164.

the protagonist, thereby producing an effect which augmented any interaction of the characters.

To illustrate his point, Antoine referred to a moment in William Tell. First, he described how the crowd was composed of individuals--some barred the way and some turned their backs on the audience in order to focus their attention upon Tell and Gessler. The group also contained children, wives, middle-class tradesmen and others.

Second, he described the crowd's verbal responses. They did not chant or shout their lines in unison. The effect produced, according to Antoine, was one of great verisimilitude. Antoine's illustration of how he would have handled a crowd scene suggested a partial reproduction of the Meiningen Players' techniques. The group was to shout "Vive Gambetta!" and Antoine detailed his execution thus:

> I would train the children to begin five seconds after the others. It is, in total, a controlled chorus. I am certain that the auditorium would have heard a grand shout! "Vive Gambetta!" and if, like the Meiningens, the attitudes, the gestures, the groupings were diversified and varied with the same care the general and true effect, no doubt, would be produced.[61]

Antoine offered another realistic example of a crowd effect--Richard Wagner's employment of the chorus. After dividing the chorus into various segments and assigning a special characteristic to each section, Wagner then composed identifying music for each group. Since each section of the chorus began to sing at different moments, the result sounded like a group. To fulfill the realistic demands of the theatre, Antoine could not understand why similar techniques had not been applied to the French theatre.

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[61] Ibid., p. 166.

An additional reason which contributed to the excellence of the Meiningen Players' crowd scenes stemmed from the well-known fact that each principal actor had to function as a section leader of a mob scene. When the principal actors or actresses were not scheduled for a lead, they were in the chorus. For example, on the nights that Mlle Lindner played "Time" in The Winter's Tale, she was also a member of the crowd; on other nights, she played Hermione.

Antoine hoped to reproduce some of the scenic and staging effects he had recently seen in Brussels. In concluding his letter to Sarcey, Antoine wished to inform the public about his coming production of the Goncourt play, La Patrie en Danger, and the Hennique play, La Mort du duc d'Enghein. It was to be in these productions that such effects would be attempted.

As Antoine grew up in Paris, his inquisitive mind explored the libraries, museums, and exhibitions of painting. This inspection of the intellectual Paris during the 1870's could not help expose a young bourgeoisie to the aesthetic maelstrom that was réalisme. It was through an awareness of the conflict between the reality of life and the artistic truth that a dissatisfaction developed within Antoine. Sparked by his attendance at Taine's lectures, Antoine began his cultural development and appeared to have become more and more conscious of what réalisme meant to the increasing middle class. When the Théâtre-Libre opened, réalisme had developed into its advanced form known as naturalisme. When Antoine's theatre opened, his conception of theatrical naturalisme appeared to be rather vague; but it can be surmised that Henry Becque may have been the individual who indicated to

Antoine how precepts of naturalisme could be applied to the theatre. After this interaction, Antoine began to unite the style of the play with the style of the production.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURALISTIC FEATURES OF ANTOINE'S THÉÂTRE-LIBRE

The most outstanding feature of Antoine's Théâtre-Libre was his production of plays by unknown playwrights whose works were essentially naturalistic. The continued success of the Théâtre-Libre was derived from the encouragement Antoine gave to these contemporary playwrights. Through the productions of plays by young writers, Antoine was able to solidify naturalisme in the theatre. As in all art forms, naturalisme was mainly concerned with a common denominator that was characteristic of the bourgeoisie. Besides utilizing a subject matter which was endemic of the French middle class, the naturalisme of André Antoine also dealt with "the palpilating tripe" of human misery.

At the founding of the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine's aim was to perform primarily any unproduced play. During these early days of the Théâtre-Libre, a wide variety of plays from naturalistic drama to poetic drama and pantomime was billed. Antoine's production of works by older playwrights came essentially from their literary interest and many of these were verse plays. During the first years, Le Baiser by Théodore de Banville and Émile Bergerat's Le Nuit Bergamasque were the most outstanding literary examples. Le Baiser was added to the repertory of the Comédie-Française in May, 1888 and was the only influence Antoine had upon that august body during the period of this investigation. In contrast to the Comédie, the Odéon and several other

boulevard theatres gave evidence of jumping on the bandwagon of naturalisme after the initial program of the Théâtre-Libre in March, 1887.

After the spring of 1888, Antoine felt it necessary to restrict himself to those works which followed the tenets of naturalisme. After his contact with Henri Becque and after seeing the performances of the Meiningen Players, Antoine began to concentrate upon certain theatrical elements of naturalisme. His attention to the development of naturalistic authors who were concerned with the problems of the middle and lower classes was the most important feature of the Théâtre-Libre's naturalisme. In bringing naturalisme to the theatre, Antoine produced plays by authors that were sympathetic to the problems of the growing bourgeoisie. One important phase of Antoine's interest in naturalistic writers was his introduction of foreign writers of the naturalistic school. To complete the process of transferring naturalisme to the theatre, Antoine attempted to find a style of acting and directing which would reveal the essence of the contents of the naturalistic plays which he produced. It is through the production of these new plays by contemporary writers who attempted to use new theatrical techniques to portray the essential characteristics of contemporary life that Antoine achieved an importance in the development of theatre.

PLAYWRIGHTS

The initial and continued impetus of naturalisme at the Théâtre-Libre came from Antoine's relations with writers who were attempting an exploration of new subjects and new dramatic techniques. In the reviews of the early Théâtre-Libre productions, continued stress was placed

upon an apparent lack of any playwriting techniques. The usual complaint was that the plays lacked form, did not have any action, and that the three unities were not followed. Besides, they were not well-made plays. For example, Sarcey, in his review of Soeur Philomène, complained that this play did not have any action.[1] The important contribution of this play from a dramaturgical point of view was its juxtaposition of violently contrasting emotions. In the final scene, the dying woman's singing popular and bawdy songs while the nuns prayed suggested an opposition of moods which the authors found to be part of the hospital action. Here was an example where conflict was not as important as the establishment of specific moods. Besides, the characters of Soeur Philomène were doctors, interns, patients, and nuns and these commonplace characters shocked the critics.

In discussing the works of the naturalistic authors, it has been necessary to divide Antoine's work into several categories. First, in the early years of the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine was forced to rely mainly upon adaptations of short stories and novels which exemplified the literary tenets of naturalisme. (Adaptations played a prominent part through the duration of Antoine's work at the Théâtre-Libre.) Second, Antoine felt the need to introduce foreign playwrights who employed naturalistic dramatic techniques and subject matter to further the acceptance of naturalisme by French writers and by the audience. Third, Antoine was able to develop French playwrights who were concerned with contemporary socioeconomic problems. When discussing the plays which

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[1]Francisque Sarcey, Quarante ans de Théâtre (Paris: Bibliothèque des Annales, 1901), Vol. VIII, p. 245.

fall into these categories, attention will be called to the subject matter and the dramaturgy.

For his initial evening of plays (March 30, 1887), Antoine found relatively few plays which fulfilled the requirements of naturalisme. Thus, he was forced to rely upon adaptations of novels or short stories. On this first evening, one of the most successful adaptations appeared--Jacques Damour. This play was a one act pièce based upon Émile Zola's story and was adapted by Léon Hennique. For many years Jacques Damour was closely linked to naturalisme, and its success was so great that it was identified with the Théâtre-Libre. In considering aligning his theatre with naturalisme, Antoine immediately felt the need to associate Zola with his undertaking.

Jacques Damour is an Enoch Arden situation with a middle-class setting. The locale of this one act is a dining room at the rear of a butcher shop. Felicie remarries after her first husband has been considered dead. His sudden return forces her to choose between the two men. Her choice is motivated by the contrast in the character of the two husbands. The play's dialogue brought the conflict quickly into focus besides illustrating the milieu of the time. The economic conditions of the Commune played an important part in the first husband's motivation to leave his wife, and the prosperity of the early years of the Third Republic contributed to the success of Felicie's marriage to her second husband.

One other adaptation of a Zola story was produced at the Théâtre-Libre along with an original play by Zola. Tout pour l'honneur, based

upon Captaine Burle, was dramatized by Henry Ceárd.[2] Though rather melodramatic, much of its action including its climax took place offstage; yet, its plot was pointedly concise. For the performance of this play, Mademoiselle LeRou of the Comédie-Francaise was granted permission to join the Théâtre-Libre and perform the leading woman's role.

Tout pour l'honneur deals with the honor of a middle-class military family. The play deals with a superior officer's revenge when he discovers, before being transferred, that one of his officers was having an affair with his wife. Naturally, he kills the offending officer and his family's name is protected. Dramatically, the play is slow in developing as the dialogue discusses the situation and the climactic action occurs offstage. The importance of this play stemmed from the fact it was an adaptation of a Zola short story.

The only play written by Zola to be produced by Antoine was Madeleine.[3] After reading the novel, Antoine sensed the possibilities of a good play drawn from its subject matter and asked Zola if he would consider making an adaptation. Zola excused himself and returned later with a manuscript which he handed to Antoine. Here was the play, Madeleine, for Zola had developed it as a play first. Its conversion into a novel came after the failure of Zola's plays to be accepted for production.

Madeleine is a short three-act work which contains several poignant passages of genuine human feelings. Unfortunately, the plot is

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[2]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre on December 23, 1887.

[3]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre on May 2, 1889.

artificially contrived and the tragic outcome is too obvious. The play deals with a young woman's coming to terms with her "past." After confessing her youthful indiscretion, Madeleine plans a second honeymoon with her husband, but they choose the very place where her youthful affair occurred. By chance, Madeleine's former lover turns up and she realizes that one cannot find any refuge by attempting to flee the past. Through a misunderstanding with her husband and his dominant mother, Madeleine takes poison to die.

In adapting modern science to the characterization of Madeleine, Zola relied upon a treatise on heredity by Dr. Prosper Lucas (Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'hérédité naturelle dans les etats de santé et de maladie du systeme nerveux) published in 1847. This treatise stated the startling proposition that a woman, once impregnated, carries the seed of this first impregnation for an indefinite period of time and gave to her subsequent children the hereditary traits of her first husband or lover. Thus, a woman was in eternal bondage to her past. Zola extended this physical bondage to a psychological one; he showed Madeleine being pursued by her past from which she is unable to find any release. Unfortunately, the brevity of the play was due to the inadequate development of the dialogue and the complications of the plot. Since Zola had written Madeleine in 1865, he had not yet fully developed his concepts of naturalistic theatre; the play's rejection by the theatre managers reflected Zola's inadequacies in theatre techniques and thus Zola turned it into a novel.

Another chief source for adaptations was found in the Goncourt novels. Besides these adaptations, Antoine produced La Patrie en danger

(written by the two brothers) and Á Bas la progress (written by Edmond alone). Each adaptation was made with the approval of Edmond: Soeur Philomène was adapted by Arthur Byl and Jules Vidal; Les Frères Zemganno by Paul Alexis and Oscar Méténier; and La Fille Elise by Jean Ajalbert.[4] Several of these plays are related to specific problems which will be discussed later.

In the planning of La Patrie en danger, Antoine developed more precise naturalistic concepts of scenery and staging of crowd scenes. During the summer of 1888, Antoine saw the Meiningen Players perform in Brussels. Being startled by their realistic crowd scenes, Antoine, in the letter to Sarcey quoted above in Chapter Four, discussed the staging of crowd scenes and his hope of extending these practices to his theatre.

The third act of La Patrie en danger was set in the "salle de la mairie de Verdun" and required a careful preparation of the crowd scene. Antoine wrote:

> I have revived the trial of le Duc d'Enghien; the lighting from above, with bright lamps that swarm over the crowd, becomes truly beautiful. I am somewhat proud to see the passing sensations on the face of the mayor. In the small decor, I had to mass, through only one door, nearly 500 people who filter in slowly, like a cunning flood, and completely submerge the furniture and the other characters. With the crowd in the shadows, the effect of glimmering lights on the crowd as they moved from place to place was extraordinary.[5]

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[4]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre: Á Bas la progress on January 16, 1893; Soeur Philomène on October 11, 1887; Les Frères Zemganno on February 25, 1890.

[5]Andre Antoiné, "Mes Souvenirs" sur le Théâtre-Libre (Paris: Artheme Fayard & Cie, 1921), p. 139. Author's translation.

The number of extras seems excessive, for this play was performed at the small Théâtre des Menus-Plaisir. The importance Antoine attached to the details of the staging cannot be emphasized enough. In the crowd, each extra became a personality. The adjectives employed to describe the movement of the crowd and its relationship to the central action are suggestive of naturalistic theatre practices.

In La Patrie en danger, the de Goncourts employed their episodic narrative technique to express the action. The use of this technique disturbed the conservative critics who felt it difficult to connect the seemingly isolated actions. To write this play, the de Goncourts researched the Revolution of 1789 and its subsequent years. The portrayal of the political and social conditions of that era was the main objective of the brothers in writing this play.

In the adaptation of Soeur Philomène, the dramatic juxtaposition of the nuns' praying with the vulgar shouting and singing of the dying woman scandalized the critics. The atmosphere of the hospital was handled in a most naturalistic manner and seemed to retain the mood of the de Goncourt novel. From a later novel, Les Frères Zemganno, written by Edmond alone, a similar atmospheric quality was transferred to the stage by Antoine. To understand the circus and the backstage life, Antoine, according to Théâtre-Libre Illustreé, spent hours in the coulisse (backstage) of the Medrano observing in detail its actions and objects which could be reproduced on the stage of the Théâtre-Libre.[6]

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[6]Rodolphe Darzens, Le Théâtre Libre Illustrée (Paris: E. Dentu, Editeur, 1890), p. 212.

Sarcey was shocked by the action of the adaptation of La Fille Elise and claimed that "it was not natural."[7] In this play, the characters were middle-class individuals except for the prostitute (who had become a fascinating part of the naturalistic catalogue of characters). The action detailed a young man's propositioning a lady of easy virtue only to be slapped down. Unfortunately, her slap was hard enough to knock him against a tombstone and kill him.

The second act of this play took place in a courtroom, a seemingly popular setting for naturalistic plays. In the same review, Sarcey complained that Antoine's monologue, the defense lawyer's plea, was too long and undramatic. Antoine said that while the performance of this scene took about twenty-five minutes, he and the novel's adaptor (Ajalbert) felt they should have retained the complete speech which the de Goncourts had written for their novel.[8]

Above all, Antoine was interested in what the author had to say and the manner in which he said it; the playwright was supreme. Antoine believed that the author knew the best manner or technique to portray his characters and action. The best example of Antoine's regard for the playwright's work is illustrated by the production of Le Père Lebonnard (October 21, 1889). This play also emphasized the contrasting practices of the Comédie-Française and the Théâtre-Libre.

After the Comédie had accepted Le Père Lebonnard in 1887, performances were scheduled for February of that year. While the "lecture"

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[7]Sarcey, op. cit., VIII, p. 296. Author's translation.

[8]Antoine, op. cit., p. 19.

committee had "unanimously" accepted this play, trouble began immediately. Suddenly each actor demanded modifications of his role and the actors' consensus of opinion about the play was that it needed to be reduced from four to three acts. Their solution was the removal of the third act. Got, who was assigned to play the title role, insisted that the third act was impossible to perform. "Why is it impossible?" asked Jean Aicard. "Because it is not of the theatre," Got replied.[9] This criterion indicated one of the prime requirements of the Comédie in evaluating a theatrical work. It also illustrates the dominance of the Comédie actor in controlling many aspects of the production. Antoine did not care if the play was theatrical. He was interested in seeking a new means of expressing reality which meant permitting the playwright the maximum freedom with his play's form and content.

Considering himself chiefly a poet, Aicard composed Le Père Lebonnard in verse. His aim here was to "mix my taste of the idea with a realistic life."[10] Le Père and his daughter, Jeanne, were evangelists who brought the purity of an ideal life to the family. In the play, these two are the most realistically conceived characters, with one other character, Jeanne's mother, approaching this level. When the actress playing Mrs. Lebonnard grumbled about the fact that her character was not a sympathetic one, Aicard complained to the Comédie-Française administration that "you reproach me for the reality of these characters."[11]

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[9]Darzens, op. cit., p. 21. Author's translation.

[10]Ibid., Author's translation.

[11]Ibid., Author's translation.

To maintain the proper conflict, Mrs. Lebonnard had to be an unsympathetic character; any alteration of her character would have eliminated the conflict and its social comment.

The play's subject matter was contemporary, for the family could be classified as being nouveau riche. While the father and daughter remained humble people, the mother and son had delusions of grandeur and hoped to be considered part of the aristocracy. This conflict was a favorite one for contemporary playwrights.

The "unplayable" third act was the play's crisis. In it, the idealism of Le Père was faced with the horrible truth which could destroy his family. Mrs. Lebonnard and her son, Robert, wanted Jeanne to marry a rich nobleman. Robert was about to marry the daughter of the play's Marquis. The pretentious attitudes of the wife and son did not coincide with the idealism of the father. When mother and son became unbearable, Le Père blurted out the truth--his son, Robert, was not his son, but the offspring of a liaison between his wife and the Marquis. This third act was a well-written dramatic one which illustrated forces of heredity. It was marred only by its theatrical denouement. Le Père, at the peak of his emotional scene, stormed off the stage in a theatrical manner reminiscent of romantic drama.

When the playwright became completely dissatisfied by the continued delays at the Comédie, he withdrew his play. The procrastination had extended from the first of 1887 until 1889. Since the discord between the Comédie-Française and Jean Aicard was well publicized, Antoine, by promising an immediate production, sensed an opportunity to challenge one of the Comédie's policies. Though the play's techniques,

according to Antoine, were linked to those of the School of Good Sense, he offered to perform Aicard's play as it had originally been written.[12]

For revenge, Aicard insisted upon adding a one act preface to the performance. In Dans le guignol, Aicard savagely and personally attacked the Comédie in a thinly disguised manner. Le Père Lebonnard was considered a brilliant personal success for Antoine; Le Père was one of his best roles to that date. Unfortunately, no details of his performance have been recorded in reviews of his memoirs.

Since Antoine's Théâtre-Libre was a reaction to the conventional theatre, it could not fail to include works by writers who were representative of some aspects of a revolutionary tradition. The two playwrights who fell into this category were Edmond Duranty and Catulle Mendès. While Duranty, recently deceased, was linked only with the Théâtre-Libre (on its first program), the presence of his name as part of the naturalistic movement was vital to the revolutionary ideas of the Théâtre-Libre; Duranty's interest in verism has been previously indicated. Paul Alexis, the literary executor of his estate, found among the Duranty papers the play Mademoiselle Pomme. Antoine described the play as having a "guignolesque" quality which was also an important part of the naturalistic scene. On the first program, Duranty's play passed unnoticed.[13]

Catulle Mendès, a disciple of Blanqui--the idealist instrumental in the Commune of 1870--was the other individual with a revolutionary

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[12]Antoine, op. cit., p. 147.

[13]Ibid., p. 30.

tradition included in the Théâtre-Libre programs. Two works by Mendès, in contrasting genres, were produced by Antoine; the first and more famous of the two was La Femme de Tabarin, which the author called a tragi-parade in one act; the other play, La Reine Fiammette, a drama in six acts, was of minor importance in this theatre's program.[14]

The high regard which Antoine held for Mendès derived from his prominent literary status in the naturalistic movement. Mendès' patronage would increase Antoine's importance. In contrast to Zola, Mendès was active in his assistance to Antoine's theatre. For example, the summer tour to Brussels, arranged by Mendès, improved the financial condition of the Théâtre-Libre. (The full implications of this tour are discussed above in Chapter IV.) More important, Catulle Mendès helped to marshal the Parisian literati for the Theatre-Libre. The respect Mendès held for Antoine was indicated in the dedication of La Femme de Tabarin. Mendès expressed the pleasant satisfaction which was the result of the Théâtre-Libre's offering difficult and new works that were considered "not of the theatre." "In several evenings, you have done more for dramatic art than other directors have done in several years."[15] Mendès hoped that the Théâtre-Libre would begin the renaissance of the true drama, the true comedy, and the true farce.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Catulle Mendès, as a drama critic, compared many current productions with those of

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[14]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre: Femme de Tabarin on November 11, 1887; Le Reine Fiammette on January 15, 1889.

[15]Catulle Mendès, Théâtre en Prose (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1908), p. i. Author's translation.

Antoine's Théâtre-Libre. It was at this time that Mendès demonstrated the value of Antoine's work. Repeatedly, he stated that: "Antoine is the only man who, for a long time in France, has revived a dramatic movement."[16] The process of sparking a dramatic movement should have, according to Mendès, rekindled other contingent concepts which would enhance the growth of the theatre. This ever-widening circle of changing ideas was vital to Mendès and his concept of the arts. Many times, he found that the public and the writers were too complacent with their work. This self-contentment only produced a plateau in the author's development. A sense of progress was important to Mendès' conception of the naturalistic movement. Through implication, this seems to have been Antoine's view also.

When the management of the Théâtre-Libre passed to Larochelle, the new director revived its more successful works. In reviewing Blanchette on October 1, 1897, Mendès wrote that "the only excuse [for the existence] of the elderly was to be each morning younger."[17] Mendes felt that by relying upon passed achievements the new management was not maintaining the original concept of his theatre. Mendès pin-pointed the contribution of Antoine's Théâtre-Libre when discussing the revivals of older playwright's works. Since the illusion of reality had been accomplished in Antoine's productions, this achievement of a reality had to become an essential factor in all other contemporary productions

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[16]Catulle Mendès, L'Art au Théâtre (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1897), Vol. I, p. 325. Author's translation. This phrase was found four times in these reviews of Mendès.

[17]Ibid., I, p. 344. Author's translation.

and especially those of the classics and older playwrights. The reality Antoine effected came from a blending of the acting, directing, and scenic design with the play and its style.

Since Antoine was willing to experiment with plays, the essence of his naturalistic productions was fulfilled; according to Mendès, the production of new plays, good and bad, achieved a theatrical improvement. For the naturalistic theatre, Antoine had perfected the "drame d'observation" which was compulsory to the naturalistic viewpoint. To justify the extremes in Antoine's productions, Mendès felt that a median could be attained only after experimenting with the limits of naturalistic theatre practices. Antoine "only sincerely wished [to produce] the single works, good or bad, which contributed to the manifestation of the actual [or current] state of mind. . . At no point, did the efforts of Antoine miscarry; but on the contrary, it triumphed."[18] Though Mendès was not always sympathetic to all the plays Antoine produced, he was willing to fight for their cause. "However, what Antoine has done for the theatre called realistic--which I admire but do not necessarily like--is so much superior, generally, to the species of theatre which preceded it."[19] Unfortunately, Catulle Mendès, a realist, did not accept the naturalistic portion of this literary development. Yet, Mendès was able to localize and emphasize the importance of Antoine's contribution to the contemporary theatre.

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[18] Ibid., I, p. 316. Author's translation.

[19] Ibid. Author's translation.

The youthful playwright who became the spokesman for the young naturalistic writers was Jean Jullien. With several other naturalistic writers, he founded the short-lived revue, Art et Critique. In this weekly, in the prefaces to his plays, and in other periodicals, he expressed his views on naturalisme. Jean Jullien assembled these articles in Le Théâtre Vivant and divided the book into two parts, the theory and the practice (his plays L'Échéance, La Sérénade, Le Maître, and Le Mer, the first three of which were produced by Antoine).[20] Jullien defined the objective of naturalistic theatre:

> A serious theatre is a living image of life. The principal goal of this theatre is to interest the spectator and especially to move him; this goal ought to be the reason to approach life as nearly as possible. The characters are as near as possible to life. The characters are human beings and not creatures of fantasy, but the interpretations of simple good men, speaking as they speak in real life without increasing their tone; and not as some actors do by exaggerating the grotesque or odious, some declamators shout a speech . . . while showing their pretentious qualities in diction. In order for this theatre to achieve its goal, the action must recall a trade or a shop, every manner which is able to disclose the work of the author or to make the presence of the actor disappear. So much the worse for the style of one and the effects of the others; everything should melt into the characters; an actor should be able to inspire interest in the impression of a man.
>
> It is necessary for the public to lose itself for an instant in the emotions of the present in the theatre, and for that, I believe it is necessary before raising the curtain, to darken the auditorium. The tableaux should be seen with vigor; the spectator's attention is not permitted to wander nor does the spectator dare to talk and become intelligent.[21]

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[20]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre: La Sérénade on December 23, 1887; L'Échéance on January 15, 1889; Le Maître on March 21, 1890.

[21]Jean Jullien, Le Théâtre Vivant (Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1892), pp. 9ff. Author's translation.

To fulfill this basic contention, all the conventions of the theatre had to be discarded. The footlights had to be abolished; the actors could not converge upon the prompter's box; in playwriting, exposition and denouement became useless, according to Jullien.[22]

To make the theatre "a slice of life [put] upon the stage with art," it had to become a theatre of action which vibrated from the beginning to the end like a "pulsation of blood in life."[23] A play was concerned with life in its fullest dimension; its goal, according to Jullien, was not laughter, but thought. To inject life into the play, its characters had to be the primary focus to rally the emotions, fears or hates, of the individual. By turning to the individual in an interaction with his environment and his fellow man, the naturalistic theatre was able to become concerned with the proper expression of truth. To indicate the depth of his study of the individual in society, Jean Jullien classified his plays as "étude psychologique" (L'Échéance), "étude de bourgeois" (La Sérénade), and "étude de paysans" (Le Maître). Jullien was concerned about the economic improvement of the middle and lower classes.

By shifting the emphasis from a theatricality and from the actor to the play's action, naturalists in the theatre would force a complete revision of dramaturgy. The essential factor, according to Jullien, was that "the drama which was a serious genre and which was an emulation of a philosophy of life [must] be a study of the human being in rapport

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[22] Ibid., p. 11.

[23] Ibid. Author's translation.

with his environment."[24] The Théâtre-Libre appeared to fulfill the policies of Jullien; yet, the degree to which these views could have been derived from Antoine can not be ascertained. The fact that Jullien's views paralleled Antoine's cannot be denied and their statement has been included to suggest and amplify the nature of Antoine's opinions on the naturalistic theatre.

In Antoine's development of young playwrights, two names, Eugène Brieux and François de Curel, were the most outstanding. But other names can be added to this list. Though Georges Courteline had had plays produced prior to the advent of the Théâtre-Libre, it was Antoine who exploited his talents to the fullest. It was through these three playwrights that Antoine and his Théâtre-Libre reached its peak in the establishment of French naturalistic playwrights.

Eugène Brieux grew in technical facility between the two plays which Antoine produced and this growth is indicative of the development of a form and content which was vital to naturalistic theatre. His first play was a dramatization of a social condition and characterized his concern with the conflict of adjustments indigenous to the new bourgeoisie. Ménage d'artiste, the first play, was a bitter satire on the concept of art for art's sake and centered on an artist's household.[25] The second play, Blanchette, had a much broader application to society for it dealt with the education of bourgeois children. While Brieux

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[24] Ibid., p. 8. Author's translation.

[25] Performed at the Théâtre-Libre: Ménage d'artiste on March 21, 1890; Blanchette on February 2, 1891.

had constructed his plays around a thesis, it never became such a dominant factor that it shaped the action or the conclusion of the play. The thesis was the conflict. Nowhere was this more evident than in Blanchette; the conflict between the father and daughter illustrated the daughter's completely unrealistic attitude [the result of a college education]. In the version Antoine produced, Blanchette became a prostitute after having been forced to leave her father's house. In the published version (the one commonly accepted), she spent several years starving on a marginal income before she returned home. The separation taught Blanchette and her father compassion which helped their adjustment to the conflict. At the time of the composition of Blanchette, the schism between parents and their children produced by an increased number of educated children had become an important social problem of the larger middle class.

A comparison of Blanchette with early plays Antoine produced demonstrates the deepening of naturalistic dramatic techniques. In Tout pour l'honneur and La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin, the subject matter and its construction were contrived. These two attempts at naturalisme appeared insincere for the subject stressed the unusual (Tout pour l'honneur imposed an aristocratic sense of honor upon the bourgeoisie while La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin dealt with the death of a courtesan after her decline). The transition from scene to scene in these early plays was very abrupt and unconvincing. In contrast, the plays of Brieux and de Curel logically developed from one scene to another and marked the slow elimination of the demarcation called the French scene. An action derived from characterization and environment was the basic

concern of these two writers. In Blanchette, the three leading characters, the parents and daughter, were well developed despite the fact there was almost no exposition. The remaining characters of the play were only types as their presence was only needed to establish a contrast between Blanchette and her parents.

The two plays of François de Curel--L'Envers d'une sainte and Les Fossiles--produced by Antoine were considered to be among the best productions of his latter years.[26] The first play caused a scandal as it dealt with the twisted mind of an ex-nun. In Catholic France, the utilization of a nun as a focal character was unusual, but became shocking when the motivation of this woman was evident. The selfish love of a young girl destroyed two lives. To atone for her behavior, she began the process of becoming a nun only to renounce this secluded life when she felt it no longer useful as a means of repentance. Upon returning to civilian life, she was thrown into contact with the people she had destroyed only to find that she felt the destruction had not been complete enough. A false religiosity had begun to pervade the middle class life and de Curel felt compelled to comment upon its possible effects. This scandalous subject matter when treated realistically upset the Parisian audiences.

François de Curel's second play dealt with a social situation endemic to the Third Republic--the decay of the aristocracy. While the situation was approached from the aristocratic level, it did not flatter them. In the first years of the Third Republic, the older aristocrats

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[26]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre: L'Envers d'une Sainte on February 2, 1892; Les Fossiles on November 29, 1892.

became politically and economically powerless and in their struggle to affect any importance they were forced to turn to the bourgeoisie for help. The conflict of bourgeois agressiveness and aristocratic persistence provided fertile ground for portraying a dominant social problem. Les Fossiles deals with the only son of an aristocratic family who has loved and married a bourgeoise. When an illness threatens to end the son's life, the conflict between the parents and their son and his wife erupts over the future of the bourgeoise's expected child--will the child have a useful bourgeois life or a decorous aristocratic one? The resolution, albeit a patriotic one, was derived from an intelligent discussion of the situation.

Dramatically, the construction of the de Curel plays, like those of Brieux, was based upon the characterization of the principals in conflict with a socioeconomic problem of the day. Since the play was a summation of the social observations of the author, the resolution of the issue was never dogmatic in its statement.

George Courteline's best play (Boubouroche) was produced by Antoine and dealt with an old situation--the lover being deceived by his mistress. Instead of aristocratic characters, Courteline employed the bourgeoisie and used the basic conflict only as a device to portray the mood, intellectual and emotional, of the important bourgeoisie of a small town.

Another facet of Antoine's introduction of new playwrights came from his production of those foreign playwrights whose naturalisme matched and furthered his. In the first season of the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine produced his first play by a foreign playwright--Leo Tolstoy's

The Power of Darkness.[27] In the announcement of this play, the press found excellent grounds for a controversy and Antoine's responsibility for its continuation could be debated. The three prominent playwrights of the day--Dumas fils, Sardou, and Augier--were asked to comment upon this coming production. Dumas fils said:

> In point of view of our French sense, I do not believe that the piece of M. Tolstoy is possible. It is too sombre; also, the characters are not sympathetic, and the language of Akim, for example, will not be understood by us.[28]

Sardou wrote:

> It is really true and very beautiful; but it is to be read and is not to be seen, and is, in my opinion unplayable.[28]

Augier did not feel that the dialogue was supportable in the French theatre. Such formidable adversaries of the old school heightened the need for a change and Antoine appeared to be capable of meeting this challenge if not thriving upon it.

In the Revue des Deux Mondes, Melchoir de Vogue considered this production one of the most interesting and provocative of the time. He found that the audience was easily acclimatized and transported by the play. Above all, Vogue praised the audience for "every time I have doubted the intelligence of our young French. They quickly comprehend a work which was opposed to our taste, and I am solidly trampled. . . We saw for the first time, on the French stage, a decor and costumes characteristic of the Russian life without a comic opera atmosphere and without the gaudy and false taste which seems to be inherent in the

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[27]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre on February 10, 1888.

[28]Antoine, op. cit., p. 85. Author's translation.

atmosphere of the theatre."[29] The true representation of the Russian peasant was vitally important to this play and Antoine through his observations of the French peasant was able to bring this highly praised naturalistic quality to the play. The battle for the acceptance of foreign plays was not yet won.

The language of Tolstoy's play caused grave concern. Palovski made a literal translation which Antoine believed to be difficult to perform. Oscar Metenier was asked to revise it into playable dialogue. But, his slangy French prose did not appear natural to the Russian peasant. Antoine's emphasis upon an actable dialogue was another manifestation of his theatrical naturalisme that was important to the movement.

The most important foreign playwright produced by André Antoine was Henrik Ibsen. Antoine recorded that Zola had pointed out to him an article by Jacques Saint-Cere on a Scandinavian author now living in Munich. The first play of Ibsen's which came to Antoine's attention was Ghosts.[30] After obtaining a copy of this play, Antoine decided to produce it.

Prior to the production of Ghosts, Antoine discussed it with his friends. After an evening with Mendès, Céard, and Ancey, he recorded the details of their conversation in his memoirs. Having read Ghosts to them, he asked for their advise. Their reactions were as follows:

Mendes:

Dear friend, this piece is impossible in your theatre.

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[29]Ibid., p. 89. Author's translation.

[30]Performed at the Theatre-Libre on May 30, 1890.

Céard:

> Yes, it is very good, but it is not clear to the minds of Latins. I would have a prologue, where we would see Oswald's father and the mother of Regina being surprised by the young Mrs. Alving. Now, it is part of the dialogue between Mrs. Alving and the pastor. After this exposition, the French public would enter into the drama with all the necessary security.

Ancey:

> It is magnificent; it is not necessary to touch it at all. If you are afraid of its length make the cuts yourself according to your dictates.[31]

Ghosts had a very profound effect upon the audience. Antoine claimed that the audience was moved from boredom to astonishment while a few were aroused to anger during the final scene. Naturally, Sarcey was very hostile to this production. In his review, Sarcey said he was embarrassed by having to discuss this play which dealt with a subject more unspeakable than any other subject chosen by naturalistic playwrights. It was his opinion that this play should be read only. To increase his assault, Sarcey felt that it was poorly performed by the Théâtre-Libre.

The interest created by Ghosts was utilized by Antoine in deciding to produce The Wild Duck.[32] To facilitate Sarcey's understanding of this play, its translator, Armand Ephraim, explained to him the play's symbolism and action. In Debats, Jules Lemaître questioned Sarcey's difficulty in understanding The Wild Duck and emphasized Sarcey's apparent stubbornness toward either new or foreign plays.

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[31]Antoine, op. cit., p. 166. Author's translation.

[32]Performed at the Théâtre-Libre on April 27, 1891.

Unfortunately, Antoine did not comment upon this production or its reception.

After the public's acceptance of Ibsen, Antoine expanded his production of foreign playwrights to include Strindberg and Hauptmann. From Antoine's account of the Théâtre-Libre, the impression is obtained that these foreign playwrights more nearly approached Antoine's tenets of naturalisme than did the French playwrights with the exception of Brieux and de Curel. The result of the Théâtre-Libre's production of these plays was a public toleration and understanding of foreign plays and of theatrical naturalisme. The production of Miss Julie, The Weavers, and The Assumption of Hannele Mattern were powerful components of this progress.[33]

Of these three plays, the most outstanding was The Weavers (May 29, 1893). Antoine felt that this play painted a potent fresco for the social theatre. Generally speaking, the reviews of this production indicated the increased degree of skill which the Theatre-Libre had attained since March 30, 1887. The ensemble acting was derived from, and was directly related to, the structure of the play, and produced an audience response that was startling. Feeling that the action of the crowd was of primary importance, Antoine worked for an ensemble in which each actor became part of the environment of the play. The song of the weavers used in the second act provided a "leitmotiv" which increased

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[33]Performed at the Theatre-Libre: Miss Julie on January 16, 1893; The Weavers on May 29, 1893; The Assumption of Hannele Mattern on February 1, 1894.

the play's impact upon the audience. The staging of Hilse's death in the fourth act produced another powerful reaction in the audience.[34]

Unfortunately, after this production of The Weavers, Antoine felt that the end of his work at the Théâtre-Libre was approaching, for he became increasingly burdened by the financial debt which he had accumulated over the years at the theatre. The cost of specially designed sets and costumes for each production which had only a limited number of performances began to affect Antoine adversely. Despite season subscriptions and donations from patrons, Antoine was unable to meet all his bills. Turning commercial, he planned a tour, hoping his name would draw an audience large enough to pay his liabilities. The tour succeeded well enough for Antoine to be able to release his control of the Théâtre-Libre without the subsequent management assuming a sizeable loss.[35]

While Antoine was mainly interested in producing new plays, he was also concerned with staging plays that dealt with bourgeois life. Through adaptations and plays by young playwrights, he was able to make the theatre public aware of the socioeconomic problems of the day. It seems that his naturalisme was the expression of this increased participation of the bourgeoisie in the arts.

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[34]Antoine, op. cit., p. 291.

[35]Ibid., p. 305.

ACTING AND DIRECTING

The sources for material on the acting and directing theories conceived and expressed by Antoine during the years at the Théâtre-Libre were limited. The main source for his theories on acting was a letter written (in November, 1890) to Sarcey. In his memoirs of the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine made a few short statements about his acting and directing results, but these comments are never extensively discussed and therefore can be taken to be suggestions of the final results of the production problems involved in naturalisme in the theatre. Commenting upon La Parisienne at the Comédie-Française in 1890, Antoine noticed many items which did not make for a homogeneous totality. From the general tone of Antoine's letter, the acting and the directing of Becque's play indicated that its Comédie production was derived from a style similar to that outlined in Chapter Three of this investigation. About the acting at the Comédie-Française, Antoine wrote:

> It is necessary, in order to penetrate into the modern character, to leave all the old baggage behind; a true work must be truly played; and the same is true for the classic plays, for the characters are most often only an abstraction, only a synthesis, without a material life; the characters in La Parisienne and in Grandmère are people like us, not living in vast rooms with dimensions of a cathedral, but in interiors like ours, with a corner fire, under a lamp, around a table and not, as in the old repertoire, before the prompter's box; they have voices like ours, and their language is that of our daily life, with its blurring, its familiar ways, and not the rhetoric and noble style of our classics.[36]

In analyzing the Comédie performance, Antoine complained that Mlle Reichenberg attacked the play's first scene and the remaining ones

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[36] Ibid., p. 198ff. Author's translation. Antoine's italics.

with a voice of an actress, implying that it was big and sententious and not containing any realistic qualities. The other actors followed her. Thus, the voice quality employed by the actors at the Comédie-Française had absolutely no relationship to Becque's characters. The apparent acting practices at the Comédie demanded an ostentatious acting voice besides imposing the actor's personalities upon those of the play's characters.

Antoine believed that the actor must enter into his character both physically and emotionally. For his characterization of the leading clown of a circus in Les Frères Zamganno, Antoine developed an agility which matched that of the famous contemporary clown, Nello. Antoine practiced the stunts of Nello besides exercising regularly to be limber for his role. This resemblance was carried to the physical reproduction of the blond wig which identified Nello. Darzen said that it was difficult to tell Nello and Antoine apart.[37]

After a unique experience in Ghosts, Antoine began to believe that an emotional identification with the author's character was necessary for the portrayal of naturalistic characters. In this play, he had obtained a degree of involvement not previously attained. This phenomenon occurred when he noticed that his "personality [was] completely [submerged] . . . I remember nothing, neither the public nor the effects of the spectacle nor the curtain falling."[38] More and more, this identification of the actor with his character became an important theme in Antoine's naturalistic approach to acting and to the theatre.

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[37]Darzens, op. cit., p. 212.

[38]Antoine, op. cit., p. 183. Author's translation.

The actors at the Comédie did not hesitate to ask the playwright to change lines or the situation to suit their personal whims. This attitude was not conducive to naturalistic acting, and the integrity of the author's characters was destroyed through the alteration of any line basic to the play's structure. At the Comédie, the Le Père Lebonnard episode illustrated this practice beautifully. To fulfill the requirements of naturalistic acting, the actor had to supplant his own personality and voice for those of his character.

In directing, several distinct qualities were brought to the theatre by Antoine. When a realistic play contained a scene between two, three, or four people, Antoine insisted that his actors face each other in the scene. He felt that the characters had to establish a relationship and to do so, they had to look at each other during the dialogue. His famous critical letter stated requirements of stage naturalisme.[39]

Possibly his most controversial directing concept was that of turning the actor's back to the audience while speaking lines. Though actors turned their backs to the audience in the romantic productions at the Comédie-Française, they apparently never spoke a line in this position. When the Comédie actor turned his back upon the audience, it was to achieve a specific pictorial effect. For Sarcey, the most shocking example of breaking this convention was employed in Soeur Philomène. Some interns were seated around a table having breakfast, and Antoine staged the scene as it would have been seen in life. By grouping the

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[39]Ibid., p. 199.

interns around the table, several of them had to have their backs to the audience and, during the scene, deliver lines facing away from the audience. As an actor, Antoine never hesitated to play a scene with his back to the audience and may frequently have carried it to extremes. One of the biographers of André Antoine relates this anecdote: gossip said that he was the heir to a large fortune and, not wanting his family to recognize him on the stage, he turned away from the audience as much as possible. Actually, he had simply discovered a visual means to increase and heighten the naturalisme of a scene.

THE SCENERY

In discussing the scenic aspect of naturalisme at the Théâtre-Libre, the point needs to be re-made that Zola felt that the scenery had to represent the specific environment in which the play's action took place. The bourgeois audience was shown an environment on the stage that was similar to the one in which they lived; the elements of naturalisme which furthered its growth and its popularity relied upon the expression of an artistic reality that was easily recognizable by the bourgeoisie. At the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine worked to achieve a feeling of the character in his environment. André Antoine's socioeconomic background was similar to that of the rising bourgeoisie, and thus, he appeared to be able to understand this concept of Zola's.

Beyone a few indirect comments in Jean Jullien's Le Théâtre Vivant and an unidentified review from a book on the development of a bourgeois theatre, little accurate information has been found linking Antoine to the advent of darkening the auditorium in France. This

unidentified review claimed that Antoine followed the German and/or Wagnerian tradition by darkening the auditorium before the curtain opened. But understanding Antoine's penchant for publicity, it seems unlikely that Antoine would not have commented upon this innovation. Though this fact cannot be substantiated, the psychological effect of the darkened auditorium upon the audience could not escape being noticed by Antoine nor his disciples; Jean Jullien felt that the darkened auditorium aided the focus of the audience and helped to create the illusion of the play's environment.

Also, the darkened auditorium provided a framework for the actor, for he was placed in an environment. Now a greater degree of verisimilitude in the actor's re-creation of the author's intent was achieved. The audience and the actor relationship, according to Antoine, had to be an indirect one. The actor's prime responsibility had to be toward his re-enactment of the play's conflict; therefore, he was not permitted to have any conscious knowledge of the audience during his performance. Nevertheless, the audience had to be involved in the action, and by darkening the auditorium, their attention was focused upon the stage.

Antoine stated that the action of the play had to develop within a specific room or locale. For the performance, the fourth wall of the room was removed. Now the audience was permitted to witness the action.[40] It was necessary for the actor to be unaware of the audience, and so the concept of the "fourth wall" helped the actor to isolate himself in the setting which was to serve as his environment.

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[40]Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chincy (ed.), Directors on Directing (2nd. ed., Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963), pp. 89ff.

In tracing Antoine's development of the mise en scéne, it was found that he became increasingly aware of the effect of the scenery upon the action. In the beginning, Antoine was not concerned with scenery. For his first production, evidence seems to indicate that there was no scenery--only black drapes surrounding a naturalistic arrangement of furniture. For the first evening's performances of the Théâtre-Libre, Père Krauss may not have permitted Antoine to use any scenery or properties of the Cercle Gaulois. Thus, Antoine was forced to rely upon his parents for furniture. When performing at the theatre in Montparnasse (le Bon Hartmann's theatre), Antoine had the permission of the theatre owner to use any scenery in the theatre's storerooms. For his famous production of The Power of Darkness, Antoine raided the storage rooms and pieced together the necessary sets. The assumption here would be that the standard sets of the time were employed by Antoine. When the Théâtre-Libre moved to the Theatre des Menus-Plaisir for the 1888-1889 season, Antoine had scenery and costumes designed and constructed for each play.

For the first production at the Menus-Plaisir, Antoine introduced realistic props. On the evening of October 19, 1888, Antoine hung a side of beef on the set as atmosphere for the play Les Bouchers. The second play of the evening caused a greater scandal with its naturalisme. This play, Giovanni Varga's Chevalerie rustique (better known as the Mascagni opera), was set in a village square. On stage, Antoine placed a water fountain which had "a veritable stream of water which caused joy in the auditorium. I do not know why."[41] With each succeeding production, the degree of naturalisme in the mise en scéne increased.

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[41]Antoine, op. cit., p. 117. Author's translation.

Later in the same year, in December, Antoine produced Hennique's play La Mort du duc d'Enghien, an historical play in three tableaux. Hoping to renovate the conventions of the historical drama, Antoine applied to this genre the methods of the naturalistic school by attempting an "exact reconstruction of the era and the epoch."[42] The third act was singled out by Antoine for special comment. This act dealt with the treason trial of the Duke of Enghien. The setting was massive and employed "costumes authentique." The aim of Antoine was to apply a historical accuracy to the costumes which would increase the truth of the production.

In attempting to isolate Antoine's concepts of scenery, a return to that famous letter criticizing the Comédie-Française production of La Parisienne will detail his opinion of the relation of the scenery to the production. The decor had to have a direct or realistic relationship to the action.

> In modern plays, written in the movement of truth and naturalisme where the theories of the era and the influence of the external things have taken a large place, does not the decor become an indispensable complement to the work? Does not it offer a kind of exposition to the subject? Certainly we will never make the complete truth . . . until we reduce the [scenic] conventions to a minimum.[43]

To obtain a proper setting, the arrangement of doors and windows had to have an architectural validity. No longer was the mise en scéne permitted to have a door upstage center and two side doors upstage, but doors, windows, and furniture had to be placed in a manner that produced

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[42] Ibid., p. 114.

[43] Ibid., p. 200. Author's translation.

a theatrical reality which was relevant to life as the audience knew it. Realistic scenery had to explain to the audience the social and economic status of the character who lived there. According to Antoine, the scenery became an additional means to explain the play's action.

To summarize Antoine's work and its development, it is noted that he began with only a general concept of theatrical naturalisme. As he became more experienced and knowledgeable in theatrical practices, Antoine became more specific in his portrayal of reality. In this progress, it is obvious that the naturalistic movement in the theatre had to contain certain qualities which expressed a more bourgeois reality. Since the play is the basic ingredient of the theatre, a change in the play's form and content was of prime importance. In establishing the naturalistic play, the necessity of finding writers who would experiment with a form and content that expressed these needed qualities was vital. Antoine was able to interest and to find authors who believed in this style of expression. While his choice of plays varied from comedies and dramas to poetic drama and pantomimes, it was his emphasis upon comedies and dramas that contained contemporary people in conflict with their socioeconomic situation which brought naturalisme to the theatre.

To find enough plays dealing with naturalistic subject matter, Antoine was forced to have naturalistic novels adapted during the seven and a half seasons of the Théâtre-Libre. In his production program, he did not hesitate to include outstanding examples of naturalisme found outside of France. His productions of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Hauptmann were lessons for the French playwrights. As a result, experimental

playwriting was kept in a healthy state of flux by opening new techniques of dramaturgy which could be expanded through the physical aspects of play production.

The development of naturalistic production practices was derived from the play itself. The production's totality was constructed from all the elements of the play--the script, the acting, the directing, and the scenery--to produce a single, unifying result which was recognized by the audience as a reality. The bourgeois audience was seeing a re-creation of its life before its eyes. In contrast to previous practices as exemplified by the Comédie-Française, the audience believed that what it saw on the stage at the Théâtre-Libre was reality, for everything they saw attempted to achieve this goal. It was "a slice of life." In finding a means of acting and directing which conveyed this verisimilitude, the theatre of Antoine achieved a new coherence of theatrical elements. The fulfillment of these goals brought André Antoine and his Theatre-Libre into a prominent place in theatre history, for this man and his work influenced a new generation of theatre people.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In reviewing the nineteenth century in France, it can be said that it was a period of change in the socioeconomic position of the bourgeoisie, the political situation, and in the concepts of truth in all art forms. The constant governmental turmoil appears to have been caused by the slow processes of industrialization which had begun about 1820. After being dominated by the aristocracy for many years, the bourgeoisie gained an influence in the government and the arts when they became more financially secure. Since the industrialization had increased the economic position of larger portions of the middle class, it also permitted this group to gain an education which, in turn, introduced them to aspects of culture.

Beginning with the Second Empire, the bourgeoisie improved their condition to the point that they were now a major voice in society and in government. After becoming only minor officials, the bourgeoisie slowly infiltrated into more imposing positions. Though Napoleon III paid only nominal attention to the needs and requirements of the people, he did achieve some important financial improvements within the country. It was a combination of events which produced the downfall of the Second Empire--a foreign and a civil war. During the Second Republic and the Second Empire, an impasse between the two governmental branches developed. Since both constitutions did not permit any changes,

deadlocks developed. In the end, the legislative branch was overriden by the executive branch through the use of imperial decrees. Since such a condition was contrary to the French democratic tradition, the people rose up in arms and overthrew the government of Napoleon III to establish something more conducive to its demands.

The Parisians, being proud people, manned the barricades to overthrow the Second Empire and to establish the Commune of 1871. This new government, the Commune, was founded by the liberal bourgeoisie. Of a short duration, the Commune led to the establishment of the Third Republic which secured the importance of the bourgeoisie as a vital voice in the government. The Third Republic was possibly France's most democratic government during the nineteenth century. This government was a compromise one that resulted from a dichotomy of the two branches of government--the legislative against the executive.

From the beginning, the Third Republic was oriented toward the wishes of the bourgeoisie. In its first years, the organization of the government gave an unfair and unequal voice to the peasantry, for each locality indirectly elected all high-level officials and dictated policies. Through this imbalance, the peasantry were able to make several gains which placated them. These governmental changes were the result of the demands made by the bourgeoisie who had grown in size and importance through the industrialization. As the bourgeoisie became more financially independent, they became increasingly discontent with the status quo of the contemporary political and artistic situation, and this discontent was forceful enough to produce a reaction.

In the artistic world, this dissatisfaction is reflected by the growth of two art concepts: réalisme and naturalisme. During the rise of the middle class, they were in constant conflict with the aristocracy and its principles. The aristocracy was synonymous with neoclassicism and the Empire. After the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the predominant form of artistic creativity was classified as neoclassicism. This meant that in the theatre the three unities were stressed and the subject matter had to be derived from Greek and Roman life and mythology. In art, this condition implied that the silhouette of the figure was more important than its planes and that each figure was treated idealistically and independently of other figures or the surroundings. All art was controlled by the application of reason to content and form.

The first breakthrough came in art and began with Dealcroix who felt that the teachings and paintings of such neoclassic painters as Ingres had become sterile and lacked emotion. Besides shocking the neoclassicists with his subject matter, Delacroix startled them by the energy which he had been able to convey in his paintings. Ingres complained that Delacroix's paintings looked as if they had been painted in a hurry; for the neoclassicists, rationality was the essence of creativity.

In the development of verism, Delacroix is now looked upon as being romantic. His subject matter was of epic proportions, while the titles of his paintings were sometimes allegorical. But the impressive quality of his work, their robustness, had a direct appeal to the rising bourgeoisie.

The next painter to make an important stride in this advance of réalisme was Courbet whose work was the result of observing nature. From his impetus, the later impressionists painted directly from nature employing their observations as subject matter. Possibly, the most important part of the impressionist's work was their discovery of the effects of light and its color. Also, the discovery and the use of shadow was an all important detail in impressionistic painting; they discovered shadow had color.

From Delacroix and Courbet and the artistic circles that assembled in several sidewalk cafes in Paris, the revolt against neo-classicism spread to literature and eventually to the theatre. The artistic insurrection which developed after romanticism became known as réalisme; now the contemporary artist attempted to describe and to capture the emotions of the bourgeoisie rather than the nobility. Réalisme in the French novel began with Balzac and Stendahl, continued with Champfleury and the de Goncourt brothers, and moved to a climax with Zola. The de Goncourt brothers and Zola belonged to that advanced movement of verism known as naturalisme; these gentlemen were employing writing techniques which transcended the precepts of réalisme.

In the extension of réalisme known as naturalisme, the importance of observation cannot be stressed enough. This introduction of observation stemmed from the popularization of the sciences; in science, the utilization of observation and the classification of its data implied that no opinion needed to be formed as a result of assembling this material. The general impression obtained would convey a reality through the use of many details to suggest the whole. Writers researched life

around them and attempted to record it in their novels. For example, the de Goncourt brothers read about various forms of insanity before writing a novel about mental dégeneration, and they spent a day in a hospital to observe its management and the patient's reactions to hospital life. The critics of that day were astonished by the degree of naturalisme that the de Goncourt brothers were able to convey in their novels. Instead of describing the outward manifestations of reality common to realistic writers, the naturalistic writers dug beneath the surface to capture the totality of the character and his atmosphere. In the novel, Zola achieved the greatest degree of naturalisme in France.

The period of the realistic novel extended from 1865 until about 1881, after which time it began to wane. In 1881, naturalisme in the theatre was almost non-existent. Yet, a more realistic approach to the theatre had begun after the outburst known as romanticism. After 1840, romanticism was a dead issue in the theatre. The School of Good Sense which followed was a conservative reaction to the wild and passionate quality of the romantics. While the School reverted to many neo-classic principles, it was concerned with the return of "belles lettres" to literature besides insisting upon a more rational portrayal of "customary life." Ponsard, the leading playwright of the School of Good Sense, chose subject matter derived from Greek and Roman life; yet, he was modern enough to choose themes for his plays that were related to the needs of the bourgeoisie. Augier, at first a member of the School, moved beyond its immediate scope to write plays which had a lasting quality. Augier's subject matter originated in his interest in the contemporary problems which confronted society. He was shocked at the

intrusion of the prostitute into the upper class society. During the 1860's (the second decade of the Second Empire), the aristocracy were fascinated by courtesans. Thus, the courtesans were invited into official circles and were imitated by the court of Napoleon III. Augier fought this condition in play after play. In contrast, Dumas fils supported the courtesan by permitting her to be redeemed through love. Yet, there is more than this attitude toward society which differentiated Augier from Dumas fils.

The socially oriented Augier constructed his plays around a central theme derived from his attitude toward a social problem of the day. The purpose of the play was to illustrate the serious nature of a transitory quality inherent in contemporary society. Augier's plays reflect a degree of réalisme, for his characters have a human quality which has kept his plays before the public for a long period of time.

Le Gendre de M. Poirier is characteristic of Augier's craft. In this play, there is a conflict between the old and the new--the older aristocracy represented by a young nobleman and the nouveau riche by an old gentleman. The older man, by purchasing the estate of the young nobleman, compels him to marry his daughter. The conflict arose from the nobleman's continuance of his old habits and especially from his cavalier attitude toward his wife. Such an attitude was in direct contrast to the social and economic demands of the nouveau riche. The situation is further complicated by this wealthy gentleman's pretensions of joining the aristocracy. In the end, there is a compromise whereby both individuals gain compassion and a deeper understanding of each other's problems. This situation represented a very common

problem derived from the increasing influence of the bourgeoisie in business and society during the Second Empire.

While Dumas fils began his plays with a thesis derived from the day's social conditions, he differed from Augier in his dramatic treatment. Unfortunately, Dumas fils bent the theme to fit his technical facility. Since he was primarily concerned with theme, Dumas fils employed a raissoneur who spoke for the playwright and who made certain that the audience understood the playwright's theme and his attitude toward it. The composition of the characters involved in the struggle was built in a manner which kept the theme constantly before the audience. One group of characters was directly involved in solving the problem while a secondary group had experienced a similar problem. These groups were contrasted to illustrate the universal quality of the theme. Feeling that a rapidity of action would keep the audience's mind off the limitations of the theme and the impossibilities of the action, this author "greased the wheels" of his plot so well that the action rolled forcefully and violently to its conclusion. According to Dumas fils, the primary device which shaped the plot was the resolution of the play. After planning the conclusion, the action and its lines, this playwright began to plot his play. While his themes had a social and contemporary significance, they tended to be negated through the use of techniques which were imposed upon the action.

During one of the latter years of Perrin's administration at the Comédie-Française, he said that all he needed to keep this theatre alive was to present a play by Augier one year, the next year a play by Dumas fils, and the following year one by Sardou. The combination of these

three figures for an extended period retarded any normal development in the theatre. Of these three, Sardou was most removed from the contemporary scene. Sardou's method of giving a body to his theme is stated in the preface to Le Haine. After the question of the theme was stated, Sardou looked for a formula which would answer this question. Once answered, the play could be constructed swiftly. Unfortunately, the body of the play which Sardou built was never very strong and had little relation to reality. His questions were abstract statements of obvious philosophical tenets. The prime factor which made Sardou's plays popular was the starring roles for great personality actors or actresses of the day, such as Sarah Bernhardt. André Antoine, in his memoirs of the Théâtre-Libre, stated that he was very much against policies (Perrin's or the playwright's) which permitted playwrights to dominate the theatrical scene to the exclusion of others. Antoine believed that playwrights should be permitted to develop freely any subject matter which reflected the socioeconomic conditions of the middle class.

Those individuals directly linked to the naturalistic movement which influenced Antoine are Taine and Zola. By chance, Antoine wandered into one of Taine's lectures on the history of art at the École des Beaux-Arts. Immediately, Antoine was fascinated by Taine's point of view and his concepts of art. For some time, Antoine did not miss a lecture and the implication can be made that Antoine knew, either through reading them or through attending the lectures, the complete Taine method and theories of art along with its naturalistic application. Taine's two great works are his Lectures on Art and History of English Literature. Both works are an expression of his method; in the

preface to the latter work, Taine states the exact nature of his method.

Taine's procedure was to relate the art work to the race which produced it, to the surroundings of that race, and finally to the social, political, and economic situation of its epoch. Taine felt that by this means a better understanding of an art work's value and its importance could be determined. The importance of his system stems from the significance he assigns to the environment which produced this art work. Antoine attempted to relate these ideas to the theatre through the production of plays which reflected the changing nature of society. André Antoine recognized Taine as one of the men to whom he owed a great deal.

From Zola, Antoine developed an understanding of the theories of naturalistic theatre. Zola, many years before the opening of the Théâtre-Libre, examined the state of contemporary theatre and expressed a concern for its failure to reflect society. In his critique of the theatre, Zola wrote articles for two papers that were later published under the title Le Naturalisme au théâtre. As in his novels, Zola based his concepts of reality upon observations of life. In the theatre, Zola felt that the training of the actor had to be related to nature; thus he insisted that the actors examine and observe the reactions of people in their surroundings. Also, Zola noticed that there was little coordination between the various technical aspects of the theatre. The setting did not contain any reality inherent in the play's action; it was usually a large setting even though a small living room was the play's locale. The acting was big and at the footlights, and failed to

establish any relationship between the characters and their environment. Dramaturgically, Zola believed that the older playwrights produced only cardboard people. Above all, Zola stated that there had to be a slow evolution in all art forms. It was Zola's belief that naturalisme was the end result of this altering process.

The most direct theatrical influence upon Antoine was Henri Becque. During the spring of 1888, Antoine was asked to appear in a special private performance of La Parisienne which Becque personally supervised. Though it is difficult to define Becque's theatrical practices as naturalisme, it is obvious that Antoine in the months immediately after this experience became more keenly attuned to various theatre practices which would express naturalisme. This is strikingly seen by Antoine's reaction to the performances by the company of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen seen during the summer of 1888 in Brussels. Prior to re-opening the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine wrote a letter to Sarcey explaining some of his concepts in the staging of crowds. Now, his attention to naturalistic details of acting and directing appeared to be the direct result of his association with Becque. In the coming season, Antoine proved his concepts of staging naturalistic crowd scenes in his productions of La Patrie en danger (by the de Goncourt brothers) and Le Mort du duc d'Enghien (by Hennique).

In the examination of the milieu prior to the opening of the Theatre-Libre, the theatrical practices of the Comédie-Française revealed that their attitude toward production was dated--cliches had become the ruling factor in their productions. Scenery designed for productions of the period from 1875 to 1890 was formalized to a degree which did not

allow the development of a naturalistic quality in the acting or directing. The placement of the doors upstage center and upstage right and left forced an actor's entrance movements to be artificial. Another outstanding example of an unrealistic scenic quality was the arrangement of the furniture; it was stretched across the stage near the footlights.

This condition was further magnified by the fact that the actors enjoyed crossing to the footlights or prompter's box to play their scenes. Such stage movement and settings could not contain any quality of truth as defined by naturalisme. During this era at the Comédie, gestures employed by the actors were big and open, which indicates that the acting tended toward heroic proportions. Also, one of the acting techniques was derived from the personality of the actors or actresses. The combination of these effects and practices gave the productions at the Théâtre-Française a pronounced presentational quality, a complete antithesis of naturalisme.

In establishing the Théâtre-Libre, André Antoine brought a naturalistic quality to the theatre that had been derived from the theories of Taine, Zola, and Becque. Not always finding popular playwrights reflecting the necessary qualities of naturalisme, Antoine searched for works by younger playwrights whose ideas were compatible with his. During the early years of the Théâtre-Libre, authors were not always available. To achieve his goal, Antoine did not hesitate to ask for adaptations of novels and short stories that contained realistic attributes. Such productions as Tout pour l'honneur, Jacques Damour, Soeur Philomène, and Les Frères Zemganno were the result. After several years, Antoine discovered and developed playwrights who fulfilled his

naturalistic approach to all production aspects. The two most outstanding authors of this era were Brieux and de Curel; both writers employed characters and subject matter indigenous to the background of the bourgeoisie who began to support the theatre during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. More and more, the socioeconomic problems of the day became material for the plays produced by Antoine.

While development of playwrights was basic to the growth of naturalisme in the theatre, a corresponding need was felt in the production techniques. The first outstanding change came in the staging of crowd scenes and in the introduction of realistic props. To achieve a naturalistic crowd effect, Antoine handled the supernumeraries in such a manner that they were a collection of individuals instead of the formal arrangement which appeared at the Comédie. By paying attention to the movement details of each individual and the individual vocal response, the crowd became a vital part of the stage action and seemed to influence and control the action of the play. Also, Antoine sensed the need for a greater reality of scenic environment; in developing it, he introduced realistic props and more realistic scenery and costumes. Beginning with Les Bouchers and Chevalerie rustique, Antoine brought real meat and water onto the stage. While these were only isolated items, they shocked the audience but prepared them for an extended use of the actual on the stage.

To acting and directing concepts, Antoine brought his observations of life. To illustrate the extent that naturalisme played in the acting and directing, Antoine believed that the actor had to become the character which the author created. In his portrayal of Oswald in

Ghosts, Antoine found that he had completely submerged his personality into the character's. This submersion of Antoine's personality was so extensive that he was unaware of the audience after the first act of the play. Expanding these staging concepts, Antoine observed that people looked at each other when talking. Thus, he demanded that his actors look at each other instead of at the audience (as was common at the Comédie-Française). In facing each other, the actors were forced into movements and positions derived from everyday actions. In Soeur Philomène, for example, Antoine turned the actors away from the audience and insisted that they speak in that position; he felt that a group of interns having breakfast around a table would face the center of the table.

Above all, Antoine unified the total effect of the naturalistic play. The audience was required to feel that they were observing the truth of the action. By removing the fourth wall of a set, the audience could properly observe the action. The idea of the fourth wall tied the directing, acting, and the scenic elements together to obtain a homogeneous emotional response from the audience. Antoine's goal was the creation of a theatrical reality indigenous to the bourgeois audience; through the development of an increased degree of truth in the theatrical art form, he achieved his aim.

Thus the growing influence of the bourgeoisie affected not only the political, socioeconomic situation of the nineteenth-century France but all the art fields. The bourgeoisie by obtaining a financial security through the industrialization improved their socioeconomic security by an education. This newly acquired knowledge indicated to

the middle class that there was a separation between the current art forms as an expression of reality and their own observations of life. This discovery of the bourgeoisie brought a sense of their daily life into the reality of art. Developing from a very simple form, réalisme changed from a very superficial penetration of life to the deeper probing of naturalisme. This shift in realistic art paralleled the growing dominance of the bourgeoisie. In the beginning, réalisme dealt only with the individual; but through observation, réalisme discovered that the individual was related to his society. This change is reflected in the plays which André Antoine produced during his management of the Théâtre-Libre. After Antoine's work drama was liberated from previous theatrical mannerisms by directly relating the theatre to the socio-economic problems of the bourgeois audience. During the seven seasons of the Théâtre-Libre, Antoine intensified the development of naturalistic theatre which injected a new spirit into theatrical concepts and affected future theatrical developments.

APPENDIX

THE PROGRAMS OF THE THÉÂTRE-LIBRE

Passage de l'Elysee-des-Beaux-Arts

1887

March 30
Mademoiselle Pomme, comédie-farce en un acte, en prose--Edmond Duranty and Paul Alexis
Un Préfet, drame en un acte, en prose--Arthur Byl
Jacques Damour, pièce en une acte, en prose (tirée de la nouvelle d'Émile Zola)--Léon Hennique
La Ccccarde, comedie en un acte, en prose--Jules Vidal

May 30
Le Nuit Bergamasque, comédie en trois acts, en vers--Émile Bergerat
En Famille, piece en un acte, en prose--Oscar Méténier

1887 - 1888

October 11
Soeur Philomène, pièce en deux actes, en prose (tirée de roman des Goncourt)--Arthur Byl and Jules Vidal
L'Évasion, drame en un acte--Villiers de l'Isle-Adam

Théâtre Montparnasse, 31, rue de la Gaite

November 11
Belle-Petite, comédie en une acte, en prose--André Corneau
La Femme de Tabarin, tragi-parade en un acte, en prose--Catulle Mendès
Ester Brandès, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Léon Hennique

December 23
La Sérénade, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Jean Jullien
Le Baiser, comédie, en un acte, en vers (musique de Paul Vidal)--Théodore de Banville
Tout pour l'honneur, drame en un acte (tirée du Captaine Burle d'Émile Zola)--Henry Céard

February 10
La Puissance des ténèbres, drame en six actes, en prose (traduction Pavlovsky et Mètènier)--Léon Tolstoy

March 23
Le Pelote, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Paul Bonnetain and Lucien Descaves
Perrot assassin de sa femme, pantomime en un acte (musique de Paul Vidal)--Paul Margeritte
Les Quarts d'heure, deux tableaux, en prose--Gustave Guiches and Henri Lavedan

April 27
Le Pain du péché, drame en deux actes et quatre tableaux, en vers (d'après Aubanel)--Paul Arene
Matapan, comedie en trois actes, en vers--Émile Moreau

June 15
La Prose, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Gaston Salandri
Monsieur Lamblin, comédie en un acte, en prose--Georges Ancey
La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin, comedie en un acte, en prose--Paul Alexis

Théâtre de Menus Plaisirs, 14, Boulevard de Strasbourg

1888 - 1889

October 19
Les Bouchers, drame en un acte, en vers--Fernand Icres
Chevalerie rustique, pièce en un acte, en prose (traduite par Paul Solanges)--Giovanni Verga
L'Amante du Christ, mystère en un acte, en vers--Rodolphe Darzens

November 5
Rolande, pièce en cinq actes, en prose--Louis de Gramont

December 10
La Chance de Françoise, comédie en un acte, en prose--Georges Porto-Riche
La Mort du duc d'Enghien, drame en trois tableaux, en prose--Leon Hennique
Le Cor fleur, féerie en un acte, en vers--Ephraim Mikhael

January 15
La Reine Fiammette, drame en six actes, en vers (musique de Paul Vidal)--Catulle Mendès

January 31
Les Résignés, pièces en trois actes, en prose--Henry Céard
L'Échéance, piece en un acte, en prose--Jean Jullien

March 19
La Patrie en danger, drame en cinq actes--E. & J. de Goncourt

May 2
L'Ancien, drame en un acte, en vers--Léon Cladel
Madelein, drame en trois actes, en prose--Émile Zola
Les Inséparables, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Georges Ancey

May 31
Le Comte Witold, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Stanislas Rzequski
Le Coeur revélateur, pièce en un acte (adaptée d'après la traduction de Tell-Tale Heart de Poe par Charles Baudelaire)--Ernest Laumann
La Casserole, pièce en un acte, en prose--Oscar Méténier

1889 - 1890

October 21
Dans le Guingol, prologue en un acte, en prose--Jean Aicard
Le Père Lebonnard, pièce en quatre actes, en vers--Jean Aicard

November 27
Au temps de la ballade, pièce en un acte, en vers--Georges Bois
L'École des veufs, comédie en cinq actes, en prose--Georges Ancey

January 10
La Pain d'autri, drame en deux actes, en prose (traduite par Armand Ephraim et Willy Schutz)--Ivan Turgenev
En Détresse, pièce en un acte, en prose--Henry Fèvre

February 25
Les Frères Zemganno, pièce en trois actes, en prose (tirée du livre d'E. de Goncourt)--Paul Alexis and Oscar Méténier
Deux Tourtereaux, pièce en un acte, en prose--Paul Ginistry and Jules Guérin

March 21
Ménages d'artistes, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Eugène Brieux
Le Maître, étude de paysens, en trois tableaux--Jean Jullien

May 2
Jacques Bouchard, pièce en un acte, en prose--Pierre Wolff
Une Nouvelle École, pièce en un acte, en prose--Louis Mullem
La Tante Léontine, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Maurice Boniface and Edouard Bodin

May 30
Les Revenants, drame familial en trois actes (traduite de norvégien par Rodolphe Darzens)--Henrik Ibsen
La Pêche, pièce en un acte, en prose--Henry Céard

June 13
Myrane, étude dramatique en trois actes, en prose--Émile Bergerat
Les Chapons, pièce en un acte, en prose--Lucien Descaves and Georges Darien

1890 - 1891

October 29
L'Honneur, comédie en cinq actes, en prose--Henry Fèvre

November 26
Monsieur Bute, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Maurice Biollay
L'Amant de sa femme, scenes de la vie Parisienne--Aurelien Scholl
La Belle operation, pièce en un acte, en prose--Jullien Sermet

December 25
La Fille Elisa, pièce en trois actes, en prose (tirée du roman d'E. de Goncourt)--Jean Ajalbert
Conte de Noël, mystère moderne en deux tableaux, en prose--Auguste Linert

February 26
La Meule, pièce en quatre actes, en prose--Georges Lecomte
Jeune premier, pièce en un acte, en prose--Paul Ginisty

April 27
Le Canard savage, pièce en cinq actes, en prose (traduction d'Armand Ephraim et Th. Lindenlaub)--Henrik Ibsen

May 26
Nell Horn, drame en quatre actes et six tableaux, en prose--J. H. Rosny.

June 8
Leurs filles, pièces en deux actes, en prose--Pierre Wolff
Les Fourches caudines, drame en un acte, en prose--Maurice Le Corbeiller
Lidoire, pièce en un acte, en prose--Georges Courteline

July 6
Coeurs simples, pièce en un acte, en prose--Sutter-Laumann
Le Pendu, pièce en un acte, en prose--Eugène Bourgeois
Dans le rêve, comédie-drame en un acte, en prose--Louis Mullem

1891 - 1892

October 24
Le Père Goriot, pièce en cinq actes, en prose (tirée du roman de Balzac)--Adolphe Tarabant

November 30
La Rançon, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Gaston Salandri
L'Abbé Pierre, pièce en un acte, en prose--Marcel Prévost
Un beau soir, comédie en un acte, en vers--Maurice Vaucaire

December 21
La Dupe, pièce en cinq actes, en prose--Georges Ancey
Son petit coeur, pièce en un acte, en vers--Louis Marsolleau

February 2
L'Envers d'une sainte, pièce en trois actes, en prose--François de Curel
Blanchette, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Eugène Brieux

March 7
L'Étoile rouge, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Henry Fèvre
Seul, pièce en deux actes, en prose--Albert Guinon

April 29
Simone, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Louis de Gramont
Les Maris de leurs filles, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Pierre Wolff

June 8
La Fin du vieux temps, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Paul Anthelme

June 27
Péché d'Amour, pièce en un acte, en prose--Michels Carre, fils, and Georges Loiseau
Les Fenêtres, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Jules Perrin and Claude Couturier
Mélie, pièce en un acte, en prose (d'après la novelle de Jean Reibrach)--Georges Docquois

1892 - 1893

November 3
Le Grappin, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Gaston Salandri
L'Affranchie, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Maurice Biollay

November 29
Les Fossiles, pièce en quatre actes, en prose--François de Curel

January 16
Le Ménage Brésile, pièce en un acte, en prose--Romain Coolus
Mademoiselle Julie, tragédie en un acte, en prose (traduite par Charles de Casanove)--Auguste Strindberg
À bas le progrès, bouffonnerie satirique en un acte, en prose--Edmond de Goncourt

February 15
Le Devoir, pièce en quatre actes, en prose--Louis Bruyerre

March 27
Mirages, drame en cinq actes, en prose--Georges Lecomte

April 27
Valet de coeur, comédie en trois actes, en prose--Maurice Vaucaire
Boubouroche, pièce en deux actes, en prose--Georges Courteline

May 29
Les Tisserands, drame en cinq actes, en prose (traduction de Jean Thorel)--Gerhart Hauptmann

June 12
Ahasvère, drame en un acte, en prose--Herman Heijermans
Mariage d'argent, pièce en un acte, en prose--Eugène Bourgeois
Le Belle au bois rêvant, comédie en un acte, en vers--Fernand Mazade

1893 - 1894

November 8
Une Faillite, pièce en quatre actes, en prose (adaptée par Schürmann et Jacques Lemaire)--Björnstjerne Björnson
Le Poète et le financier, pièce en un acte, en vers--Maurice Vaucaire

December 26
L'Inquiétude, pièce en trois actes, en prose--Jules Perrin and Claude Couturier
Amants éternels, pantomime en trois tableaux (musique de André Messager)--André Corneau and H. Gerbault

February 1
L'Assomption de Hannele Mattern, poèm de rêve, en deux parties (traduction de Jean Thorel)(musique de Marshalk)--Gerhart Hauptmann
En l'attendant, comédie en un acte, en prose--Léon Roux

February 23
Une Journée parlementaire, comédie de moeurs, en trois actes, en prose--Maurice Barres

April 25
Le Missionnaire, roman théâtral en cinq tableaux--Marcel Luget

From February 14, 1895 to April 27, 1896, the Théâtre-Libre was under the Larochelle management.

This listing of the programs at the Théâtre-Libre is based upon Adolphe Thalasso's Le Théâtre-Libre, essai critique, historique et documentaire and Samuel Waxman's Antoine and the Théâtre-Libre.

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