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An analysis of writing as a career in seventeenth-century France based on a comparative study of the career histories of Jean Racine, Philippe Quinault and Edme Boursault

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Abstract

This study analyses the careers of Racine, Quinault and Boursault to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies authors in seventeenth-century France employed to promote their careers. The literary, social, economic and political context in which they worked is explored by building on key biographical works and on studies of *l'âge classique*.

The professional status of a writer is examined, developing work by Alain Viala. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of forms of capital provides a framework to analyse the writers' pursuit of capital during their careers. Building on research by Erving Goffmann and Stephen Greenblatt, the authors' use of self-fashioning is explored, as is their manipulation of their images as *honnêtes hommes* and *hommes de lettres*.

The impact of patronage in enabling authors to ensure financially sustainable careers and the ways they appealed to potential patrons is examined. Research by Sharon Kettering and Peter Shoemaker, among others, is extended by the application of theories of patronage to the practice of the case study authors.

This thesis develops research into literary polemics with a particular focus on the deliberate employment and strategic manipulation of controversy for self-promotion, illustrated by disputes engaged in by the three authors.

The methods writers employed to gain professional legitimacy through the institutions of the monarchy, the Académie française and the literary salons are scrutinised and the impact of changes in the theatre-going public is reviewed.

The research concludes that, at this period, writing could provide a viable career and offer opportunities for social advancement, but the findings demonstrate that successful writers needed to manage their careers strategically. They had to be versatile in their writing to respond to public tastes, sensitive to expectations of behaviour in order to obtain patronage and accumulate capital and willing to adopt a range of techniques of self-promotion to build and secure their reputations.

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Declaration

Research undertaken as part of my Master of Arts by Research on *The Reasons behind 'La Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes'* (University of Durham 2011-12) has informed the discussion of this quarrel in the chapter on Literary Controversy, particularly pp.119-21.

Part of the research for this thesis has formed the basis of an article entitled 'Boursault's Career Strategies' which has been accepted for publication in *Early Modern French Studies* and is due for publication in late 2016. DOI 10.1080/20563035.2016.1235369.

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Explanatory note on texts and references

Where texts, particularly those from the seventeenth century, have been consulted in the original editions, titles and quoted text are presented with the original spelling and use of accents.

Where a source is available only electronically, the DOI or URL is given in full in the Bibliography and, where appropriate, the date accessed will indicate final checking for bibliographic accuracy.

All references to a page in Dedications and Prefaces have been calculated and appear as, for example, [p.a vi]. For non-paginated electronic sources the location will be identified by Section headings or paragraph numbers.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Aims and parameters of the research

The primary aim of this thesis is to analyse how authors in France in the second half of the seventeenth century responded to and worked within the literary, social, economic and political context in which they were situated.[1] An evaluative comparison of the authorial strategies of three case study authors will illustrate the effectiveness of techniques employed at this period to build and maintain a career as a professional writer.

This was a decisive period of change affecting the literary field in France. *L'âge classique* is characterised by the influence of the monarchy on literature and culture, the establishment of the Académie française, key developments in public theatre attendance and the influence of the literary salons. Gregory Brown discusses how the 'co-existence of royal court, royal academy, and royally-sanctioned public theatre enabled playwrights to simultaneously gain renown and revenue from commercial performances, endorsement by academic critics [...] and elite patronage and protection'.[2] Alain Génetiot sees 'le classicisme' as 'l'idéal de perfection artistique' in which 'la raison supplante le génie, le souci de la forme belle […] se discipline par un ordre qui la rend plus lisible et plus claire et partant plus accessible'.[3] Patrick Dandrey describes a literature

> se gardant des fautes contre le goût, les mœurs et la langue, affectionnant l'harmonie et la résolution des oppositions, révérant la sagesse des temps anciens et la perfection des formes antiques.[4]

It was also a period which saw important changes in society with the emerging influence of the bourgeoisie and the importance of *honnêteté* for social acceptance. It offered new possibilities of social mobility to professional writers who were able to use their renown to gain entry into salons and even to the court. Writers began to develop a new image and status: Alain Viala describes 'la naissance de l'écrivain',[5] though Christian Jouhaud emphasises that Viala 'n'a pas

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[1] The focus for the research is on this period, since works by the case study authors encompassed the period from the 1650s to the final decade of the century. However, key developments earlier in the century had a significant impact on the development of writing as a career and will be included in the research study where relevant.

[2] Gregory S. Brown, *A Field of Honor: Writers, Court Culture and Public Theater in French Literary Life from Racine to the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p.39.

[3] Alain Génetiot, 'Perspectives actuelles sur la littérature classique française', *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 1 (2006), 54-83 (pp.73-74).

[4] Patrick Dandrey, 'Les deux esthétiques du classicisme français', *Littératures Classiques,* 19 (1993), 145-70 (p.153).

[5] Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'Ecrivain: Sociologie de la Littérature à l'Age Classique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985).

visé la naissance d'une activité créatrice mais celle d'une qualification sociale'.[6] This makes it a particularly relevant period for concentrated study because it was one in which the perception of what it meant to be a writer was changing, moving towards the recognition of writing as a *métier* or profession. Brown refers to 'the new social identity of playwright' and charts the transition between the troupe authors and court poets of the early seventeenth century and the 'new type of dramatic author that appeared in the middle decades'.[7] A detailed examination of how authors reacted to and exploited the conditions at this key period of literary change will illustrate the emerging professional career of the writer. Extending the work of Viala and Brown by combining their studies with Pierre Bourdieu's research will provide greater insight into how authors constructed their careers and will inform the examination of their strategies in analysing the importance of the different audiences and institutions they came into contact with.

Bourdieu, discussing what he describes as 'the field of cultural production', argues that 'the meaning of a work (artistic, literary, philosophical etc.) changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader'.[8] He highlights the difficulty of studying works from an earlier period: 'ignorance of everything which goes to make up the "mood of the age" produces a derealization of works: stripped of everything which attached them to the most concrete debates of their time, [...] they are impoverished.'[9] In presenting his detailed analysis of Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale*, Bourdieu justifies this 'analyse scientifique des conditions sociales de la production et de la réception de l'œuvre d'art' arguing that the analysis 'intensifie l'expérience littéraire'. He contends that understanding

> la genèse sociale du champ littéraire, de la croyance qui le soutient, du jeu de langage qui s'y joue, des intérêts et des enjeux matériels ou symboliques qui s'y engendrent, ce n'est pas sacrifier au plaisir de réduire ou de détruire […] C'est tout simplement regarder les choses en face et les voir comme elles sont.[10]

This thesis will follow Bourdieu's model in analysing the context in which three selected case study authors were writing. However, unlike Bourdieu's approach, this analysis will take an overview rather than an in-depth critical study of individual works, reviewing the wider networks within which authors and their works were situated. The research will aim to increase the understanding of the reasons why authors selected particular topics for their plays, different

[6] Christian Jouhaud, 'Histoire et histoire littéraire: *Naissance de l'écrivain* [note critique]', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations,* 43 (1988), 849-66 (p.849).
[7] Brown, p.36.
[8] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), pp.30-31.
[9] Bourdieu, *Cultural Production*, p.32.
[10] Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'Art: Genèse et Structure du Champ Littéraire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), pp.14-15.

genres in which to work and ways to promote their works, informed by greater insight into the tensions they faced as professional writers. Such analysis, according to Bourdieu, is capable of bringing to light 'le principe générateur, la raison d'être' of a work of art and this then 'fournit à l'expérience artistique, et au plaisir qui l'accompagne, sa meilleure justification'.[11]

This thesis will offer a unique perspective by its detailed examination of the authorial strategies adopted by selected professional writers at this time. A significant element will be an in-depth comparison of these authors' career pathways, allowing a triangulated contextualisation of the key influences on the development of their careers. The focus will be on Boursault, Quinault and Racine. Each author has characteristics that make him particularly suitable for this study and their selection enables a differentiated comparison based on a range of criteria. Their levels of success and renown, both contemporary and long-term, varied. Racine is clearly the major writer of the three and he provides an example of an author who succeeded both in gaining contemporary recognition as one of the major dramatists of the period and in acquiring high social status. Georges Forestier considers that 'il n'a pas seulement accédé à la célébrité des plus grands écrivains. Il a accompli l'une des trajectoires sociales les plus extraordinaires de l'époque moderne'.[12] While less well-known today than Racine, Quinault's contemporary reputation was high. As Morel states: 'Louis XIV aimait les vers de Quinault, Mme de Sévigné se plaisait à le citer' and he highlights Voltaire's assessment which 'situait Quinault au même rang que Corneille et Racine', acknowledging, however, that such a judgement 'scandalise parfois les historiens de la littérature française de notre temps'.[13] Quinault provides an interesting comparative case study partly because of his responsiveness to changing fashions (demonstrated by his career move to writing *libretti*). Boursault is today the least well-known of the case study authors, though he enjoyed renown in his day, writing one of the most financially successful plays of the period.[14] Françoise Gevrey argues that Boursault should not be considered a minor author and her comments support his selection as one of the case study authors:

> Il fut bien de son temps par son parcours soumis au mécénat et aux opportunités de la sociabilité; il entra dans des réseaux d'hommes et de femmes de lettres; en écrivain qui avait du métier, il sut atteindre un large public en pratiquant tous les genres qui préparaient la modernité et en les faisant évoluer.[15]

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[11] Bourdieu, *Règles de l'Art*, p.14.
[12] Georges Forestier, *Jean Racine* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), p.13.
[13] Jacques Morel, *Agréables Mensonges*: *Essais sur le Théâtre Français du XVIIe Siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), p.397.
[14] John Lough, *Writer and Public in France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p.94.
[15] Françoise Gevrey, 'Edme Boursault: de la polémique au roman', *Bulletin du Centre de Recherche du Château de Versailles* (2015), 1-27 (p.26).

This study will explore the motivations for writing in different genres and the opportunities available to writers for diversification to sustain their careers.

All three writers were of relatively modest social origins and their early careers illustrate the ways in which they sought to make their way socially and professionally in the world of Parisian theatre. Of the three, Boursault was the least well-educated and is a useful candidate for a study of how authors planned strategically to overcome disadvantages. The careers of all three demonstrate notable social and professional mobility in their rise to prominence in the theatre, at court and, in the case of Racine and Quinault, to membership of the Académie française.

The selection of only male writers for this study is recognised as a possibly limiting factor. The exclusion of women writers is justified because the juxtaposition of writers sharing similar experiences provides an effective basis for comparison of the authors' career strategies. The experience of women writers at this period would be significantly different to that of their male counterparts and could be better explored in a broader study.

The authorial strategies employed by these writers will be scrutinised and this thesis will argue that the career paths of the case study authors demonstrate both a keen awareness of opportunities for progression and a deliberate manipulation of those opportunities. Key points of focus in this study will be the authors' involvement in literary controversy to increase public awareness of their work, their adaptability in extending their writing repertoire and in seizing career opportunities, and the tactics they employed to seek patronage and support.

Chapter 2 will explore the development of writing as a career at this period and review the sustainability of a profession as a writer. Chapter 3 will provide a detailed analysis of the career histories of the case study authors and a comparison of the strategic decisions they made in order to develop successful careers. Chapter 4 will examine the strategic manipulation of literary controversy as a way of self-promotion and will explore the extent to which authors used different forms of controversy. Patronage underwent a major change at this period, including attempts to centralise the system and make the king the focal point for authors seeking financial reward and social advancement; this will be examined in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 will then provide specific examples of the patronage system in practice through an analysis of the approach of the case study authors. Chapter 7 will explore the influence that some key contemporary institutions (restricted here to the Académie française, the salons and the theatre-going public) had on an author's career. The different rewards offered by each of these institutions and the different ways authors sought to present a favourable image of themselves

to each institution will be reviewed, with a focus on the ability of these institutions to confer status and cultural legitimacy on authors in a way that the patronage system did not.

Methodology

A key source of primary evidence for this research into authorial strategies has been the writings of the case study authors. Their career decisions as reflected in aspects of their work will be analysed in order to see how authors appealed to their audiences. The pursuit of literary quarrels will be explored through their writings and through the writings of their contemporaries. Judgements by their peers and in literary reviews provide important primary source material to highlight contemporary opinions of the strategies used. Published correspondence, particularly by the prolific Boursault, also provides an important source for an analysis of how an author promoted his views and self-image. The way authors used paratexts, chiefly prefaces and dedications, demonstrates their intentions in presenting their works and allows them to promote an image of themselves and their writing which is designed to find favour with their audience. Gérard Genette describes the paratext as a 'seuil':

> entre texte et hors-texte, une zone non seulement de transition mais de *transaction*: lieu privilégié d'une pragmatique et d'une stratégie, d'une action sur le public au service […] d'un meilleur accueil du texte et d'une lecture plus pertinente.[16]

In analysing the ways in which authors sought to ensure a favourable reception of their work, this study will focus not simply on the reception of the text itself, but, in a broader sense, the reception of the author of that text. It will examine the strategic use of prefaces to respond to critics. It will also analyse dedications and dedicatory epistles offered by the case study authors to actual or potential patrons, as these offer a valuable insight into the approaches they used to present not just their work but themselves in ways which would appeal to their target audience. A close analysis of dedications can illustrate the tensions which will be examined as a key theme in this study: the need to secure patronage and influential social support yet also to appear as a man of integrity and to avoid the appearance of obsequious flattery of patrons.

A study of the career trajectories of the three authors, using contemporary sources and later research, enables a more in-depth exploration of their motivations in strategic decision-making and illustrates the literary practices of the period. An examination of the evolution of the careers of these authors reveals their responses to external factors, particularly social, political and economic factors. This thesis will therefore utilise key critical and biographical works on the case study authors, including Forestier and Raymond Picard for Racine, Etienne Gros and

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[16] Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 2002), p.8.

William Brooks for Quinault and Saint-René Taillandier and Marie-Ange Croft for Boursault, as well as near-contemporary sources such as Boursault's granddaughter and Boscheron.[17] Contemporary judgements by their peers will be examined to analyse critical reaction to the works of the authors. These will be taken predominantly from Donneau de Visé's *Mercure Galant*, but also from Loret's *Muse Historique*, as well as works by Tallemant des Réaux, Robinet, Mme de La Fayette, Sorel, Perrault and Chapelain. Some contemporary plays also offer a judgement on the works of their peers. All such judgements may be marked by bias or partiality but nevertheless provide relevant insight into contemporary opinion.

Scholarly research will be used to provide additional evidence of the authors' interaction with the key institutions and the arguments raised in these works will be examined in the light of the findings of this study. Brown's research is particularly relevant and to some extent provides a model for the approach of using case study analysis of writers' careers, although his context is eighteenth-century France and his choice of authors aims to follow 'three trajectories exemplifying success, disappointment, and utter failure'.[18] The criteria for the selection of writers for this research and the period of study differs from that of Brown and this thesis offers a more direct comparison between the careers in the context of the main areas of this study: literary controversy, patronage and the influence of key institutions. Viala's ideas on the development of the role of the writer will be applied, where appropriate, to the analysis of the careers of the case study authors.

Other source material will inform the discussion and application of key concepts which contribute to the theoretical framework for this study: primary sources focusing on the concepts of *honnête homme* and *homme de lettres* which had such influence at this period; Bourdieu's concept of forms of capital and the impact of social relations within the literary field; theories of self-presentation by Erving Goffman and Stephen Greenblatt; Norbert Elias's and John Scotson's model of established/outsiders; and the idea of celebrity status, predominantly in works by Chris Rojek and Antoine Lilti.[19] These concepts will now be introduced to illustrate

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[17] Raymond Picard, *La Carrière de Jean Racine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956); Etienne Gros, *Philippe Quinault, sa Vie et son Œuvre* (Paris: Champion, 1926); William Brooks, *Philippe Quinault, Dramatist* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); Saint-René Taillandier, *Etudes Littéraires: un Poète Comique du Temps de Molière: Boursault, sa Vie et ses Œuvres* (Paris: E. Plon, 1881); Marie-Ange Croft, *Edme Boursault: De la Farce à la Fable (1661-1701)* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Paris Ouest and University of Quebec at Rimouski, 2014); Edme Boursault, *Theatre de Feu Monsieur Boursault,* ed. by Hiacinthe Boursault, new edn, 3 vols (Paris: La Compagnie des Libraires, 1746), I*, Avertissement;* Boscheron, 'La Vie de Philippe Quinault de l'Académie Française', in *Le Theatre de Mr Quinault,* 5 vols (Paris: Ribou, 1715).
[18] Brown, p.xii.
[19] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh,

their applicability to this research and the ways in which this research can develop key aspects in the context of the seventeenth century.

Bourdieu's theoretical work

Bourdieu's thinking extended the traditional view of economic capital and financial assets by introducing the concepts of social and cultural capital.[20] Social capital depends essentially on one's social origins, influential connections and relationships; Bourdieu refers to the assets an individual gains by possessing 'a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital'. He identified the benefits of membership as 'material profits, such as all the types of services accruing from useful relationships, and symbolic profits, such as those derived from association with a rare, prestigious group'.[21] Although Bourdieu's theory is based in a twentieth-century social context, this thesis will seek to apply it, as appropriate, to the seventeenth-century literary field by analysing the case study authors' pursuit of social capital through membership of select groups such as the Académie française or through social connections in literary salons or at court.

Cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu, is both a physical entity, such as a book, and also the talent or skill which allows the book to be produced. 'Objectified cultural capital' can be purchased, but the cultural capital embodied in the author is not easily transferred. For Bourdieu, the accumulation of cultural capital requires a 'process of embodiment, […] a labor of inculcation and assimilation […] invested personally by the investor'.[22] Thus the individual must devote the necessary time and effort to self-improvement to acquire cultural capital. The acquisition of cultural capital also involves the ability to appear as a person of culture, to understand cultural allusions and to internalise culturally appropriate ideas, opinions and beliefs.

Bourdieu identifies the final overarching category of symbolic capital, which represents the outcome of the conversion of the other forms of capital. He defines symbolic capital as 'the

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Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956); Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders,* 2nd edn (London: Sage, 1994); Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion, 2001); Antoine Lilti, *Figures Publiques: L'Invention de la Célébrité 1750-1850* (Paris: Fayard, 2014).
[20] Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', trans. by Richard Nice, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education,* ed. by John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp.241-58.
[21] Bourdieu, pp.248-49.
[22] Bourdieu, p.244.

form that the various species of capital [i.e. economic, social and cultural] assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate'.[23] In particular, in professional relationships, symbolic capital is 'l'acquisition d'une réputation de compétence et d'une image de respectabilité et d'honorabilité'[24] which emphasises the value that the recipient of symbolic capital is perceived to hold within a culture or a field. Racine's preferment as Royal Historiographer illustrates his acquisition of symbolic capital through his reputation as a dramatist which could then be converted to economic capital in the form of a salaried position. The focus on the 'image of respectability and honourability' has a clear resonance with the concept of *honnêteté,* which had a major influence on societal norms in seventeenth-century France, and demonstrates the potential relevance of Bourdieu's theory to the period under study.

Symbolic capital thus implies socially-recognised legitimisation such as prestige or honour. The concept of legitimacy and recognition by significant others is an important one, particularly at this period. Antoine Furetière provides a contemporary definition for 'une autorité legitime' as 'celle qui est emanée de celuy qui a le pouvoir de la donner'.[25] Brown discusses the struggle by playwrights to gain status and social acceptance, arguing that 'an author's objective cannot be reduced merely to material gain, such as patronage, to power over others, or to simple self-promotion, such as the performance or publication of his or her plays'; instead he argues that the writer's goal is best described as *legitimacy*, meaning 'authority, credibility, and respect from others who control the institution or institutions'.[26] This focus by Brown on legitimacy as the prime aim of aspiring authors perhaps over-simplifies the complexity of the motives underlying the strategic decision-making of authors and the tensions inherent in balancing the ultimate goal of legitimacy with the pragmatic need for a sustainable career and income. Evidence for this will be explored in the thesis.

Later scholars have explored Bourdieu's theories as a framework for their research, employing his concepts in analysing social inequality, frequently in studies relating to educational systems. Some have produced research evidence to challenge aspects of his theories. John Goldthorpe focuses particularly on the concept of cultural capital and argues 'Bourdieu's view of the transmission of cultural capital as a key process in social reproduction is simply wrong'.[27] His

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[23] Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory*, 7 (1989), 14-25 (p.17).
[24] Bourdieu, *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Editions du Minuit, 1979), p.331.
[25] Antoine Furetière, *Dictionaire Universel,* 3 vols (La Haye: Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690), II, 'Legitime'.
[26] Brown, p.27.
[27] John Goldthorpe, '"Cultural Capital": Some Critical Observations', *Sociologica,* 2 (2007), 1-23 (p.14).

challenge is that Bourdieu's 'idea of the family as the only, or even the main, locus of the transmission of cultural capital is, in the modern world at least, quite unsustainable'.[28] He argues against Bourdieu's view of the exclusivity of the mode of intergenerational transmission of cultural capital and contends that recent empirical research demonstrates that 'schools and other educational institutions can function as important agencies of re-socialisation'.[29] This argument will be considered in the context of the very rigid social hierarchy of seventeenth-century France, where it might be assumed that the dominant powerful classes would illustrate the concept of 'intergenerational monopolisation of cultural capital'.[30] The careers of the case study authors will be examined to ascertain if it was possible for them to 'compensate for or counter family influences' and acquire cultural capital through other means.

Bourdieu's concept of capital as forming the foundation of social life and the basis of position within the social order (or, in this case, within the literary field) provides a framework to analyse writers' pursuit of capital during their careers and how this influenced the image of themselves they sought to present. Viala's assessment that Racine turned to writing 'pas pour son plaisir ou pour la fascination des mots, mais pour se faire une place'[31] underlies his view that Racine's career targeted predominantly the accumulation of social capital: this study will evaluate his view. The case study authors will provide instructive models of the ways in which authors sought to present themselves to differing audiences in order to accumulate capital. The nobility at court and the members of salons and theatre audiences represented the most obvious sources of social and economic capital, while cultural capital could be obtained from a writer's peers in either the Académie or the salons.

The Bourdieusian concept of capital is relevant to an understanding of patronage. Authors could seek to gain capital through their dedications and their use of the patronage system: predominantly both economic and social capital, though this thesis will also discuss examples of authors using dedications to gain cultural capital. Patronage may be seen as an exchange of capital: the exchange of a form which cannot be measured (the author's cultural capital) for a form which can easily be measured (the patron's economic capital) and one which is less easy to measure (the patron's and author's social capital). Cultural and economic capital could also be obtained through involvement in literary controversy, though such involvement could damage an author's social capital. Therefore, the use authors made of controversy will be

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[28] Goldthorpe, p.9.
[29] Goldthorpe, p.14.
[30] Goldthorpe, p.16.
[31] Viala, *Racine: La Stratégie du Caméléon* (Paris: Seghers, 1990), p.14.

reviewed to see how they limited any damage and whether their use of the strategy was affected by the stage they had reached in their career. This study will explore the pursuit of all forms of capital by the case study authors and will propose a fluid, overlapping and spiralling model of accumulation as opposed to a model of linear, stepped acquisition of distinct forms of capital: the acquisition of one form leads to conversion to another form, which then revisits and impacts on the accumulation of the previous form of capital in a continuous process.

Bourdieu's concept of a 'field' as a system of social positions with an internal structure based on power relationships and in which people compete for resources can be applied to that of a professional community of writers. Bourdieu's view is that 'the literary or artistic field is a *field of forces*, but it is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform or conserve this field of forces';[32] this notion of struggles will be explored through the literary controversies in which the case study authors chose to engage. The relationship between the professional field and other fields of power – the Académie, salons, patrons and the dominant royal court – will also be explored.

The Bourdieusian concept of capital will be extended in this research with the suggested addition of 'vocational capital': the resources accumulated through success in one's chosen profession. The group of professional writers can be seen as a field – restricted to those with vocational capital – who are creating a cultural product. Like the other forms of capital, vocational capital takes time to accumulate as struggling writers (or newcomers to any profession) seek to develop their professional skills, to begin their careers and to gain a viable income. Once acquired, vocational capital is an obvious asset and has the capacity to produce profits; it can offer a source of power and authority within the vocational field, such as membership of the Académie. This concept of vocational capital has similarities with Andy Hargreaves's and Michael Fullan's 'professional capital', which they apply specifically to the teaching profession. They consider professional capital as a function of three kinds of capital: human capital (or individual talent), social capital (trust and collaboration) – which they argue must complement human capital to be effective – and decisional capital, since 'making decisions in complex situations is what professionalism is all about'.[33] Decisional capital provides an interesting extension to Bourdieu's theory of forms of capital and key elements are applicable to the proposed concept of vocational capital. Decisional capital includes the pride that professionals take in their work, the fact that 'they are respected by peers and by the public

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[32] Bourdieu, *Cultural Production,* p.30.
[33] Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan, *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2012), p.5.

for knowing what they are doing' and 'they come to have competence, judgement, insight, inspiration and the capacity for improvisation as they strive for exceptional performance'.[34] Hargreaves and Fullan analyse the concept of professional capital in the contemporary context of the teaching profession but this thesis will demonstrate that key elements of this concept can be applied to the profession of writer and will explore the emerging professionalism of writers as part of an analysis of the inter-relationship of the forms of capital.

Bourdieu recognised the diverse and subtle ways in which power is transferred and social order maintained, as well as the conflict within fields as people mobilise and compete for capital. While some authors in seventeenth-century France could rise to positions of status and economic reward, not all could achieve financial success and not all successful authors could sustain viable careers. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is relevant in this context. The ability to recognise and respond to society's expectations of the role of writer and to navigate successfully the complexities and demands of the court, the public theatre and the norms of critical contemporaries illustrates, in Bourdieu's terms, 'a feel (*sens*) for the game'[35] or the *habitus* ('systems of durable, transposable dispositions […] predisposed to function […] as principles which generate and organize practices')[36] acquired by experiences in the literary field. An author with *habitus* would demonstrate the sensibility developed by interactions with key institutions and individuals and the learned behaviour of how to appeal to influential patrons and to the commercial theatre audience. This thesis will provide an additional perspective on Bourdieu's research by its application to explicit examples in the context of the literary field of seventeenth-century France. It will also examine the link between capital and self-presentation: the image an author would seek to present of himself in order to acquire capital.

Self-fashioning and self-presentation
Brown discusses writers' strategies to 'fashion public identities for themselves as honorable men of letters'.[37] He refers to an individual developing a new self-conception as a way of reconciling their previous self to social experiences, rather than creating an entirely new self-identity. Therefore, self-fashioning represents a series of minor, perhaps evolutionary, changes which respond to past experiences, rather than an image created specifically to appeal to a particular audience at a particular time. For Brown, self-fashioning is a progressive concept:

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[34] Hargreaves and Fullan, p.5.
[35] Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice,* trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p.82.
[36] Bourdieu, p.53.
[37] Brown, p.37.

'the strategic creation of authorial identities'.[38] Greenblatt describes the 'fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process' suggesting 'a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving'.[39] Goffman's definition reiterates the notion of deliberate, conscious performance, referring to an individual acting 'sometimes in a thoroughly calculating manner [...] solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain' and to people attempting to control the responses of different audiences in different ways.[40] The purposeful nature of such self-presentation is demonstrated through what he describes as 'techniques of impression management'.[41] He also notes that an individual may intentionally act in a particular way 'chiefly because the tradition of his group or social status requires this kind of expression and not because of any particular response (other than vague acceptance or approval) that is likely to be evoked'.[42] This reflects the importance for the individual of acting consistently according to social norms in order to be accepted within the group. Goffman recognises the diversity of audience reactions and that different audiences may misunderstand or misinterpret the conduct of the individual, suggesting that an author could not rely on maintaining one image throughout his career but must continue to meet simultaneously the expectations of behaviour of a range of different audiences: a precarious position.

Greenblatt explores the issue of autonomy in the construction of identity, but he concludes 'fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions – family, religion, state – were inseparably intertwined'. He describes individuals as 'remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society', adding a caveat: 'if there remained traces of free choice, the choice was among possibilities whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological system in force'.[43] His conclusion is that one of the conditions governing self-fashioning is 'submission to an absolute power or authority';[44] Brown also recognises that 'strategic self-representations by individual writers [are] in response to the experience of having status and identity ascribed to them by more prominent social elites'.[45] The impact of cultural power and the strategies of self-fashioning adopted by 'self-made' men to gain social ascendency will be illustrated by aspects of the careers of the case study authors.

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[38] Brown, p.4.
[39] Greenblatt, p.2.
[40] Goffman, p.3.
[41] Goffman, p.132.
[42] Goffman, p.3.
[43] Greenblatt, p.256.
[44] Greenblatt, p.9.
[45] Brown, p.7.

Another study that is of relevance to self-fashioning and the concept of social capital, though approached from a different position, is Elias's and Scotson's study of the long-standing residents of a town and newly-arrived outsiders, which provides 'a picture [...] of the power and status relationships and of the tensions bound up with them'.[46] The established residents treat the new residents as inferior and this in turn leads to the new residents accepting this image of themselves, even when there is no basis for this. The established residents are able to control the sources of power (local councils and similar bodies) to ensure that only members of their group are able to exercise power: a model of social capital in practice, though Elias and Scotson do not make this point explicitly. Those who already possess capital are the established insiders, whilst those without capital represent the excluded outsiders. This is closely linked to the exploration in this study of the role played by the institutions in shaping an author's career. Established *gens de lettres* would have controlled one of the contemporary sources of power, namely the Académie française, and also wielded influence in the salons, though without having overall control of them. In Elias's and Scotson's study, the outsiders seek admittance to the sources of power in order to obtain social acceptance and to become part of the established group of residents. This study will explore how authors at the beginning of their careers – the outsiders – sought to gain admittance to the contemporary sources of power in order to obtain both social and cultural acceptance and will also look at the ways authors who were already established could either help or hinder the progress of the outsiders.

By linking aspects of Bourdieu's theory with that of Elias and Scotson in the context of the French seventeenth-century literary field, this study will be able to examine the process whereby aspiring writers sought to gain acceptance and recognition and whether, as outsiders, they sought initially to prioritise one form of capital or if they placed equal value on all forms of capital. Elias's and Scotson's work is particularly relevant to the Académie française, since the existing members controlled admission.

Honnête homme
To gain acceptance in contemporary society writers needed to present an image of themselves which conformed to the dominant cultural ideology of *honnêteté*. During the seventeenth century there was a gradual change from the perception that to be a man of honour required heroic exploits in the conduct of war. As Brown describes, there was 'a sublimation of early modern noble warrior culture, based on the imperative to defend personal honor, into a system

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[46] Elias and Scotson, p.xii.

of civility, or *honnêteté*', the essence of which requires 'valorizing self-control and deference to others over courageous acts of violence'.[47] Emmanuel Bury describes a context 'où l'honnêteté se substitue peu à peu à l'idéal héroïque'.[48] Furetière's contemporary dictionary defines *honnêteté* as 'pureté de mœurs', 'une maniere d'agir, juste, sincere, courtoise, obligeante, civile'. He highlights the fact that an *honnête homme* 'merite de l'estime, de la loüange, à cause qu'il est raisonnable, selon les bonnes mœurs. On le dit premierement de l'homme de bien, du galant homme, qui a pris l'air du monde, qui sçait vivre'.[49] La Rochefoucauld's *Maxime 203* states that an *honnête homme* is someone who 'ne se pique de rien':[50] one who is not easily offended and acts without pretension, being fully in control of his emotions. The need for moderation and self-restraint is commonly highlighted in guides to *honnête* behaviour. Descartes cautioned that 'un honneste homme n'est pas obligé d'avoir veu tous les livres, ni d'avoir appris soigneusement tout ce qui s'enseigne dans les escholes'. For him, the key to *honnêteté* is 'pratiquer les bonnes actions', which should be dictated by man's own reasoning, not by schooling or education. In fact, he considers it would represent 'une espece de deffaut en son education, s'il avoit trop employé de temps en l'exercice des lettres'.[51] Bury considers Descartes as 'l'archétype de l'honnête homme qui a lu, mais qui ne l'affecte pas' and he refers to the desire to appear learned and to accumulate 'le savoir livresque';[52] this overlaps to some extent with the concept of *homme de lettres* discussed later in this study.

Nicolas Faret identifies the acquisition of virtue as essential for those 'qui veulent aspirer à la conqueste des cœurs, & gaigner la bonne volonté de la meilleure & plus saine partie des hommes'. He describes virtue as 'ce tresor inestimable' and declares '[E]n toutes sortes de conditions de vie que l'on se sçauroit figurer, la Vertu certes doit bien estre le premier object que l'on se propose'.[53] Another contemporary, the Chevalier de Méré, describes *honnêteté* as 'la quintessence de toutes les vertus'.[54] Méré recommends that for an *honnête homme* 'le plus important consiste à connoître en toutes les choses, les meilleurs moyens de plaire, & de les

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[47] Brown, p.17.

[48] Emmanuel Bury, *Littérature et Politesse: L'Invention de l'Honnête Homme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), p.98.

[49] Furetière, II, 'Honnestete' and 'Honneste'.

[50] François Duc de La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes,* ed. by Jacques Truchet (Paris: Garnier, 1967), p.51.

[51] René Descartes, *La Recherche de la Vérité par la Lumière Naturelle,* ed. by Ettore Lojacono (Milan: F. Angeli, 2002), p.1.

[52] Bury, p.14.

[53] Nicolas Faret, *L'Honneste Homme ou l'Art de Plaire à la Cour* (Paris: Toussaincts du Bray, 1630), pp.41-43.

[54] Chevalier de Méré, *Œuvres Complètes,* texte établi par Charles-Henri Boudhors. Fac-similé de l'édition de 1930, 3 vols (Paris: Klincksieck, 2008), III, p.71.

sçavoir pratiquer. […] qui en veut acquérir l'estime doit principalement songer à se faire aimer'.[55] Dominique Descotes and Gilles Proust identify a key difference in these views: 'Faret tend à assimiler l'honnête homme à l'homme de bien au sens moral du terme […]. Le chevalier de Méré en revanche voit dans l'honnêteté un art de plaire, fondement d'un art de vivre en société, et non d'une morale'.[56] Maurice Magendie considers that 'Au début du siècle […] les qualités de cœur ont plus d'importance encore que les qualités mondaines d'esprit et de grâce'.[57] Elaine Limbrick *et al* also see a change from Montaigne's concept of 'l'homme civilisé': 'l'homme modéré qui cherche en tout le juste milieu, qui est «généreux» (au sens noble du mot), qui sait qu'il faut être sobre et sage, se plier aux exigences'. They suggest that 'l'aspect moral et l'aspect mondain du concept de «l'honnête homme» sont inséparables dans la pensée de tous ceux qui écrivent sur la civilité au XVIe siècle', but describe a gradual change during the century of the meaning of the term: '«l'honnête homme» tendra à perdre sa première signification d'homme de bien, d'homme vertueux pour désigner simplement l'homme agréable en société'.[58] Similarly, Henry Clark sees a gradual distinction between a moral concept of *honnêteté* 'meaning honorable, upright and honest' and a *mondain* concept 'which gained in ascendency throughout the century' and is 'sociable, but in good taste, full of esprit and gallanterie, polished and worldly in conversation'. However, he notes that 'there was much that was worldly in the moral conception of the term, and, conversely, much that was moral in the most important mondain theories'.[59]

Rémy Saisselin's consideration of the meaning of *honnêteté* concludes that 'l'honnêteté suppose qu'il faut paraître ce que l'on est' and he sees this focus on being true to oneself as a move away from the excesses of the Baroque which represent 'masque, exagération, imagination, gloire, exaltation'.[60] Peter France also contrasts the notion of *honnêteté* with the Baroque and concludes that '[e]xcess is the enemy of the new politeness'.[61] Similarly, Bury

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[55] Méré, *Lettres de Monsieur le Chevalier de Méré* (Paris: Compagnie des Libraires, 1689), I, pp.55-56.

[56] Dominique Descotes and Gilles Proust, *Les Pensées de Blaise Pascal* (édition électronique, 2011) 'Notions et thèmes> L'honnête homme'.

[57] Maurice Magendie, *La Politesse Mondaine et les Théories de l'Honnêteté en France* ([Paris: Alcan, 1925] Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1993), I, p.363.

[58] Elaine Limbrick, Patrick Grant and Arsenio Pacheco, 'La Civilité Nouvelle', in *L'Epoque de la Renaissance: Crises et essors nouveaux 1560-1610,* ed. by Tibor Klaniczay, Eva Kushner and Paul Chavy, 4 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000), IV, pp.451-60 (p.460).

[59] Henry Clark, *La Rochefoucauld and the Language of Unmasking in Seventeenth-century France* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1994), pp.173-74.

[60] Rémy G. Saisselin, 'De l'honnête homme au dandy', in *L'Honnête Homme et le Dandy,* ed. by Alain Montandon (Tübingen: Narr, 1993), pp.9-17 (p.11).

[61] Peter France, *Politeness and its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.11.

argues that the avoidance of excess was considered a major virtue during this period, hence the favour shown to Aristotle's idea of the *juste milieu*, which was 'au cœur de l'honnêteté, car elle est garante d'un équilibre'.[62]

France sees an *honnête homme* as one who 'fits into society, shines in society even, but without going in for vulgar excess'.[63] Both France and Bury emphasise another requirement of an *honnête homme* by referring to the need for decorum and for demonstrating consideration for others. According to France, it was important to show not only 'self-control and deference to others' but also 'a desire not to shock and hurt [others], but to please and gratify them'.[64] Bury sees this as the source of the idea of *bienséance* that was fundamental at this period.[65] Jean-Pierre Dens sees the essence of *bienséance* as acting in a way that 'chacune de nos actions soit appropriée aux circonstances [...], au temps, au lieu, et à la personne' and he likens it to a 'une pratique reposant sur un contrat tacite entre les membres d'une même société', underlining the sanctions imposed by polite society on anyone failing to adhere to its unwritten rules of conduct.[66] Since *honnêteté* implied behaviour that would make one acceptable in elite society, it was a key image for an author to present.

Faret is extremely critical of ambition, which would involve immodest or vain behaviour. He recommends that one should always have 'la modestie à parler discrètement de ses faits' and demonstrate 'la franchise à loüer hautement ceux des autres qui s'en sont rendu dignes'.[67] However, this presented a problem for writers tasked with praising the nobility, since Faret described flattery as a 'vice [qui] est trop lasche pour tomber en la pensée d'un honneste homme'.[68] This leads France to point out the tension between a 'generation of writers who liked to think of themselves as returning to good sense after the excesses of the previous generations, but their society revolved around a king who had to be virtually deified'.[69] To avoid this problem, many authors made use of the rhetorical device of *praeteritio*, which here took the particular form of the apparent refusal by the client to praise their patron: the author declares that the dedicatee is too modest to want their virtues to be publicly praised so will avoid doing so. However, the author then lists all of the virtues that the recipient apparently would not wish

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[62] Bury, p.82.
[63] France, p.12.
[64] France, pp.58-60.
[65] Bury, p.22.
[66] Jean-Pierre Dens, *L'Honnête Homme et la Critique du Goût: Esthétique et Société au XVIIe. Siècle* (Lexington: French Forum Publishers, 1981), pp.113-14.
[67] Faret, p.97.
[68] Faret, p.122.
[69] France, p.15.

to have praised. Corneille's dedication of *Cinna* to Monsieur de Montauron provides an illustration:

> je ne dirai rien des avantages de votre naissance, ni de votre courage […] Je ne dirai rien de ce prompt et puissant secours que reçoivent chaque jour de votre main tant de bonnes familles ruinées […] ce sont des choses que vous voulez tenir cachées.[70]

The device may appear too transparent to be credible but that would be to neglect the primacy of appearance over sincerity. Very few dedications would have been believed by a sceptical reader: whether the reader believed that the patron was too modest to wish to be praised or that the author did not wish to use excessive flattery was less important than the fact that this appeared to be the case. Since dedications are written directly to the patron, it would be most important for the author that the patron was pleased by the dedication and the flattery it contained, rather than whether any of the other readers believed it. It was in the interests of both the patrons, who are portrayed as modest in addition to their other virtues, and the authors, who avoid flattery without disappointing their patrons, to maintain the illusion of *honnêteté* that *praeteritio* enabled them to present. However, it remained the case that the author was flattering his patron, an action unworthy of an *honnête homme,* and at the same time disguising the flattery, thereby transgressing the requirement for openness and transparency. Vivien Thweatt states that 'the honnêtes gens of the classical age were guilty of a considerable hypocrisy in their practice of the art of pleasing and one of which they were frequently unaware'. She goes on to say 'the habitués of the salons were frequently blind to the fact that the *art de plaire* was a euphemism for the *art de parvenir*'.[71] Falsely professing admiration for a patron and praising qualities they do not possess purely in order to secure personal gain may be hypocritical but, in the context of seventeenth-century patronage, it was accepted practice. Moderate, even undeserved, flattery would have been considered an element of *politesse* towards a patron: as Thweatt notes, they would have been unaware of any hypocrisy. It may also be supposed that, in many instances, an author would have felt genuine gratitude towards a patron who had been particularly generous and so his praise of such a patron would have been quite sincere.

Underpinning *honnêteté* is the requirement to appear to act naturally and without pretension. Faret condemns 'la plus noire malice dont l'envie se sert pour ruyner l'estime de ceux qui l'ont bien establie, c'est de dire que toutes leurs actions sont faites avec dessein' and 'que tous leurs

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[70] Pierre Corneille, *Œuvres Complètes,* ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1980, 1984), I, p.906.
[71] Vivien Thweatt, *La Rochefoucauld and the Seventeenth-Century Concept of the Self* (Geneva: Droz, 1980), p.56.

discours sont estudiez'.[72] Alain Montandon sees this 'idéal de sincérité, de transparence et de vertu calme' as the main requirement of an *honnête homme*, citing Méré's statement 'le parti qui plaît aux honnêtes gens est celui de la franchise et de la simplicité'.[73] Montandon refers to 'fausse honnêteté' or 'une honnêteté contrefaite', highlighting Méré's judgement ('jamais la fausseté n'est bien soutenue, elle se dément à toute heure') that such unnatural, artifical behaviour cannot be sutained.[74] While it is in fact a literal contradiction, it can be argued that the self-fashioning by individuals represents dishonest *honnêteté*. Instead of acting in a natural, unaffected way, *honnêteté* required everyone to conform to the norms expected by elite society (the court and the salons). There is therefore an element of duplicity and deception which relates to Goffman's concept of self-fashioning as presenting an image of oneself that others are most likely to find appealing. Greenblatt also sees self-fashioning as 'linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception: an adherence to mere outward ceremony'.[75] Appearance would have been more important than reality: as Thweatt confirms, 'position and power at court and social success in Paris depended to a large extent on the packaging and merchandizing of the self'.[76]

Faret recommends that an *honnête homme* should be physically reserved and not display excessive emotions through either speech or gesture: these should mirror one's general comportment in order to present a uniform appearance of *honnêteté*.[77] This links to Goffman's argument that self-presentation is like an actor's performance, selecting his 'social front'[78] and ensuring the movements and gestures are made to work in harmony with the lines spoken to present the audience with the desired image of the character. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is also relevant: an author must learn the appropriate behaviour for the social situation. As Lilti concludes, 'with salon life [...] the writers had to behave, for the most part, as courtiers'.[79] Acceptance into the influential social groups of the day was of vital importance to the authors' careers. They could not find patrons or gain legitimacy if they were outsiders: not part of the established groups in the salons, the Académie and the court. Elias's and Scotson's research with twentieth-century social groups has clear relevance to the notion of *honnêteté*: they

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[72] Faret, pp.35-36.
[73] Alain Montandon, 'L'honnête homme et le dandy', in *L'Honnête Homme et le Dandy*, pp.223-62 (p.235).
[74] Montandon, p.235.
[75] Greenblatt, p.3.
[76] Thweatt, p.56.
[77] Faret, pp.235-36.
[78] Goffman, p.13.
[79] Lilti, 'The Kingdom of Politesse: Salons and the Republic of Letters in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *Republics of Letters*, 1 (2008), 1-11 (p.8).

identify high-status social groups as having a 'code which demands a higher level of self-restraint [...] it prescribes a more firmly regulated behaviour, [...] greater refinement of manners and which is studded with more elaborate taboos':[80] this code is imposed on outsiders seeking access to and acceptance by elite groups.

The nature of seventeenth-century French society meant that anyone seeking any degree of social mobility had little option but to comply with the code and social norms of the established ruling group. This study will consider the tensions for authors in balancing the requirements of presenting oneself as an *honnête homme* while seeking pragmatically to further one's career, sometimes through actions thought to be inappropriate, such as engaging in literary controversy. The aim of presenting oneself in a way acceptable to a powerful social elite in order to gain entry to such a group is not necessarily, or always, duplicitous or cynically calculating. The ideal of *honnêteté* could be genuinely appealing as a mode of living. Writers from modest backgrounds might wish to emulate the behaviour they admired or regarded as being the accepted norm and they would willingly fashion themselves according to the same model of comportment.

Homme de lettres

Another contemporary concept that merits consideration is that of the *homme de lettres*. This implied being not only a writer but also a well-educated, cultured and well-read person. The dictionary of the Académie française defines 'un homme lettré' as someone 'qui a de l'érudition';[81] Furetière's definition is similar: 'celuy qui a estudié, qui est sçavant'.[82] Roger Chartier suggests that the *homme de lettres* 'was not a scholar who had acquired profound knowledge in a specialised field but a studious man who had some acquaintance with all fields of knowledge'.[83] This polymath had to be at ease in society and to facilitate this, should be a 'master of discourse'.[84] In short, 'like fashionable people [...] they had wit and took pleasure in the charms of conversation and in parlour games, but above all they were men of letters – that is men dedicated to study, to reading'.[85] Nicholas Hammond identifies a possible area of tension since 'although he may be widely read, [the *honnête homme*] must affect a "docte ignorance",

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[80] Elias and Scotson, p.153.
[81] Académie française, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Françoise,* 2 vols (Paris: Coignard,1694), I, p.640.
[82] Furetière, II, 'Lettré'.
[83] Roger Chartier, 'The Man of Letters', in *Enlightenment Portraits,* ed. by Michel Vovelle, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp.142-89 (p.142).
[84] Chartier, p.159.
[85] Chartier, p.143.

not appearing too learned'.[86] Brown sees *gens de lettres* as 'those included in the *monde* based not on title or wealth, but on acculturation, as displayed through comportment and self-presentation'[87] which also implies underlying elements of *honnêteté*. Lilti discusses Voltaire's conclusion ('Il est plus important d'être un homme du monde qu'un homme de lettres') suggesting a shift in emphasis from the earlier seventeenth-century view of the man of letters defined 'on the basis of scholarship or writing' to be replaced instead by 'the association of the *esprit philosophique* and *le bon goût*'.[88] Thus the concept of an *homme de lettres* is a multifaceted and evolving one with a merging of elements of *honnête homme* and *homme de lettres*.

Several scholars comment on the relationship between *gens de lettres* and state sponsorship. Chartier asserts that 'far from destroying the critical freedom that was the mark of the man of letters, the sovereign's generosity made that freedom possible because it rescued the less wealthy among them from the tyranny of private protectors'.[89] Brown identifies 'an interdependence between royal state power and gens de letters [*sic*]' through which 'the emerging modern state power and autonomous literary field reinforced each other'.[90] His view is that 'those who identified with the literary republic attributed their presence at courts, and the compensation they received from patrons, as recognition of their personal virtue rather than as payment for any written work they produced'.[91] This apparent indifference to, or at least downplaying of, the importance of direct financial gain was an important quality of an *homme de lettres*. Chartier believes that an *homme de lettres* would not wish to be seen as a client, since it made him beholden to a member of the nobility and resulted in 'the humiliating dependency of a clientage relation'.[92] France points out that 'the mercantile values of self-interest are seen eroding the older values of honour, friendship and duty'.[93] Rori Bloom sees a conflict of opposites 'since the gentleman refuses those very things that the author pursues: publicity and profit'.[94] Joshua Halberstam notes that while both fame and fortune are viewed as positive

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[86] Nicholas Hammond, *Creative Tensions: an introduction to Seventeenth-century French Literature* (London: Duckworth, 1997), p.84.
[87] Brown, p.14.
[88] Lilti, 'Kingdom of Politesse', p.8.
[89] Chartier, p.144.
[90] Brown, p.9.
[91] Brown, p.13.
[92] Chartier, p.144.
[93] France, p.100.
[94] Rori Bloom, *Man of Quality, Man of Letters: The Abbé Prévost between Novel and Newspaper* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009), p.39.

attributes ('traditional blessings'), 'yet the *pursuit* of either is generally deemed objectionable'.[95]

It is this element of the 'pursuit' of fame and wealth which created a tension for an author seeking to increase his economic capital, since his social capital depended upon appearing to be indifferent to his economic capital. The basic necessity for professional writers was a sufficient and secure income from their writing. However, their image and reputation could be damaged by too vigorously and obviously seeking financial reward and this would then impact upon their accepted place in salons and at court which, in turn, would affect their chances of preferment and patronage. Geoffrey Turnovsky adds another perspective, referring to the contemporary attacks by other writers against Pierre Corneille, apparently for the commercialisation of his works, but, he argues, more based on 'his lack of modesty' ['Je ne dois qu'à moi seul toute ma Renommée'][96] and 'his ethical lapses as an *homme de lettres*'.[97] Turnovsky describes 'a new cultural ideal […] which lay in the "refinement" of letters through integration into court and noble society, and in the "socialization" of *gens de lettres* as adept participants in *le monde*. […] Central to the articulation of this socialization process were images of exclusion from *le monde* […] as negative paradigms against which writers could affirm their adeptness for elegant society'.[98] He suggests that Corneille effectively isolated himself by transgressing against expectations of behaviour considered appropriate for writers.

The image of the *honnête homme* would have appealed slightly more to authors wishing to improve their social capital, since it was focused on gaining access to and acceptance by the most influential social groups. By contrast, the image of a well-educated polymath implied by an *homme de lettres* would have been more appealing to an author interested in accumulating vocational and cultural capital. However, there would have been considerable overlap between the two images and authors could not easily overlook either in their self-promotion.

Renown and celebrity

Authors in seventeenth-century France used various strategies to make their name known and to maintain their position in the eye of the literate public and thereby consolidate their careers. This thesis will consider whether this recognition can be said to amount to celebrity status. The concept of celebrity is related to ideas of fame, notoriety, reputation and renown. Gladys and

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[95] Joshua Halberstam, 'Fame', *American Philosophical Quarterly,* 21 (1984), 93-99 (p.93).
[96] Corneille, I, p.780.
[97] Geoffrey Turnovsky, *The Literary Market: Authorship and Modernity in the Old Regime* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp.38-39.
[98] Turnovsky, pp.36-37.

Kurt Lang differentiate between reputation – the esteem in which others, particularly professional peers in the same field, hold the artist – and renown, which is 'measurable by how well a person is known outside a specific art world'.[99] Fred Inglis makes a distinction between celebrity and renown: '[r]enown brought honour to the office not to the individual, and public recognition was not so much of the man himself as the significance of his actions for the society'.[100] If renown provides fame associated with the office, the essence of renown is vocational capital, since that is strictly relevant to how well one fulfils the office and implies that someone is well-known in a specific field on account of success within that field. Rojek suggests that celebrity is being 'well-known in public'.[101] This thesis will explore the ways in which the case study authors sought renown – increase in their vocational capital – by appealing to a social network of their peers, gaining membership of the Académie and admittance to literary salons and the court and by attracting the theatre-going public.

Rojek makes a distinction between what he describes as *ascribed celebrity,* which 'concerns lineage: status typically follows from bloodline. […] Individuals may add to or subtract from their ascribed status by virtue of their voluntary actions, but the foundation of their ascribed celebrity is predetermined', and *achieved celebrity*, which 'derives from the perceived accomplishments of the individual in open competition'.[102] Louis XIV therefore has *ascribed celebrity* and Racine could be said to have *achieved celebrity*. Such celebrity could perhaps be considered as a form of capital, elements of which could be transferred through association: Racine's *achieved celebrity* was enhanced by being connected with the king and even the king recognised benefits in being associated with someone with *achieved celebrity*. Forestier, in discussing the *privances* with which Louis had honoured Racine, makes the point that 'il importait sans doute à Louis XIV qu'on sût qu'un homme aussi célèbre – et célèbre dans toute l'Europe – […] était tout à lui'.[103]

For some scholars, a defining characteristic of celebrity is the speed with which fame is acquired (and with which it can be lost). According to Gillian Perry *et al* celebrity 'denotes a cult of personality and a more fleeting or transient status that is at least partly dependent on the

[99] Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, 'Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation', *American Journal of Sociology,* 94 (1988), 79-109 (p.84).
[100] Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p.4.
[101] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p.9.
[102] Rojek, *Celebrity*, pp.17-18.
[103] Forestier, p.796.

relationship with an audience'.[104] Rojek points out that the word 'celebrity' derives from Latin words meaning 'fame' and 'swift', indicating 'a relationship in which a person is marked out as possessing singularity, and a social structure in which the character of fame is fleeting'.[105] Similarly, Charles Kurzman *et al* stress the importance of the speed of one's rise in their definition of celebrity, since it 'confers honor in days, not generations'.[106] This implies speed of communication and it may be questioned whether the notion of celebrity can be applied to a period before the creation of mass media. Both Kurzman *et al* and Rojek regard the involvement of mass media as a crucial element in the promotion of celebrity status.[107] Rojek acknowledges: '[o]f course achieved celebrity pre-dated the rise of the mass media', describing individuals who had achieved fame and often notoriety as possessing *pre-figurative* celebrity status: 'they were items of public discourse, and honorific or notorious status was certainly attributed to them'. He recognises that such individuals enjoyed a 'measure of metropolitan celebrity in their lifetimes' and argues that 'its indispensable conduits were kinship and friendship circles and the possession of literacy'.[108] He later describes a 'reframing of celebrity culture' since the seventeenth century, acknowledging that individuals of fame and influence had existed before the advent of mass media but information about them had to be communicated without the speed and effectiveness of technology: modern-day celebrities, on the other hand, can 'command the world's headlines'.[109] Thus he distinguishes those with pre-figurative celebrity status from present- day celebrities who are 'ubiquitous' and accessible through mass media.[110]

For Daniel Boorstin, heroes obtain respect through 'greatness in some achievement. [...] The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media'.[111] This thesis will explore ways that celebrity status might be created by individuals with the aid of the forms of media available at the time through a conscious process of self-fashioning. Joseph Roach identifies as a key factor in the rise of celebrities the fact that '[t]heir images circulate widely in the absence of their persons'.[112] In seventeenth-century France, portraits of authors frequently appeared in

[104] Gillian Perry, Joseph Roach and Shearer West, *The First Actresses* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2011), p.133.
[105] Rojek, p.9.
[106] Charles Kurzman, Chelise Anderson, Clinton Key, Youn Ok Lee, Mairead Moloney, Alexis Silver and Maria W. van Ryn, 'Celebrity Status', *Sociological Theory,* 25 (2007), 347-67 (p.347).
[107] Kurzman *et al*, p.347; Rojek, p.13.
[108] Rojek, p.19.
[109] Rojek, *Fame Attack: The Inflation of Celebrity and its Consequences* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), p.vii.
[110] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p.19.
[111] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), p.49 and p.61.
[112] Joseph Roach, 'Public Intimacy: The Prior History of "It"', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain*

published editions of their works. Brown suggests that these engraved portraits were designed to represent authors as courtiers and *gens d'esprit* rather than providing a more technical image of the writer (pen in hand), establishing iconic conventions that would be widely followed and offering a new format for self-presentation.[113] These images cannot be said to have circulated widely but would have been available to a literate audience through the media available at the time. The case study authors all published editions of their plays, including collections of their works, and used their dedications and prefaces to draw attention to the success of the performances. Authors would also distribute copies of their works widely among friends and social connections: one of Boursault's letters to his wife refers to sending her copies of his latest work for her to give to her friends, who, since they were not in Paris, might not have been able to obtain them otherwise.[114] Lang and Lang suggest that the durability of reputation depends largely on what an artist did in his lifetime to protect or project his reputation: 'artists who count on their work for a livelihood have a strong incentive to provide publishers […] with a steady supply'.[115] They also consider the impact of posthumous publications in preserving an artist's reputation: both Racine's and Boursault's family wrote what amounted to memoirs dedicated to preserving their reputations. Quinault's reputation may have benefitted from what they describe as the 'satellite' effect through his association with Lully and all three authors had links to literary circles and to the court 'which fosters the posthumous visibility of an artist'.[116]

Notoriety can be considered as the process of becoming well-known through actions that are met with some disapproval or even outright condemnation. It may be possible for writers to achieve notoriety with little vocational capital or limited literary talent if they become known for actions which attract public attention. This thesis will examine whether authors in seventeenth-century France sought to use literary controversy as a means to achieve notoriety, perhaps as a substitute for literary renown, and whether some authors used it as a means to overcome a lack of vocational capital.

Lilti argues that celebrity was 'invented' in the mid-eighteenth century, describing it as 'un premier âge de la célèbrité'. He identifies key factors creating the cult of celebrity at this time as 'crise de la société d'ordre, premiers développements d'une économie commerciale de la

1660-2000, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp.15-30 (p.16).
[113] Brown, p.47.
[114] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles de Feu Monsieur Boursault*, new edn, 3 vols (Paris: Nicolas le Breton, 1738), I, p.247.
[115] Lang and Lang, p.87.
[116] Lang and Lang, p.92 and p.95.

culture, essor massif de l'imprimé et notamment de la presse périodique, affirmation, du moins en théorie, du principe de la souveraineté populaire'.[117] These factors cannot be said to apply in a similar way in a seventeenth-century context but some aspects may be seen in germination, particularly towards the end of this period, with the increased opportunities for authors to publish their works and with the advent of the periodical, *Le Mercure Galant*, in 1672: the 'first nonofficial journal' according to Juliette Cherbuliez.[118] To illustrate the impact of greater opportunities for social discussion in promoting celebrity status, Lilti highlights 'le rôle des nouvelles sociabilités urbaines, comme la taverne ou le café, où les conversations construisent la figure publique d'un individu bien au-delà du cercle de ses connaissances'.[119] An analogous forum in the seventeenth century was the salon, where discussion of the theatre was a frequent topic. Here, however, the difference between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries is one of scale rather than of nature: access to the salons was manifestly more limited than access to the taverns and coffee-houses.

Lilti refers to actors in the 1760s whose 'présence suffisait à remplir la salle'.[120] Even in the seventeenth century it was enough for an author's name to be associated with a play for the quality of that play to be assumed, again demonstrating that seventeenth-century authors could achieve fame based on their vocational capital. Reviews in the *Mercure Galant* show that Quinault and Racine had a similar impact, with one review of *Esther* saying that '[o]n peut juger [...] la beauté de la Piece par le nom de son Auteur'.[121] Another of the *Mercure*'s reviews reports that Racine 'est connu par un si grand nombre de beaux Ouvrages que son nom fait son Eloge'.[122] Cultural capital, and in a broader context vocational capital, shown by the excellence of Racine's work, could lead to celebrity status: the quality of the plays makes his name praiseworthy. Given the number of people who would have seen a popular play and, with an increase in the literate public, those who would have read a printed edition or a critical review or satire or heard it discussed in the literary salons, plays could have enabled an author to reach a wide audience within the literary field. So it is not perhaps the mass media *per se* which is key to celebrity culture; what is essential is the existence of channels of communication for a wider public to be made aware of individuals as celebrities, confirming, in David Marshal's

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[117] Lilti, *Figures Publiques*, p.9.
[118] Juliette Cherbuliez, *The Place of Exile: Leisure Literature and the Limits of Absolutism* (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), p.48.
[119] Lilti, p.142.
[120] Lilti, '*Figures Publiques*', p.44.
[121] *Le Mercure Galant* (January 1689), pp.281-82.
[122] *Le Mercure Galant* (July 1685), p.288.

words, 'the role of the larger public audience in the construction of the celebrity'.[123] This thesis will therefore explore the emerging public awareness of literary figures from the mid-seventeenth century onwards and 'their impact on the public consciousness' noted by Rojek as an aspect of celebrity.[124]

Methodological constraints

An important issue in the study of seventeenth-century French theatre is the relative lack of reliable primary evidence with which to evaluate a playwright's success in pursuing his career and the specific factors influencing that success. Direct evidence of how many people attended performances of plays or of the revenue from each performance is often limited and needs interpretation to judge the impact a particular authorial strategy had on the popularity of a play. Jan Clarke accepts that the contemporary way of evaluating the success of a play at the time of its production was based on the number of performances, 'en particulier de représentations consécutives'.[125] However, she provides evidence to suggest that reliance on calculations based on consecutive performances can be misleading. With this caveat, she lists plays performed by the *troupe de Molière* and the *compagnie de l'Hôtel Guénégaud* in the period 1659-1680 in order of the number of consecutive performances; the performances of the leading ten plays numbered between 29 and 47.[126] Attempts to establish the number of times a play was performed can be complicated by a scarcity of records available for the different acting companies and this makes it difficult to establish reliably the length of the first run, especially of the early plays by the case study authors. Where such evidence does exist this will be highlighted, particularly in relation to Clarke's evidence that more than 30 consecutive performances represented a very successful play; however, this cannot be used as the sole means of judging success.

There is some available evidence for how much income a play raised during the entirety of its run. La Grange's *Registre* provides some detail of how much Molière's plays raised per performance. This, coupled with reviews of Molière's plays, gives an approximate guide to how much revenue could be expected from a successful play. La Grange gives examples of successful runs, such as *Dom Juan ou Le Festin de Pierre,* which took a total of 20,314 *livres*

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[123] David P. Marshal, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p.8.
[124] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p.31.
[125] Jan Clarke, 'Comment définir mineur/majeur? Une étude du répertoire de la troupe de Molière et de la compagnie de l'Hôtel Guénégaud', *Littératures Classiques*, 51 (2004), 187-204 (p.191).
[126] Clarke, pp.191-92.

in a run of 15 performances.[127] However, the earnings of Molière and his company may be supposed to have been higher than those of a less well-known author and cannot provide an exact point of comparison. As will be mentioned in Chapter 2, even if it were possible to establish how much a playwright could earn, it is difficult to establish what this meant in real terms. Sections later in this thesis make use of figures compiled by John Lough but as his study covers a wide range of careers, the resulting comparison is imprecise. Picard makes estimations of Racine's income but suggests that the actual figures are of less significance than the question: 'A quel niveau social Racine tient-il à se placer?' since 'ses besoins matériels seront ceux du milieu auquel il souhaitera d'accéder: ils seront à la mesure de son ambition'.[128]

For this research study, Pierre Mélèse's *Répertoire Analytique* provides a useful source, listing contemporary reaction to plays and to their authors in the form of an annotated bibliography. However, the accompanying annotation for each document is, of necessity, brief: entries for Quinault are restricted to Chappuzeau's 'éloge de son style si tendre' or Baillet's 'jugement dedaigneux' and Mme de Sévigné's response to Racine's *Bajazet* is summarised in the word 'ironie'.[129] An associated problematical area is the lack of objective reviews of the plays. To gauge the popularity of a play among the theatre-going public and cultured audiences, one may refer to the reviews published in *Le Mercure Galant*, which Picard recognises as a 'revue qui avait une large diffusion'.[130] Denis-François Camusat in his near-contemporary history of the French press provides a somewhat scathing judgement of the *Mercure*: 'il présentoit tout ce qui pouvoit satisfaire un grand nombre de personnes qui ne veulent lire que pour s'amuser'.[131] Moreover, the nature of *Le Mercure Galant*, described by Cherbuliez as a mixture of 'gossip rag, social barometer, chronicle and bona fide news',[132] indicates that its reviews cannot necessarily be considered as serious and objective literary criticism. Camusat is dismissive of the editor, Donneau de Visé, describing him as 'un complimenteur de profession: ajoutons y qu'il pouvoit bien n'avoir pas assez de genie pour oser s'eriger en juge et critique'. He refers to his 'complaisance aveugle' and 'les louanges qu'on l'accuse d'avoir distribuées sans discernement'. He argues that his lack of critical judgement leads him to 'les louanges donées

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[127] Charles Varlet de La Grange, *Le Registre de La Grange 1659-85*, ed. by Bert Edward Young & Grace Philputt Young (Paris: Claye, 1876), pp.73-74.
[128] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.75.
[129] Pierre Mélèse, *Répertoire Analytique des Documents Contemporains d'Information et de Critique concernant le Théâtre à Paris sous Louis XIV 1659-1715* ([Paris: Droz, 1934] Geneva: Slatkine reprints, 1976), p.60 and p.62.
[130] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.155.
[131] Camusat, Denis-François, *Histoire Critique des Journaux*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: J.F. Bernard, 1734), II, p.200.
[132] Cherbuliez, p.48.

au hazard & qui n'honoroient cependant ni celui qui les donnoit, ni celui qui les recevoit'.[133] Picard accuses Donneau de Visé not only of a lack of critical judgement but of prejudice in his judgements. He discusses the reviews of some of Racine's plays, referring to his 'vieille hostilité'[134] to Racine and declares that he was 'contraint d'avouer un succès qui ne lui fait nullement plaisir' in reviewing *Bajazet*.[135] Not only can reviews in the *Mercure* be considered subjective, but unfortunately, the *Mercure* is also inconsistent in choosing which plays to review and the reviews themselves tend to be brief. However, if treated with a certain amount of caution, the reviews can provide useful first hand evidence for the reception of a play and the reputation of authors.

Evidence of personal preferences survives in contemporary letters, of which the best-known are those of Mme de Sévigné. Her letters to Mme de Grignan give her opinion of the plays she has seen, including *Bajazet* (16 March 1672) and *Esther* (21 February 1689). The potential lack of objectivity in personal correspondence is highlighted by Picard who sees Mme de Sévigné as prejudiced against Racine (she is 'l'admiratrice d'un de ses rivaux' [Corneille]) and states 'son opinion est déjà faite, et lorsqu'elle assiste à la représentation […] elle y cherche surtout la confirmation d'un jugement préconçu'.[136] Reviews by other contemporary authors can be relevant but these are also often partisan. Critical responses to plays as part of polemical debates provide a useful source of contemporary reaction, especially when these form part of a wider *querelle* eliciting a range of opinions and counter-arguments. Picard describes the passionate interest at the time for the theatre and declares '[I]l y a même un public pour toute la littérature parasite qui se multiple autour du chef-d'œuvre, pour l'attaquer, ou bien pour le défendre', listing, among others, Boursault, Donneau de Visé, and Montfleury, who 's'en donnent à cœur joie' to the debate about Molière's *Ecole des Femmes*.[137] There were also collections of satirical comments, with those of Boileau a notable example. Picard describes an anonymous writer who attacked Racine's plays as 'un satiriste sans talent' who 's'épuise à collectionner les principales critiques qu'on a pu faire à ses pièces'.[138] Further evidence can be found in the form of references to cabals organised against the plays, sometimes before they were performed, and consequently not to be taken as reliable evidence of the public's view. References made by the authors themselves to the public's view of a performance should naturally be treated with

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[133] Camusat, pp.206-07.
[134] Picard, p.255.
[135] Picard, p.171.
[136] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.172.
[137] Picard, p.88.
[138] Picard, p.253.

caution, though these can be illuminating in providing an insight into the authors' feelings about the reception of their works and relevant examples will be discussed later in this study. While recognising that most of these sources present a partisan view, extrapolation from the evidence available can provide an outline of the situation at the time and permits a reasonable deduction based on triangulated evidence.

CHAPTER 2 – THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING AS A CAREER

This chapter will explore key elements in the early stages of the development of writing as a professional career. The literary context at this period will be reviewed to analyse the interconnected social situation and status of writers. The nature and extent of the income which authors could make from their writing and the other rewards accrued through the profession of writer will be examined. The issues identified here will be applied to the career histories of the three case study authors in the following chapter.

Professional status of a writer

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of the status of *écrivain* and the beginnings of what could be considered as an 'authorial identity'. For Viala,

> la carrière d'écrivain de profession devenait [...] une possibilité réelle. Les gains de finances (gratifications, droits d'auteur), de prestige (académies, mécénat) et d'influence et relations (presse, salons) constituaient des possibles, dont l'acquisition fonde les premières stratégies d'écrivains.[139]

A profession can be considered as a body of individuals having a high degree of skill or vocational capital in a particular occupational area. It implies a paid occupation rather than a leisure activity. There would normally be an expectation that the practitioners undergo training or some form of prolonged apprenticeship and so entry to the profession would be restricted to those individuals with proven skills. Professionals would be expected to adhere to high standards and this is the basis on which the profession would earn respect. Individuals would be expected to demonstrate a personal commitment to their chosen profession. Viala describes '«les littérateurs de profession»: quelle que soit leur raison sociale première, abbé, précepteur, historiographe etc., leur activité la plus connue et la plus importante se situe dans la vie littéraire'.[140] Laurie Ellinghausen, whose subject is English writers of approximately the same period as the *âge classique*, sees 'the establishment of "modern" authorship as a vocation, a profession and a matter of personal commitment'[141] with vocation defined as 'the sense that one's identity is bound up in one's work'.[142]

The concept of a community of writers can take many forms. Roger Marchal describes 'le processus de fondation et de pérennisation d'un groupe littéraire' as a scale with, at the one extreme, 'des groupes d'écrivains unis dans la « camaraderie littéraire »' and, at the other, the

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[139] Viala, *Naissance*, pp.183-84.
[140] Viala, p.42.
[141] Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567-1667* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), p.124.
[142] Ellinghausen, p.1.

official elite of the Académie.[143] Génetiot discusses the concept of 'une communauté savante débattant de questions de théorie littéraire [dans] la pure tradition de sociabilité académique' and describes 'un milieu où la collaboration de chacun des auteurs est féconde pour tous'. This 'sociabilité lettrée' provides a climate in which 'l'œuvre s'élabore en quelque sorte collectivement dans la collaboration intellectuelle des auteurs'.[144] Such a collaborative social group can nurture new writers. Croft provides details of the friendships with other more established authors (including Pierre and Thomas Corneille, Boyer, Charpentier, Des Barreaux, Donneau de Visé, Gilbert, Ménage, Quinault and Segrais) which supported Boursault in the apprenticeship stage of his career: 'L'écrivain, encore peu connu, gagne énormément à ces amitiés. Grâce à elles, il peut parfaire sa formation, bénéficier de conseils avisés et de soutien'.[145] She also provides details of Boursault's own support as a mentor for another writer, Marie-Anne Barbier,[146] which illustrates the nurturing aspect of the professional community of writers.

In contrast, however, Bourdieu's concept of a vocational field implies a less collaborative social group: a key element is the struggle for resources and competition for power within the group. The cultural products of the field would be the plays and published works the writers produced for a competitive market. An element within a definition of a profession is payment for performance or production within that profession. The increase in publishing meant that authors could receive payment from booksellers, while playwrights gained an income from the revenue generated through performances of their works. There would be competition for patronage and for theatre audiences, resulting in literary disputes and forms of direct competition, as will be seen later in this study. As Chartier reports, 'the status of author delivered [the writers] over to the capricious demands of the bookseller-publishers and the public, and enmeshed them in the conflicts common to all trade communities'.[147] C.E.J. Caldicott gives details of the conflicts faced by Molière, who was 'parfaitement au courant des ruses des libraires-imprimeurs qui refusaient de lui reconnaître ses droits' and he explains that Molière paid for his works to be published at his own expense, 'cherchant à opposer aux faux recueils illégitimes de ses œuvres

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[143] Roger Marchal, 'Introduction', in *L'Ecrivain et ses Institutions*, ed. by Roger Marchal (Geneva: Droz, 2006), pp.7-20 (p.8).
[144] Génetiot, 'Boileau et les Institutions Littéraires', in *L'Ecrivain et ses Institutions*, pp.163-85 (pp.171-72).
[145] Croft, *Boursault*, p.92.
[146] Croft, pp.75-76.
[147] Chartier, pp.145-46.

complètes le projet de sa propre édition.'[148] He concludes: 'Il cherchait ainsi manifestement à affirmer son statut d'auteur indépendant.'[149] Viala, debating the case for Corneille to be considered 'le premier auteur moderne', argues that 'les formes de la publication, tant par la scène que par l'imprimé, sont les domaines où Corneille a mené de façon très professionnelle son entreprise d'auteur', concluding 'il a été doublement professionnel: dans sa dramaturgie et, dans la publication de ses œuvres'.[150]

There is a significant contrast between professional writers and the aristocratic amateurs. Jonathan Dewald states: 'Nobles turned to writing in a variety of surprising circumstances, as a part of both public and intimate life. They wrote political reflections and love letters; many began […] producing memoirs for their own amusement or the instruction of their families'.[151] He explains: 'Nobles rarely sought to publish what they wrote. [...] Writing for the public demeaned anyone of high birth'.[152] However, Steven May challenges the idea of the 'stigma of print' whereby 'the Tudor aristocrat honoured a social code obliging him to feign, at least, an abhorrence of the press. Above all he scorned to publish any works of his own'.[153] He argues that 'the substantial number of upperclass authors who published during the sixteenth century effectively discredits any notion of a generally accepted code which forbade publication'.[154] Nevertheless, the 'stigma of print' continued to have an impact in seventeenth-century France, where the situation was further coloured by the concept of *honnêteté* and the concomitant desire to avoid the appearance of being mercenary; Lough speaks of 'the commonly held view that it was wrong to write for money'.[155] Boileau's verdict is clear:

> Travaillez pour la gloire, et qu'un sordide gain
> Ne soit jamais l'objet d'un illustre Ecrivain.[…]
> Je ne puis souffrir ces Auteurs renommez,
> Qui dégoûtez de gloire, et d'argent affammez,
> Mettent leur Apollon aux gages d'un Libraire,
> Et font d'un Art divin un métier mercenaire. [156]

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[148] C.E.J. Caldicott, *La Carrière de Molière: entre protecteurs et éditeurs* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998), p.6.
[149] Caldicott, p.8.
[150] Viala, 'Corneille, premier auteur moderne?', in *Pratiques de Corneille,* ed. by Myriam Dufour-Maître (Rouen: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2012), pp.29-40 (p.35).
[151] Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France 1570-1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.174.
[152] Dewald, pp.182-83.
[153] Steven W. May, 'Tudor Aristocrats and the Mythical "Stigma of Print"' [originally published in *Renaissance Papers 10* (1980)], (para. 1 of 13)
[154] May (para. 13).
[155] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.122.
[156] Nicolas Boileau, *Œuvres Complètes* ed. by Françoise Escal, intro. by Antoine Adam (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p.183.

Lough describes the 'gulf between the nobleman who wrote for pleasure and the bourgeois professional writer':[157] whereas a professional writer could take pride in his published works and the performances of his plays and lay claim to the intellectual property in his work and the financial reward for it, a gentleman writer would circulate his letters and *mémoires* to a circle of friends, avoiding the commercial market. Turnovsky summarises the 'quandary that seventeenth-century *gens de lettres* faced':

> the rise in the status of leisure-oriented writing in elite culture allowed individuals with "literary" talent to claim a more enhanced social identity. But they could do so only so long as that identity adhered to the values of aristocratic sociability, which prescribed that, out of modesty and deference to the group, one downplay one's writing and publishing activities.[158]

If male writers faced social difficulties in publishing their works, the position of women writers at this period was even more difficult. Educated women wrote poems, novels, letters and memoirs and shared their writing with other women in the salons but they very rarely wrote for publication, as this would not have been considered socially acceptable; some adopted the tactic of publishing their works anonymously. Nevertheless, there was a change in the second half of the century which saw more women publishing their work, mostly novels. Joan DeJean refers to nineteen women novelists publishing their work at this period and she describes the 'major force women represented in the production of novels at the end of the seventeenth century'.[159] There were, however, fewer women playwrights. Elizabeth Grist identifies only six women who had their plays published or performed in France between 1650 and 1691:[160] Madame de Saint-Balmon, Marthe Cosnard, Marie-Catherine Desjardins (later known as Madame de Villedieu),[161] Madame Deshoulières, Catherine Bernard[162] and Françoise Pascal. This is a small number compared with their male counterparts but, as Grist observes, it was 'a bold move for a woman to venture into what had hitherto been an exclusively male preserve, at least in Paris'.[163]

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[157] Lough, *Writer and Public,* p.125.
[158] Turnovsky, p.21.
[159] Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the origin of the novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p.128.
[160] Elizabeth Grist, *The Salon and the Stage: Women and theatre in seventeenth-century France* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary & Westfield College, University of London, 2001), p.199.
[161] Mlle Desjardins wrote the first plays by a woman to be professionally produced in Paris. Molière advanced her career in 1665 'by producing her tragi-comedy *Le Favory* at the Palais-Royal and including it in a royal command performance at Versailles'. Grist, p.196.
[162] In 1689 and 1690 two of Bernard's tragedies were the first full-length plays by a woman to be produced at the Comédie-Française. Grist, p.289.
[163] Grist, p.247.

Very few women could expect to earn their livelihood from writing or even to consider it as a possibility. Grist notes that 'whether or not she earned much money from her plays, Françoise Pascal was one of the first women to have her work published and to consider herself a professional writer' and she claims that Mme de Villedieu was one of the first women 'to earn her own living from writing'.[164] However, this was far from typical of the position of women writers at the time. Grist includes the example of Catherine Bernard who 'despite her literary achievements […] did not earn enough to support herself':[165] an indication of the difficulties for a woman seeking a career as a professional writer.

The position of writers in society

There was a delicate balance to be maintained by writers: their social standing and interactions with elite society were key to their success in the literary field. As part of the early formation of a professional identity as a writer, Brown describes the process of 'strategic self-representations by individual writers in response to the experience of having status and identity ascribed to them by more prominent social elites'.[166] He also recognises 'the tension between cultural expectations of self-restraint and social, economic, and even psychological imperatives for self-assertion'.[167] Alison Finch suggests that writers at this period might have 'an acute sense of social complexity. […] They knew their own rank was despised, but, well versed in the literature of their nation and of others, they might have a profounder understanding of chivalric ideals, of 'courtoisie' than the aristocrats who condescended to them.'[168] The interaction between and among writers and the society in which they operated and on which they depended was fundamental to their professional decision-making. Turnovsky refers to 'the integration of writers into the networks and values of social elites […] such as the Académie, court patronage and salons' which then offered opportunities for an entrée into the court and high society.[169] Picard highlights the importance, when reviewing the 'histoire d'une carrière' of a writer, to study

> l'homme social, la manière dont il s'est intégré dans les divers groupes dont il a fait partie, les voies et moyens de son existence matérielle, le style de son ambition, le périple qu'elle lui a fait parcourir, ainsi que l'ensemble des jugements et des démarches grâce auxquels il est parvenu à ses fins.[170]

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[164] Grist, p.234 and p.237.
[165] Grist, p.289.
[166] Brown, p.7.
[167] Brown, p.4.
[168] Alison Finch, *French Literature: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p.26.
[169] Turnovsky, p.45.
[170] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.7.

The pursuit of social advancement as an underpinning motive for following a career as a writer is a key area for analysis. It will be seen that, albeit exceptionally, a celebrated, successful writer of relatively modest social origin could gain acceptance into normally exclusive social circles. Picard states 'c'est la carrière de Racine qui a fait sa noblesse, et non pas – à aucun degré – l'inverse'.[171]

This period was one of considerable debate about the role of literature and its value in society. The diverting effect of suitable literature was recognised and Corneille suggests its importance to higher officials in his dedication to Richelieu of *Horace*: 'nous [playwrights] ne rendons pas un petit service à l'Etat' in entertaining the Minister and contributing 'à l'entretien d'une santé qui lui est si précieuse.'[172] Finch refers to 'a pivotal change in French literature' beginning with Corneille: from this period onwards there was a revived interest in drama, in literary genres modelled on forms from antiquity: fables, satires, maximes and portraits; new types of novels were being written and journalistic writing was becoming popular.[173] The developing 'literary market' is seen by Turnovsky[174] as having a significant impact. Timothy Reiss refers to the 'invention of literature' and he sees Richelieu's foundation of the Académie française as key in this process. He considers that it was 'but one aspect of making anew a whole cultural environment' arguing that 'Richelieu was clear that the language and belles lettres of France were to be suitable tools serving a new kind of centralized national authority and bureaucratized monarchy'.[175] He makes the link between the invention of literature and the emergence of the '"honnête homme", the cultured gentleman wit, he of a certain education, of sufficient leisure to spend time reading or going to plays, of sufficient wealth to be able to purchase such a supplement to necessity'.[176] Génetiot also sees 'l'émergence et l'essor de la civilisation mondaine et du modèle anthropologique de l'honnête homme qui entraîne ce qu'on pourrait appeler la mondanisation des belles lettres' as significant in the development of literature at this period.[177]

Attitudes towards the theatre were changing – Georges Couton speaks of a 'rénovation théâtrale' – following Richelieu's interest in the theatre. Couton refers to the royal sanction of 1641 which recognises theatrical performances (provided they are 'exemptes d'impuretés') as

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[171] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.35.
[172] Corneille, I, p.834.
[173] Finch, p.26.
[174] Turnovsky, p.6.
[175] Timothy J. Reiss, *The Meaning of Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p.72.
[176] Reiss, p.73.
[177] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', p.63.

innocent entertainment.[178] Corneille makes his 'apologie du théâtre' in *L'Illusion Comique* when Alcandre declares

> à présent le Théâtre
> Est en un point si haut qu'un chacun l'idolâtre,
> Et ce que votre temps voyait avec mépris
> Est aujourd hui l'amour de tous les bons esprits […]
> Le divertissement le plus doux de nos Princes,
> Les délices du peuple, et le plaisir des grands.[179]

A major reason behind the popularity of the theatre among writers is that, as Lough notes, along with the possibility of earning 'a substantial sum of money in a short period', the creation of professional theatres in Paris meant that 'a successful play had become what it was long to remain, the quickest way for a young writer to get himself known'.[180] Forestier reiterates this point: 'une pièce de théâtre […] était au XVIIe siècle le moyen le plus rapide de se faire un nom'.[181] Charles Sorel provides a contemporary view:

> Comme la plupart des Gens du Siecle ne pensent qu'à leur plaisir, ce leur est une chose fort agreable de s'entretenir des Comedies qu'on represente: Aussi aucun Autheur n'acquiert de la reputation en si peu de temps que ceux qui ont travaillé pour le Theatre: En cinq ou six representations de leur Piece, il se trouve que quatre ou cinq mille personnes y ont assisté, & en font encore le rapport à quantité d'autres.[182]

There is little direct contemporary evidence that the pursuit of fame motivated authors, probably because this would not have been compatible with the indifference towards personal achievement and financial profit that an *honnête homme* was meant to display. Symbolic capital should be the motivating focus; as Rebecca Bird and Eric Smith explain, 'for Bourdieu, the highest profits in symbolic capital can be obtained when individuals act in ways that reliably demonstrate lack of interest in material acquisition'.[183] Authors would therefore have sought to present an image of themselves as untainted by mercenary motives. Picard suggests that it was considered 'une faute de goût' for a writer to pursue payment through his *droits d'auteur*: 'tirer profit de l'impression d'un ouvrage restera toujours quelque peu choquant, et […] les écrivains prennent soin de faire connaître leur désintéressement'.[184] There may therefore have been a conflict between achieving social advancement through *honnête* behaviour and gaining

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[178] Corneille, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, I, pp.1423-24.
[179] Corneille, I, p.687.
[180] Lough, *Writer and Public,* p.95.
[181] Forestier, p.135.
[182] Charles Sorel, *La Bibliotheque Françoise,* 2nd edn (Paris: Libraires du Palais, 1667), p.211.
[183] Rebecca Bliege Bird and Eric Alden Smith, 'Signaling Theory, Strategic Interaction, and Symbolic Capital', *Current Anthropology,* 46 (2005), 221-38 (p.223).
[184] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.201.

financially by pleasing the public. Turnovsky suggests that success in one field (either in society or with the public) could preclude or limit success in the other: 'only by belittling their literary pursuits could *gens de lettres* benefit from the social transformation that these pursuits made possible'.[185] For Turnovsky, authors can either reject the commercial benefits of publishing in favour of social advancement, or use the market to gain financial independence and escape patronage. He considers that '"Commerce" marked a failure […] to adapt to the behavioural and linguistic norms that upheld the new elite's cult of refined manner and harmonious, polished interaction'. He argues that 'the writer's interest in the sale of his works spoke to isolation and marginality; it evoked an inability to be integrated into the community', indicating 'the writer's lack of sociability: awkwardness, inelegance, rudeness and above all extravagant self-centredness, arrogance and driving ambition'.[186] The concept of capital can profitably be applied to this debate, since Turnovsky is essentially arguing that the pursuit of either social or economic capital inhibits pursuit of the other. This thesis will show that, while authors may have prioritised one type of capital over another at certain points during their career, it was not the case that seeking one made it impossible to achieve the other.

Brown recognises some of the tensions faced by writers who wished to gain renown by printing their works: 'in print, an author's self-restrained personal comportment could not be demonstrated, so readers might attribute mercenary, self-aggrandizing intent to a writer who had put forth his work so directly'.[187] To avoid such criticism, writers often attempt to suggest that they are not writing as a professional seeking financial profit but, for example, to please their friends. In his dedication to *Les Nicandres*, Boursault tells his dedicatee, Barthélemy Hervart, that he has long wished 'd'estre habile homme pour avoir la gloire de faire des Ouvrages qui soient dignes de Vous', suggesting that one of the reasons for publishing is to write a dedication so that he has the chance to repay 'des genereux suffrages que Vous avez eu la bonté d'accorder à une Muse'.[188] Racine offers an example of an author citing encouragement from friends as the reason for undertaking a particular work. In his preface to *Les Plaideurs*, he writes 'moitié en m'encourageant, moitié en mettant eux-mêmes la main à l'œuvre, mes amis me firent commencer [cette] pièce'.[189] By placing the responsibility on his friends, Racine presents himself as reluctant to seek renown or financial reward, but also as reluctant to disappoint his friends: the model of an *honnête homme*. Picard summarises the situation for

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[185] Turnovsky, p.21.
[186] Turnovsky, p.205.
[187] Brown, p.48.
[188] Boursault, *Les Nicandres* (Paris: Pepingué, 1665), pp.i-ii.
[189] Jean Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Raymond Picard, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), I, p.309.

writers seeking a livelihood: 'La littérature est surtout le passe-temps distingué de quelques honnêtes gens qui ont des rentes […] Essayer d'en vivre est non seulement incertain, mais par surcroît de très mauvais ton'.[190]

While writing for the theatre had the potential for acquiring renown and a comparatively large amount of money in a relatively short period, this period also saw the increase in popularity of a number of other literary genres. Hammond sees the influence of the salons on 'innovative forms of writing', suggesting that 'these forms were moulded to shape the demands of seventeenth-century salon society'.[191] Finch describes 'the extension of the idea of literature to cover new dimensions of social relatedness'. She identifies a variety of genres including the verbal character-sketch, the epigrammatic shaft of wit, the fable, aphorisms, fiction, personal letters and caricatural moral portraits as 'public modes: this body of texts in appearance formal was also highly social in its original production, embedded in the elite exchanges of the day and rooted in performance'.[192] An author may have chosen to extend his literary output to present an image of himself as 'un homme lettré', one 'qui a de l'érudition',[193] as opposed to a mere 'écrivain'. By writing in different genres, authors could show they possessed a broad field of knowledge and a wide range of ability, in line with the later *Encyclopédie*'s definition of *gens de lettres*: 'on ne donne point ce nom à un homme qui avec peu de connaissances ne cultive qu'un seul genre […] les véritables *gens de lettres* se mettent en état de porter leur pas dans ces différens terreins'.[194] Another possible explanation for authors changing genre is the suggestion by Lang and Lang that reputations are dependent on the style of work that happens to be in vogue at the time: 'Artists build reputations by working in an accepted genre or style; their reputations change as genres go out of fashion'.[195] Writers who made such changes may have been motivated less by a desire to experiment and to develop their writing skills, and more to ensure they were perceived as fashionable and responsive to popular taste. Bourdieu suggests that 'shifts from one genre, school, or speciality to another, […] performed "in all sincerity," can be understood as capital conversions, the direction and moment of which […] are determined by a "sense of investment"'. He argues that 'it would be thoroughly erroneous to describe the choices of the habitus which lead an artist, writer, or researcher toward his natural

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[190] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.41.
[191] Hammond, *Creative Tensions*, p.95 and p.97.
[192] Finch, p.34.
[193] *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Françoise*, I, p.640.
[194] Denis Diderot, *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences des Arts et des Métiers*, 17 vols (Paris: Briasson, David, Le Breton and Durand, 1751-65), VII, p.599.
[195] Lang and Lang, p.80.

place (a subject, style, manner, etc.) in terms of rational strategy and cynical calculation'.[196] This thesis will analyse evidence from the career trajectories of the case study authors to evaluate the extent to which Bourdieu's view that authorial decisions are not based on strategic planning can be validated. All three authors experimented by writing in different genres and the impact of this on their careers will be scrutinised to ascertain if it can be demonstrated that the authors' pursuit of capital should be considered as based on strategic calculation.

Playwrights' income

According to Bourdieu, 'economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital'[197] and professional writers needed to be in receipt of sufficient income to make a viable living. The financial position of writers could be precarious: a successful play could offer a significant reward but the author was subject to the vagaries of the taste of the audience and his next play might not be so successful. The passage of time has rendered seventeenth-century financial success difficult to define, since it is difficult to establish not only what the currency was worth in practical terms, but also how much money was considered necessary by each social class to meet the requirements of its lifestyle. Turnovsky also makes the point that financial success alone was not sufficient for entry to high society: 'the trappings of respectability might be devalorized by the very fact that they were accessed *only* monetarily and thus stand as symbol not of the writer's *qualité* but of the opposite: ambition, presumption, and thus low stature and rightful exclusion'.[198]

An important exploration of the viability of writing as a professional career is Lough's review of the sources of income and the extent of earned income for writers at this period. He suggests that 'novelists seem to have done fairly well out of booksellers by the middle of the century'[199] and recognises that 'the establishment of a professional theatre in Paris undoubtedly offered playwrights the possibility, given a successful play, of earning in a short space of time relatively large sums of money'.[200] He concludes that 'writing plays did become decidedly more lucrative from the 1630s onwards'; however, and importantly for this study, he concludes 'it did not offer a career'.[201] Harrison agrees with Lough's view, stating that 'a literary career in seventeenth-century France did not by itself provide a sufficient income for anyone who wished to live beyond the means of a well-paid servant'. She then qualifies this comment by stating that a

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[196] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.257, n. 18.
[197] Bourdieu, p.252.
[198] Turnovsky, p.27.
[199] Lough, *Writer and Public,* p.86.
[200] Lough, p.90.
[201] Lough, p.129.

'talented individual could, nevertheless, satisfy many of his financial needs through writing and particularly through writing for the theater, above all in the latter part of the century';[202] she cites Molière, Scarron and the two Corneilles as receiving 'considerable income from their works'.[203]

This was a period of transition. Lough recalls the earlier humble status of the 'mere *poète à gages* [...] hired by the company of actors to write so many plays a year';[204] this had largely changed by the latter part of the seventeenth century to a 'system whereby the author received a fixed share of the receipts from the performances of his play', though it should be noted that 'payment for performances was strictly limited to a play's first run'.[205] An alternative form of remuneration is seen in Viala's account of Corneille's success in imposing his 'droits d'écrivain' as demonstrated 'dans les sommes élevées qu'il exige de la troupe de Molière pour chaque œuvre nouvelle, 2,000 livres, et « à prix fait »': the amount was paid immediately, 'comme si sa pièce devait être un succès, que ce succès se vérifie ou non'.[206] Viala examines the new concept of the rights of an author and concludes 'l'âge classique peut être regardé comme une période d'émergence progressive et difficile de ces droits'.[207]

Lough states that 'the earnings of playwrights from the performance of their works would seem to have improved enormously in the course of this period'[208] and concludes that 'the author of a really successful play [could] earn a substantial sum of money in a short period'.[209] In 1679-80 Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé shared a record sum of 5,651 *livres* for their play *La Devineresse*. Lough further cites the examples of Campistron, who earned 2,839 *livres* from his play *Alcibiade*, and Crébillon, who earned 2,918 from *Rhadamiste et Zénobie*. However, these plays were all very successful and the figures cannot be regarded as average earnings for playwrights. A more accurate gauge may come from a detailed examination of Campistron's career. In the period from 1683 to 1693, during which he wrote 10 plays, including *Alcibiade*, his total earnings were 11,500 *livres*.[210] Further evidence comes from an examination of

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[202] Helen Harrison, *Pistoles/Paroles: Money and Language in Seventeenth-century French Comedy* (Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 1996), p.22.
[203] Harrison, p.21.
[204] Lough, *Writer and Public,* p.91.
[205] Lough, p.94.
[206] Viala, 'Corneille', p.35.
[207] Viala, 'Le statut de l'écrivain à l'âge classique', *Littératures Classiques,* 40 (2000), 77-86 (p.81).
[208] Lough, p.90.
[209] Lough, p.95.
[210] Lough, p.94.

Boursault's earnings. *Germanicus* was sold to the actors at the Marais for 1,300 *livres*.[211] Records of the takings from four of the five plays that Boursault wrote between 1683 and 1694 suggest that he earned on average 1,250 *livres* from each, but the fifth play, *Les Fables d'Esope*, earned him 3,291 *livres*, more than double the average. Lough cites Boursault's remark 'Qui serait assuré de faire deux pièces par an avec le même succès, n'aurait guère besoin d'autre emploi', adding 'but this was an obvious impossibility.'[212]

Playwrights would also have had the advantage of a second source of income from sales of published editions, though this might have produced a meagre income. Lough gives as an example an unsupported story that Racine received only 200 *livres* for the publication of *Andromaque*;[213] Forestier adds that he also received 2,000 *livres* for 'ses parts d'auteur' and 'une largesse exceptionnelle de la part du roi, qui avait accepté la dédicace de la pièce'.[214] Brooks cites Eric Walter's estimate that the more renowned playwrights (among them Racine and Quinault) received 2,000 to 3,000 *livres* for each play from the publisher 'on top of 2,000 or so from the actors'.[215] The earnings of playwrights may be compared with what is known of the income of novelists. Lough says that La Calprenède earned 3,000 *livres* when he published the second and third parts of *Cléopâtre* in 1646, Scarron earned 1,000 *livres* from publishing the second part of *Le Roman Comique* in 1654 and 11,000 *livres* for 11 books of *Virgile travesti*, while La Fontaine earned 1,500 *livres* for *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*.[216] These few cases, if they can be assumed to be representative, suggest that the average earnings for a novelist would be somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 *livres* per successful work published. However, there were cases of playwrights who wrote more than one play per year and whose annual earnings would have been much higher as a consequence. While Alexandre Hardy may have been an exception in frequently agreeing to write six plays per year,[217] Molière, Quinault and Boursault all wrote two plays in the same year on at least one occasion.

Relative to playwrights, Quinault appears to have been well paid for his operas, since he and Lully agreed a contract whereby Quinault would write one opera per year, and in exchange be paid 4,000 *livres* annually. This is probably about double the amount Quinault would have received for writing one play per year and meant that Quinault was financially secure, because

[211] Sophie Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Le Théâtre du Marais,* 2 vols (Paris: Nizet,1958), II, p.188.
[212] Lough, *Writer and Public*, pp.94-95.
[213] Lough, p.89.
[214] Forestier, p.282.
[215] Brooks, p.294.
[216] Lough, pp.86-87.
[217] Lough, pp.91-92.

the contract ensured that he would not suffer financially if an opera was poorly received. Gros suggests that, compared to later librettists, Quinault's salary was extremely generous, since 'le règlement de l'Opéra, qui fixera, en 1713, les droits d'auteur pour les pièces en musique, n'accordera au librettiste, comme au musicien, que 100 francs pour les dix premières représentations et 50 francs pour les vingt suivantes'.[218] This totalled 2,000 livres for thirty performances, though most of the operas written by Quinault and Lully would have been performed more than sixty times, which may suggest that Quinault was not as fortunate as Gros thought. Buford Norman confirms that 'this new type of theater [*tragédie lyrique*] was more popular than the traditional spoken theater, even though Racine was at the height of his career'.[219] Operas would normally enjoy a longer run than plays and so it might have been more advantageous for Quinault to have taken a share of the ticket sales, as playwrights frequently did. However, the importance of the stable income guaranteed by Quinault's contract should not be underestimated.

It is difficult to establish what level of income would have represented a comfortable life, or simply a 'living wage'. Viala suggests 'pour faire socialement bonne figure, il fallait près de 3,000 livres par an au milieu du siècle, un peu plus de 4,000 à la fin'.[220] Boursault's claim that anyone who was assured of writing two plays per year as successful as *Esope* would have no need of another source of income[221] suggests that he considered an annual income of between 6,000 and 7,000 *livres* to be necessary. Such an income might have been possible for some playwrights: Racine's *Iphigénie* earned him 9,600 *livres* from box office takings, patronage and other gratifications,[222] though such high earnings would be the exception. Viala, writing about Corneille's arrival in Paris in the early 1630s, estimates 'ses revenus littéraires (ses parts d'auteur ou ses « prix faits », ses contrats de librairie, et ses gratifications du mécénat)' were between 2,000 and 3,000 *livres* per year. He was also in receipt of 2,000 *livres* for his work as *avocat*. Viala concludes that with an annual revenue of between four and five thousand *livres* 'Corneille peut, selon les critères du temps, faire figure honorable: il n'est pas riche à proprement parler, mais suffisamment à son aise'.[223] It may therefore be reasonable to conclude that an income of approximately five thousand *livres* would have been sufficient to allow a

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[218] Gros, p.105.
[219] Buford Norman, *Touched by the Graces: The Libretti of Philippe Quinault in the Context of French Classicism* (Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications, 2001), pp.8.
[220] Viala, *Naissance*, p.113.
[221] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.247.
[222] Louis Vaunois, *L'Enfance et la Jeunesse de Racine* (Paris: Del Duca, 1964), p.200.
[223] Viala, 'Corneille', p.37.

writer to maintain a lifestyle which would have given him access to society. Forestier calculates that, from 1666, 'Racine disposait d'environ treize cents livres de revenu fixe par an, à quoi s'ajoutaient, selon les années, les revenus du théâtre et les largesses des dédicataires'.[224]

To determine the level of lifestyle that a given income would have allowed, some comparison of earnings may be attempted. Lough states that a farm labourer could earn 90 *livres* for 180 days work,[225] and it can be assumed that this was barely enough for the essentials for life. By contrast, Boursault was given 330 *livres* by Fouquet for a sonnet,[226] almost four times the wage of a labourer. Further up the scale, office holders, such as the Secrétaire général de la Marine de Levant, could expect an annual salary of 3,000 *livres*.[227] A successful playwright would not have earned much less than this, although the average playwright would have been slightly further down the scale. As has been seen, even Boursault, who is not normally regarded as being as successful as Quinault or Racine, had years when his earnings were over 3,000 *livres*. The main difference between an office holder and a writer seems to be the security of the former's pay, since, although writers had the potential to earn far more than 3,000 *livres* per year, there was no guarantee of this and they were susceptible to poor years.

Lough and Harrison base their examinations of a writer's income entirely on what they earned from performances of their plays or publication of their works, and do not take into account any benefits of patronage. In part this is because such figures are not always readily available, and in part because the rewards of patronage were not always quantifiable financially. By contrast, this thesis will recognise other forms of indirect income. A patron may have given a writer board and lodging; Harrison cites the example of Pierre Corneille, who, in 1662, was housed by the Duc de Guise in his Paris residence.[228] Boursault received a pension of 2,000 *livres* 'avec bouche à Cour' from the king for writing a weekly gazette.[229] The impact of such indirect support meant that the writer's annual revenue was not improved by patronage, but his expenses might be dramatically lowered. Some aspects of patronage are more readily quantifiable. Corneille dedicated *Cinna* to a financier, Montauron, and received 'deux cents pistolles' or approximately 2,000 *livres* in return.[230] According to Lough, this was 'probably more than he

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[224] Forestier, p.283.
[225] Lough, *Seventeenth Century French Drama,* p.23.
[226] Taillandier, p.72.
[227] Hugh Gaston Hall, *Richelieu's Desmarets and the Century of Louis XIV* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp.23-24.
[228] Harrison, p.33.
[229] Boursault, *Theatre*, I, 'Avertissement', [p. a ix].
[230] Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes,* 2 vols, ed. by Antoine Adam (Paris: Gallimard, 1960-61), I, p.344.

earned for his tragedy from the actors and the bookseller combined'.[231] Similarly, Quinault received 1,650 *livres* from the king for publishing *Thésée* and 1,000 each for publishing *Atys* and *Isis*.[232] This thesis will explore the impact and implications of patronage in more detail in a later chapter.

Authors could also benefit from annual pensions from patrons. Brown says that in 1662

> Colbert had Chapelain draw up a list of *gratifiables* [...] each of whom was offered annual royal pensions. At the top of this list was "Corneille, leading dramatic poet in the world", who was granted 6500 annually. This sum matched what he had come to demand from commercial troupes for each tragedy, making him by far the best paid and most respected non-acting dramatic author of his time.[233]

Picard refers to the *Liste des Gratifications Royales* as evidence that, in 1669, Racine received payment of 1,200 livres 'en considération de son application aux belles-lettres et des pièces de théâtre qu'il donne au public'.[234] He provides details for the payment in 1670 of 1,500 *livres* for Racine compared with 800 *livres* for Quinault. Norman provides details of increases in payment, listing Racine's pension as 1,500 *livres* from 1670-78 and 2,000 from 1679-84; Quinault's pension is given as 800 *livres* in 1670-71, 1,200 in 1672-73 and 1,500 from 1674-87. Norman adds a warning that 'these figures are of course only estimates and sources do not always agree'.[235] Quinault received an annual pension of at least 3,000 *livres* from the king at a time when his work with Lully provided 4,000 *livres* per year, so he would have had a guaranteed income of 7,000 *livres* per year, occasionally supplemented by isolated payments. A cautious conclusion is that this appears to compare well with the earnings of administrators, being in excess of the 6,000 *livres* Racine earned as Royal Historiographer, a position that would have been relatively well paid.[236]

An aspect that is frequently overlooked in assessing a writer's income, but one that will be explored in this study, might be termed 'indirect earnings', that is, earnings that are not directly linked to the theatre, but are nevertheless a result of writing talent. Examples of such indirect earnings that will be examined include Racine's career as Royal Historiographer and Boursault's position as tax collector. Some offices offered the holder some additional income;

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[231] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.102.
[232] Brooks, p.346.
[233] Brown, p.41.
[234] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.205.
[235] Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, p.127.
[236] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.200.

for example, in 1674 Racine became *trésorier de France*, a position that was worth 2,400 livres a year,[237] more than the presumed average annual earnings for a playwright.

It must also be recognised that many writers at this time would have sources of income in addition to income derived from their writing. Quinault married a rich wife in 1660. Gros comments that 'son mariage fut un coup de maître: les quarante mille livres de sa femme allaient l'aider à se pousser dans la vie aussi haut qu'il pouvait atteindre.'[238] Picard asserts that Quinault 'mourut dans l'opulence', citing Pierre Ribou: 'Il avait amassé des biens que l'on faisait monter à cent mille écus'.[239] The Church could offer another source of regular income. After completing his studies, Racine sought to obtain an ecclesiastical benefice through the influence of his uncle, Antoine Sconin, who was Vicar-General to the Bishop of Uzès. John Sayer sees this as rather a cynical move: 'Racine was deeply in debt and had to make a living. Le Vasseur had shown him that an ecclesiastical career, with the prospect of a living, did not rule out versifying, theatre-going, womanising'.[240] Racine seems to have pursued his theological studies seriously, albeit with an underlying financial motive: in a letter of 1662 he states, 'Je commence mon noviciate, cependant je vois que je n'ai plus à prétendre ici que quelque chapelle de vingt ou vingt-cinq écus; voyez si cela vaut la peine que je prends: néanmoins je suis résolu de mener toujours le même train de vie, et d'y demeurer jusqu'à ce qu'on me retire pour quelque meilleure espérance'.[241] The list of members of the Académie française at this period[242] provides an indication of the number of ecclesiastics who were also poets and writers and who could rely on an income from the Church while continuing their writing and participation in the literary field. Other writers might have private incomes or family support. Picard notes that, even before beginning his literary career, Pierre Corneille 'disposait déjà d'une fortune personnelle dont le montant est très appréciable: près de deux mille livres de rentes, des biens fonciers, une maison qui sera vendue 4,300 livres'.[243]

To summarise this brief examination of the earnings offered by writing at this period, while it is difficult to offer a precise figure, it is possible to conclude that writers seem to have earned about as much as a holder of low office, if the rewards of patronage are taken into account.

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[237] Forestier, p.506 and p.533.
[238] Gros, p.61.
[239] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.203.
[240] John Sayer, *Jean Racine: Life and Legend* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), p.31.
[241] Racine, *Œuvres de Jean Racine: Lettres de Jean Racine,* ed. by Louis Racine, 5 vols (Paris: P. Didot L'Aîné, 1813), V, p.53 [Lettre du 30 avril 1662 à Le Vasseur].
[242] See Appendix 5.
[243] Picard, p.202.

Picard makes the important point that 'la dépense, au XVIIe siècle, est moins en rapport avec des nécessités indiscutables: nourriture, habillement et logement, qu'avec le rang social à soutenir'.[244] It is therefore appropriate when assessing the viability of a writer's career to consider the lifestyle which their writing enabled them to attain in order to make justifiable inferences that their income was sufficient to support that lifestyle. Any writer unable to display reasonable affluence by meeting key expectations of dress, appearance and levels of culture would find difficulty in being accepted on the relatively equal social terms of the salons and would certainly be excluded from court. Although the cost of maintaining this appearance and conforming to this image is virtually impossible to quantify, that does not invalidate the argument that belonging to a salon and being involved in court life implied a certain lifestyle and would require a considerable financial outlay. The three case study authors were welcomed in Parisian society for long periods of their careers and it can therefore be inferred that the income they derived from their writing was sufficient to support and maintain this lifestyle. This would suggest that writing could indeed offer viable financial rewards, though it must be stressed that income from writing did not offer the security or regularity of income of office holders.

The risk of dependence on such an unreliable source of income meant that writers sought to maximise any other sources of revenue open to them. This thesis argues that a broader view of the income derived from writing should be adopted, recognising the benefits derived from patronage and from salaried positions which were offered in recognition of their talents as playwrights. In this way authors used the cultural and vocational capital accumulated through their writing to increase their social capital, before they were able to obtain a position at court that would further enhance their social standing and benefit their economic capital. They were only in a position to obtain the role at court because they had initially used their writing to establish their social capital: such roles would have been inaccessible to anyone with limited social capital. Thus, while it may be correct that it was difficult to have a career solely as a playwright with no other source of income, writing for the theatre would have been a way for playwrights to display their talent, and any income they gained from a position at court, even if it was not a literary role, would have been an indirect result of their talent as writers. Therefore, this thesis will seek to demonstrate that the career of a writer should be seen in the broader context of making a living as a consequence of their writing in order to judge if this was a sustainable career at this period.

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[244] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.75.

CHAPTER 3 – CAREER HISTORIES OF THE CASE STUDY AUTHORS

This chapter will analyse the career trajectories of the case study authors, seeking to identify their approaches to managing their careers and to compare the strategic decisions they made in pursuing their career aims as an illustration of their professional *habitus*. The analysis will be focused on the literary context in which they made their career choices and innovations in their writing. Much has already been written about the lives and works of Racine, Quinault and Boursault and this study will build on these sources to include recent scholarship and will provide, through a comparative analysis, a broader review of the effectiveness of their authorial strategies.

Boursault

Edme Boursault was born at Mussy-l'Evêque, Champagne, in October 1638, and moved to Paris in 1651. His obituary in *Le Mercure Galant* stated that he had received little formal education, knew no Latin, and could speak only his local dialect on arrival in Paris.[245] His granddaughter, Hiacinthe, corroborates this, saying he 'ne sçavoit […] que fort grossièrement la Langue Françoise'.[246] Thus, he was an author whose cultural capital was initially limited, as confirmed by some of the early reactions of his contemporaries. Boileau – a harsh critic of many of his contemporaries – described Boursault as a 'froid rimeur',[247] as well as a tedious poet.[248] Boileau subsequently retracted his mockery of Boursault, generously stating: 'de tous les Auteurs que j'ay critiqués, [il est] celui qui a le plus de mérite'.[249] In the course of the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* in 1663, Molière referred to Boursault as 'un auteur sans réputation'.[250] Croft discusses a contemporary judgement (made in 1668) of Boursault by the Abbé de Pure and summarises his verdict: 'Boursault ne figure pas au rang des «excellens poètes» mais plutôt parmi les auteurs de «petites galanteries» et de «petits amusemens de théâtre»'.[251] The *gazetier*, Robinet, was surprised to admire *Germanicus*, having not expected much of its author: 'Certe, [Boursault] s'est, au dire des Gens/Qui sont des plus intelligens/Surpassé dedans ce Poëme/N'ayant encor rien fait de même'.[252] However, according to Gevrey, other contemporary criticism praises 'son style «naturel », « aisé », qui s'accorde avec une « morale

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[245] *Le Mercure Galant* (September 1701), p.398.
[246] Boursault, *Theatre,* I*,* p.a v.
[247] Boileau, p.39.
[248] Boileau, p.51 and p.56.
[249] Boileau, p.642.
[250] Molière, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), I, p.691.
[251] Croft, *Boursault*, p.290.
[252] *Le Théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent,* ed. by William Brooks (Paris: Papers on Seventeenth Century French Literature, 1993), p.140.

vive »'.[253] Pierre Bayle includes an entry in his dictionary acknowledging Boursault's contemporary reputation, declaring that he was 'connu par divers Ouvrages en vers & en prose, qui ont été estimez'.[254]

The critical reaction of Boursault's contemporaries varied and his work included some failures as well as notable successes. The changes that he made during his career were predominantly those of genre and they both reflect and develop some of the important literary developments at this period. In Boursault's long career (1660-1701) it is not surprising that he should have made strategic choices to explore other literary genres but he was particularly innovative in his approach. Elizabeth Goldsmith states: 'he seems to have tried his hand at every form that was in his day considered a vehicle for the writer's display of his art'.[255] Croft summarises the diversity of his

> pratique polygraphique, en écrivant des comédies certes, mais aussi des ouvrages religieux (*Les litanies de la sainte Vierge*) ou pédagogique (*La Véritable étude des Souverains*), une pastorale (*La métamorphose des yeux de Philis, changez en astres*), des gazettes, un recueil épistolaire (*Lettres de respect, d'obligation et d'amour*), des nouvelles (*Artémise et Poliante, Histoire espagnole, Le marquis de Chavigny*) et des poèmes épidictiques.[256]

The vocational capital he accumulated during his career would have enabled him to make appropriate professional decisions to take advantage of these changes in genre.

Boursault's first literary efforts were in journalism, which was in its infancy in France at this period. Goldsmith sees the newspaper ('or more properly in its emergent seventeenth-century form, the *gazette*') as 'the most important innovation in the world of cultural production'.[257] James de Rothschild recognises the importance of:

> les gazettes en vers publiées depuis 1650 jusque vers 1690. Malgré leur forme burlesque, ces gazettes […] répondaient à un veritable besoin. D'une lecture plus facile que la *Gazette* en prose, elles joignaient aux informations politiques, des anecdotes piquantes, des nouvelles de la cour et de la ville.[258]

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[253] Gevrey, p.1.

[254] Pierre Bayle, *Dictionaire Historique et Critique par M. Pierre Bayle*, 4 vols, 5th edn (Amsterdam: P. Brunel *et al*, 1740), I, p.651.

[255] Elizabeth Goldsmith, *Exclusive Conversations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p.145.

[256] Croft, p.333.

[257] Goldsmith, p.145.

[258] *Les Continuateurs de Loret. Lettres en vers de La Gravette de Mayolas, Robinet, Boursault, Perdou de Subligny, Laurent et autres (1665-1689,)* ed. by Baron James de Rothschild, 2 vols (Paris: Damascène Morgand et Charles Fatout, 1881), I, p.vi.

La Muse historique by Jean Loret, published in 1650, was one of the earliest 'gazettes en vers'. René de Livois claims that Loret's efforts inspired many other writers to imitate him; he includes Boursault among those who wrote 'petites gazettes en vers ou en prose [qui] traitent de l'actualité'.[259] Bernard Beugnot considers that:

> Comme dans les autres séries de lettres du même genre, il y a fort peu de jugements, et en général simplement élogieux. C'est que le gazetier ne cherche ni à exprimer son opinion, ni à former ou influencer celle de ses lecteurs; il n'est que le secrétaire des événements qui règlent la vie de cour (campagnes, fêtes).[260]

Boursault may indeed have been inspired by Loret's success. Beugnot and Jean-Pierre Collinet report that in Boursault's *Lettres en vers* 'les six premières lettres se présentent comme une continuation de la *Muse historique* de Loret'.[261] Beugnot describes the content as: 'anecdotes, vie de cour, vie militaire, vie religieuse, éloges et vers de circonstance'.[262]

In 1661, while Boursault was acting as Secretary to the Duchesse d'Angoulême, he undertook a trip to Sens and sent her 'une relation de voyage très divertissante'. As a result '[T]outes les relations de la Comtesse (le Prince de Condé, le Maréchal de Noailles, le Maréchal de Créqui…) voulurent entretenir une correspondance avec Boursault' and his reputation for writing verses and entertaining anecdotes and *bons mots* became known at court.[263] According to his granddaughter,

> il fit par ordre de la Cour, quelques Gazettes en vers enjoués, qui divertirent assez le feu Roy pour porter ce grand Prince à ordonner à l'Auteur, en lui donnant une pension de deux mille livres avec bouche à Cour, de travailler à cette Gazette.

The gazette was soon popular with 'tous les Courtisans'.[264] Taillandier says that he was thus 'commençant déjà [...] ce commerce épistolaire qui sera une des grandes occupations de sa vie',[265] describing Boursault as 'le gazetier de la cour'.[266] Writing a court gazette would have given Boursault the ideal opportunity to build up a network of influential supporters and increase his social capital. However, Boursault lost the *privilège* for his gazette as he was

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[259] René de Livois, *Histoire de la Presse Française,* 2 vols (Paris: Les Temps de la Presse, 1965), I, p.35.

[260] *Dictionnaire des Journaux 1600-1789,* ed. by Bernard Beugnot (2011), '0815-lettres-en-vers-de-robinet-de-saint-jean'.

[261] *Dictionnaire des Journalistes 1600-1789,* ed. by Bernard Beugnot and Jean-Pierre Collinet (2011), '107-edme-boursault'.

[262] *Dictionnaire des Journaux,* '0816-lettres-en-vers-de-boursault'.

[263] Association des Amis de la Lecture et du Patrimoine de Mussy-sur-Seine, *Dossier Edme Boursault,* 'Boursault et les Gazettes'.

[264] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, [p. a ix].

[265] Taillandier, p.34.

[266] Taillandier, p.73.

accused of mocking the Capucin order by including an anecdote about a Capucin friar.[267] This apparently entertained the court but the Capucin order exerted pressure and Boursault was nearly imprisoned as a result. Only his social connections with the Prince de Condé helped him avoid this fate. Following Loret's death, Boursault tried to obtain the *privilège* for *La Muse historique,* writing in the 19 July 1665 entry for the continuation of Loret's gazette that he has been advised to do so by fellow writers (including Corneille and Quinault) who consider:

> Que je puis calmer le regret
> Qu'a causé la mort de Loret,
> Et que je suis en droite Ligne
> De ses Successeurs le plus digne.[268]

Loret, however, had already chosen La Gravette de Mayolas as his successor.[269] As Croft notes, 'L'influence de Condé ne suffit pas toutefois à empêcher la révocation du privilège de Boursault, qui devra renoncer à son ambition de succéder à Loret'.[270] After his *privilège* was withdrawn, Boursault's journalistic activities continued through letters containing news items written to members of the nobility. This would have allowed him both to strengthen his connections to these nobles and to display his social capital by subsequently publishing some of these letters showing his familiarity with members of the nobility. In 1665, the Prince de Condé, while staying at his château in Chantilly, asked Boursault to write to him with 'des nouvelles de Paris et de Versailles, un libre journal à sa façon, moitié prose, moitié vers'.[271] Taillandier points out that 'le grand Condé n'était pas le seul qui fût si friand des lettres de Boursault. La Grande Mademoiselle partageait le même goût'.[272] Subsequently 'le bruit s'en répandit bientôt à la cour. Des demandes nouvelles furent adressées au journaliste; plus d'un seigneur à la mode s'efforça d'obtenir un *abonnement*'.[273]

Boursault's second, considerably later, attempt at writing a gazette, *La Muse enjouée*, was, according to his granddaughter, 'par l'ordre du Roy, pour instruire & divertir Monseigneur le Duc de Bourgogne'.[274] The reasons for Boursault's decision in 1691 to return to this genre at a late date in its development are unclear, unless it was indeed a royal command. Rothschild reports that 'aucune gazette rimée se rapportant aux années 1675 et 1676, 1679 à 1683' has

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[267] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, [p.a x].
[268] *Les Continuateurs de Loret,* ed. by Rothschild, I, p.121.
[269] *Les Continuateurs de Loret,* I, p.vii.
[270] Croft, *Boursault*, p.113.
[271] Taillandier, p.78.
[272] Taillandier, p.83.
[273] Taillandier, pp.85-86.
[274] Boursault, I, [p.a xii].

been traced and for the years 1684 to 1689 only 'quelques lettres de Robinet et quelques relations en vers de J. Laurent, dernières productions d'un genre de poésie désormais abandonné'.[275] Boursault had returned to Paris in 1688 from his position as tax collector and may have sought to re-establish himself at court in his earlier role of 'gazetier de la cour'. However, his willingness to court controversy (or perhaps his lack of judgement) again cost him dearly and he lost his *privilège* following an accusation of mocking William of Orange. Rothschild suggests an alternative, or perhaps an additional, reason for the loss of *privilège*: 'sauvegarder des droits acquis, notamment ceux des éditeurs de la *Gazette* et du *Mercure*, fort jaloux de leurs privilèges et très âpres à s'en assurer la jouissance exclusive.'[276] Boursault himself saw the reason for the loss of the privilege thus: 'apparemment que les diseurs de nouvelles ont eu peur que je n'en dise de meilleures qu'eux, ou tout au moins que je ne les débitasse plus agréablement'.[277]

Boursault's journalistic writing can be seen to comprise the short-lived attempts to write a gazette intended for the court and the longer-lasting personal correspondence with members of the nobility, some of which was published. His first attempt to write a gazette appears to have been motivated by a desire to follow Loret's success. The letters themselves, however, appear to have been solicited, suggesting that many of them were the result of Boursault's reputation as a witty correspondent. Goldsmith confirms that 'throughout his career he was able to maintain his reputation as an "informed source"':[278] he was well placed to access court gossip and able to transmit it in an entertaining way. His letters and gazettes were popular with a readership anxious to be kept informed, he understood what sort of anecdotal material intermixed with stories and verses would be of interest and his journalistic talent was in being able to relay such material in a diverting way. Boursault's talent for writing light diverting news gazettes could be readily adapted to his dramatic works. Croft's judgement is that

> ses œuvres intègrent volontiers l'actualité à des fins comiques, misant sur la connivence du public, exploitant le rapport entre théâtre et société, adoptant les dernières tendances esthétiques et parfois même, innovant. Fin observateur, il agit comme témoin des mœurs de son époque.[279]

He was particularly associated with the *théâtre comique,* ranging from one-act farces in the early part of his career, through popular plays in several acts, to the *comédie moralisante* of his

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[275] *Les Continuateurs de Loret,* ed. by Rothschild, I, p.ix.
[276] *Les Continuateurs de Loret,* I, p.x.
[277] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.322.
[278] Goldsmith, p.144.
[279] Croft, *Boursault,* p.91.

later career. His first play, *Le Médecin Volant*, was performed in 1661 and the following year he had two plays performed, *Le Mort Vivant* and *Les Cadenats*. Taillandier is dismissive of the artistic quality of Boursault's early plays, criticising their use of the 'style comique du temps, composées par un écolier naïf à l'imitation de Scarron et de Thomas Corneille'.[280] In contrast, a recent appraisal of his early plays by Charlotte Dias sees elements of 'une originalité lexicale', recognising that Boursault had not yet fully mastered the French language. She provides an analysis of 'sa recherche lexicale', explaining that 'certains mots ne sont pas employés dans ses pièces dans leur usage ordinaire même s'ils restent compréhensibles grâce au sens impliqué par le contexte'. She considers that Boursault 'fait preuve de créativité en insérant dans ses pièces des mots non répertoriés dans les dictionnaires et construits par analogie'. She argues that he is prepared to mix linguistic registers and to give some of his characters (valets in particular) 'un vocabulaire vulgaire mêlé de jurons, de mots familiers et de mots populaires et bas', concluding: 'peu importe le respect de la bienséance tant que les paroles de ses personnages amusent ceux qui ont payé pour venir le voir'.[281]

Paul d'Estrée sees in this period the beginnings of the genre of theatrical revue. He identifies key elements as 'la recherche obstinée de l'anecdote courante, l'amour du fait-divers, et, pour tout dire, le sentiment de l'actualité à la cour, à la ville et au théâtre'.[282] D'Estrée considers that

> les contemporains de Molière ont pris pour sujet de leurs comédies tel ou tel épisode de la vie parisienne, tel ou tel type d'individu, tel ou tel groupe de personnes. De cet ensemble de particularités naquit la pièce épisodique, si largement exploitée […] par Boursault.[283]

He uses *La Comédie sans titre* to illustrate this innovative approach: 'le spectateur voit se succéder comme dans une revue, tous les personnages qui croient devoir recourir aux bons offices du Mercure', concluding that Boursault was 'le créateur du genre'.[284] More recent criticism likewise recognises Boursault's skill in satirising contemporary manners and in portraying situations that reflected the audience's own experiences or to which they could readily relate. Croft highlights a vein of satire running through Boursault's plays: 'la satire prend chez lui différentes formes, parmi lesquelles on retiendra celle des caractères, des professions et des mœurs'.[285] Boursault's acute observations of the foibles of society and his

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[280] Taillandier, p.32.
[281] Boursault, *Trois Petites Comédies*, ed. by Charlotte Dias (2014), 'Présentation'> L'écriture de Boursault
[282] Paul d'Estrée, 'Les origines de la Revue au théâtre', *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France,* 8 (1901), 234-80 (p.244).
[283] D'Estrée, p.244.
[284] D'Estrée, p.248.
[285] Croft, *Boursault,* p.247.

ability to turn observation into sardonic witty comment make his plays a social commentary on contemporary lifestyle. Gevrey sees a moral dimension in *La Comédie sans titre*:

> la comédie porte le journalisme au théâtre; elle passe en revue les catégories de lecteurs du périodique et raille leur soif de publicité, qui nous paraît encore bien actuelle[…] Par des vers aisés et avec un style agréable, Boursault dénonce alors la société dans un discours moral qui confère une utilité à la comédie.[286]

D'Estrée's comparative verdict is perceptive: 'L'auteur du *Misanthrope* s'occupe de tous les hommes et de tous les temps: l'auteur de *La Comédie sans titre* n'étudie que son époque et ses contemporains'.[287]

In 1670, Boursault added another genre to his repertoire: the short novel. He appears to have recognised the opportunities offered by this fashionable genre. Charles Sorel confirms the contemporary demand for new reading material: 'il y a une mode pour les Livres […] de mesme que pour les Esvantails, les Gans, les Rubans' and that there are some authors 'qui n'ont travaillé, que pour fournir aux Libraires des Livres nouveaux […] selon la mode qui avoit cours alors'.[288] Camille Esmein sees this expanded market based on 'la diffusion d'une littérature de divertissement destinée à un public élargi. Cet élargissement va de pair avec un embourgeoisement'.[289] The Abbé de Villiers suggests that for a young writer to be successful, he should ignore the opinions of the *doctes*, but instead '[il] faut plaire à la cour. Il faut être du goût des dames pour réussir'.[290] Esmein points out that the 'trait caractéristique du lectorat de romans, sinon de fait, du moins dans l'imaginaire collectif, est la supériorité en nombre des femmes'.[291] Thus, the market for novels at this time was diverse with a new class of reader to whom the novelist had to learn to appeal. Huet's advice offered a certain moral legitimacy to the genre: 'La fin principale des Romans, ou du moins celle qui le doit être, et que se doivent proposer ceux qui les composent, est l'instruction des Lecteurs, à qui il faut toujours faire voir la vertu couronnée; et le vice châtié'.[292] However, this new genre was considered of low status in the literary canon; according to Wolfgang Matzat and Hartmut Stenzel, 'le roman, déconsidéré parce que frivole, semble plutôt jouer le rôle d'un parent pauvre en comparaison avec les inventions des auteurs de théâtre qui ont développé des formes dramatiques

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[286] Gevrey, p.18.
[287] D'Estrée, p.250.
[288] Charles Sorel, *De la Connaissance des Bons Livres* (Paris: Pralard, 1671), pp.11-12.
[289] Camille Esmein, 'L'Invention du Roman Français au XVIIe siècle', *Loxias 10 Doctoriales II*, (2005), (para. 7 of 26).
[290] Abbé de Villiers, *Entretien sur les Tragédies de ce temps* (Paris: Michallet, 1675), p.59.
[291] Esmein, p.7.
[292] Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Traité de l'origine des romans* (Paris: Desessarts, An 7 [1799]), p.4.

prestigieuses'.[293] Dominique Moncond'huy confirms that the novel was not highly regarded by the *doctes*: 'c'est à peine un genre aux yeux des gens de lettres'.[294]

Two types of novel were popular at this time: historical novels and romances. Boursault's earliest novels were romances, focused on *galanterie*: *Le Marquis de Chavigny*, *Artémise et Poliante* (described by Vanessa Viola as 'romans passionnés sur un fond de décor historique')[295] and *Ne pas croire ce qu'on voit*, all of which were published in 1670. This type of novel was fashionable slightly before the historical novel, twenty of them appearing between 1661 and 1670.[296] Beugnot and Collinet note that '[Boursault] oriente le genre vers la nouvelle courte qui emprunte ses sujets à la réalité contemporaine et à la plus immédiate actualité'.[297] The use of a contemporary setting in literary works was innovative and Boursault later tried to use a similar approach in his work for the theatre. Taillandier sees these early novels as 'écrites pour le divertissement d'un monde dont Boursault était à la fois l'amuseur et le confident'.[298] His experience in the *mondain* society and his links with the salons enabled him to understand how to appeal to the tastes of a mostly female audience in a genre which was new to him but in which he could produce three novels in quick succession.

Historical novels had become very popular by the time Boursault adopted the genre in 1675 with *Le Prince de Condé*. Günter Berger confirms: 'cette tendance vers l'histoire [est] précisément à l'origine du succès du roman auprès du lectorat'.[299] Barbara Woshinsky considers the appeal of the genre:

> the nouvelle historique, as a form of idealized dynastic history, gained the favour of both the nobility and the bourgeoisie who shared the nobility's artistocractic attitudes. Its tactful blending of history and fiction produced a formula just to the taste of polite society.[300]

The historical novel allowed an author to praise a patron indirectly by taking as its subject an ancestor of that patron. Attempts by writers to link the hero of their play to their patron will be

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[293] Wolfgang Matzat and Hartmut Stenzel, 'Introduction. L'invention du roman français au XVIIe siècle', *Dix-septième siècle,* 215 (2002), 195-98 (p.195).

[294] Dominique Moncond'huy, *Histoire de la Littérature Française du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2005), p.174.

[295] Boursault, *Les Deux Frères gémeaux ou les menteurs qui ne mentent point,* ed. by Vanessa Viola (2003-2004), 'Esquisse bio-bibliographique>Ses œuvres'.

[296] René Godenne, *Histoire de la Nouvelle Française aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Geneva: Droz, 1970), p.62

[297] *Dictionnaire des Journalistes 1600-1789*, '107-edme-boursault'.

[298] Taillandier, p.103.

[299] Günter Berger, 'Genres bâtards: roman et histoire à la fin du XVIIe siècle', *Dix-septième siècle,* 215 (2002), 297-305 (p.298).

[300] Barbara R. Woshinsky, *La Princesse de Clèves: The Tension of Elegance* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), p 58.

examined as a patronage strategy in a later chapter. In the case of a historical novel the connection was even more obvious, especially if the hero and the patron shared the same name: the glorified image of the novel's hero is reflected on to his eponymous descendant. Boursault depicts his hero, the ancestor of the contemporary Prince de Condé, his patron, as a lover, the perfect courtier and a brave warrior. He praises both the current Prince and the hero of his novel by saying 'c'est assez de dire ce nom pour dire un grand homme'.[301] As Woshinsky notes, 'the virtues that romance had attributed to antique and legendary heroes were bestowed instead on members of the sixteenth-century nobility, whose seventeenth-century descendants still bore the same names and titles. For them, reading an historical novel became a ceremony of recognition'.[302] The glory of his ancestor is reflected on Condé, but Boursault avoids the appearance of excessive flattery of a patron. Boursault was able to use the form of the historical novel as another literary mechanism to offer thanks and praise to one of his patrons.

In another style of prose writing, Boursault produced a short essay in 1671 for the education of the Dauphin, entitled *La Véritable Etude des Souverains*, described in *Le Mercure Galant* as 'rempli d'exemples illustres & necessaires aux jeunes Princes que l'on entreprend d'instruire'. The king was so pleased with the work that he wanted to make Boursault 'sous-précepteur' to the Dauphin. However, Boursault was under-qualified for the role: 'il n'y eut que son seul défaut de Latinité qui fut un obstacle à un honneur & à une fortune si considerable'.[303] A subsequent and significant change in his career path occurred in 1672 and Florence Maine considers that 'c'est sans doute comme dédommagement qu'on lui propose le poste de receveur des tailles à Montluçon'.[304] Apart from royal favouritism, there does not appear to have been any reason why Boursault should have been selected for an advantageous position as a tax collector: he had received little formal education, his writing would not have been directly relevant for this role and there is no evidence to suggest that he bought his way into the post. It appears that Boursault owed this appointment to his connections at court, which in turn he owed to his writing; it might have been as a reward for one particular work or in general recognition of his status as a writer.

Boursault's granddaughter suggests that he enjoyed more financial stability as a tax collector than as a writer, saying that during this time Boursault lent Boileau 'une bourse de deux cents

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[301] Boursault, *Le Prince de Condé* (Paris: Guignard, 1683), pp.1-2.
[302] Woshinsky, p, 58.
[303] *Le Mercure Galant* (September 1701), p.399.
[304] Boursault, *Germanicus: Tragédie*, ed. by Florence Maine (2001), 'Presentation> L'Auteur> sa vie'.

louis':[305] such generosity seems likely to be explained by an increase in Boursault's own earnings. Maine suggests that 'Ce travail, Boursault l'exerce sans conviction: il se met plutôt du côté des taillables que des receveurs'. He lost the post in 1688 but Maine considers that 'Il met à profit son séjour pour se consacrer à l'écriture de comédies'.[306] He wrote four plays and a novel during his time in the post: the fact that he continued writing when he was financially more secure demonstrates his personal ambition for literary recognition and his continuing pursuit of cultural and vocational capital. In Montluçon, he was distanced from the court and from Parisian society and his social capital would have been decreased by his absence. Likewise, his absence from the cultural consciousness could have risked damaging his vocational capital. Irving Rein *et al*. emphasise the importance of remaining constantly in the public eye: 'sustaining celebrity involves two factors: how visible a celebrity remains, and for how long his or her longevity can be extended'.[307] Writing to Racine in 1687 (while Boursault was in Montluçon and four years after he had last published anything), Boileau says 'M. Boursaut, que je croiois mort, me vint voir'.[308] This ironic comment shows the perils that authors risked if they were absent from either the social or cultural scene for any period of time.

As a further example of his literary versatility and adaptability to trends, Boursault published two epistolary novels, as well as large collections of his own letters. Gevrey recognises the importance of Boursault's contribution to this new genre:

> C'est d'abord à l'évolution de la fiction épistolaire − qui représente une forme de roman de l'intime, apparenté au théâtre mais en quête de naturel et de vérité − que Boursault contribua, en composant deux ensembles de lettres amoureuses fictives, mêlées dans un premier temps à des lettres réelles.[309]

The first of his epistolary novels, *Lettres à Babet*, appeared in 1669, shortly after the more famous *Lettres Portugaises*, and was published by the same company.[310] This could suggest that Boursault sought opportunistically to take advantage of the success of the earlier work, although his originality in this genre is highlighted by Arnaldo Pizzorusso as significant: his novels 'présentent […] quelques traits distinctifs qui préparent ou qui annoncent d'assez près l'évolution successive du roman épistolaire'.[311]

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[305] Boursault, *Theatre*, I, [p. a viii].
[306] Boursault, *Germanicus*, 'L'Auteur> Sa vie'.
[307] Irving J. Rein, Philip Kotler and Martin Stoller, *High Visibility* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990), p.302.
[308] Boileau, p.745.
[309] Gevrey, p.21.
[310] Goldsmith, p.151.
[311] Arnaldo Pizzorusso, 'Boursault et le roman par lettres', *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France,* 69 (1969), 525-39 (p.539).

Boursault had taken the step of publishing his novel as part of a collection of his own letters,[312] possibly to increase interest in the work as a whole and insure against the unpredictable fate of his first epistolary novel. The question of reality in an epistolary novel was an important consideration, as Pizzorusso states: 'les lecteurs de l'époque, dans un ouvrage […] de ce genre, attachaient un grand prix à l'authenticité'.[313] Boursault, therefore, may have included *Lettres à Babet* within the collection of his other letters to strengthen the impression of their being genuine. He follows the literary convention of denying that he has written the letters himself, and also uses the text of the letters themselves as part of this tactic, inviting Babet to attend one of his own plays, though with the modesty befitting an *honnête homme* he warns her that she will find it tedious.[314] According to Pizzorusso, Boursault 's'efforce surtout de persuader son lecteur qu'il s'agit bien de documents authentiques, étrangers à toute intention et à tout dessein littéraire'.[315] However, presenting the letters as genuine could have the negative effect that Boursault would be considered indiscreet in publishing such personal correspondence. Boursault therefore uses his preface to defend himself by saying that he is only publishing them now that Babet is dead. He professes that his initial intention was merely to show them to his close friends for their private enjoyment rather than taking the less *honnête* step of publishing them for profit; his main motive for publishing is that it would be a shame to deprive the readers of such fine letters.[316] Boursault frequently addresses the reader of the preface as 'ami',[317] underlining the impression that he merely wants to share these letters with a few close friends.

Boursault's second epistolary novel, *Treize Lettres Amoureuses d'une Dame à un Cavalier*, followed a similar strategy, in that he initially published it as part of a collection of his own letters. Boursault professes reluctance to profit by publishing the letters but he is unable to refuse the request of a lady who gave them to him (a further sign of *honnête* behaviour): 'sa prière est pour moy un ordre'.[318] This convention among writers of feigning reluctance to publish enabled them to appear to be writing for personal pleasure and the pleasure of a few friends: the idealised image of the cultivated gentleman of leisure. This more *mondain* form of

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[312] Goldsmith, p.151.
[313] Pizzorusso, p.528.
[314] Boursault, *Lettres à Babet,* ed. by Emile Colombey (Paris: Quantin, 1886), p.61.
[315] Pizzorusso, p.527.
[316] Boursault, p.46.
[317] Boursault, p.43 and p.45.
[318] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles de Monsieur de Bourseault, avec Treize Lettres Amoureuses d'une Dame à un Cavalier,* 3rd edn, 2 vols (Lyon: Par la Société, 1711), II, p.345.

honnêteté would be acceptable to elite society and Boursault's tactics enable him to meet the expectations of his readership.

Boursault's willingness to experiment is further shown in 1673 when he wrote his first tragedy. In total Boursault wrote fifteen plays but only two were tragedies. The first was based on Mme de La Fayette's novel, *La Princesse de Clèves*: 'J'en fis une piece de Théatre, dont j'esperois un si grand succès'.[319] This change of genre was potentially hasardous for him, as his experience had been in light verse and diverting comedies. He also took the risk of innovation by attempting to write a tragedy based on relatively recent French history. He had used contemporary France as a setting in some of his novels and comedies, and may have wished to transfer elements of this *moderne* approach to tragedy. Boursault identifies the challenge to customary practice when he writes that, in the theatre, 'vous ne trouvez en votre chemin que des Grecs & des Romains'.[320] However, the play was a failure: he blamed this on the fact that the 'ears' of the audience 'ne purent s'accommoder de ce qu'elles n'avoient pas coûtume d'entendre'. Boursault reacted quickly to the negative response, changing the setting to ancient Rome and renaming the play *Germanicus*. As he freely admits, 'comme *La Princesse de Clèves* n'avoit paru que deux ou trois fois, on s'en souvint si peu un an après que, sous le nom de *Germanicus*, elle eut un succès considérable'.[321] The *Anecdotes Dramatiques* confirm the effectiveness of the revisions: 'L'Auteur y fit des changemens […] & sa Piece […] fut représentée avec un grand succès'.[322] This demonstrates Boursault's *habitus* and his understanding as a professional writer of the need to respond to the tastes of his audience. He had wanted to modernise but he recognised that 'il est dangereux d'exposer de trop grandes nouveautés'.[323] However, he was sufficiently pragmatic to abandon an innovation which was not working. He concludes (perhaps in ironic resignation): 'Quoique la Seine soit plus abondante, & roule une plus belle eau que le Tibre, elle n'a pas tant de grace dans la Poësie'.[324] The subsequent success of *Germanicus* may suggest that the Paris theatre-goers were not

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[319] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles de Feu Monsieur Boursault,* I, p.294.
Mme de La Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* was not published until 1678, while Boursault's play was written in 1673. Maine explains the discrepancy: 'le manuscrit du roman […] aurait circulé dans les salons et les cercles littéraires, bien avant sa publication. […] Boursault, qui fréquentait ces milieux, en aurait donc pris connaissance et s'en serait inspiré pour sa tragédie'. (Boursault, *Germanicus*, ed. by Maine, 'Presentation> Genèse de la Pièce> Sources'.)
[320] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, p.293.
[321] Boursault, I, pp.294-95.
[322] Jean-Marie-Bernard Clément and Joseph de La Porte, *Anecdotes Dramatiques,* 3 vols (Paris: La Veuve Duchesne, 1775), I, p.409.
[323] Boursault, I, p.295.
[324] Boursault*, Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.302.

prepared for such radical new settings, or alternatively, that Boursault had learnt why *La Princesse de Clèves* had failed and had changed more than just the name and setting. His later, and only other, tragedy, *Marie Stuart,* was a failure and was only performed seven times. Chloé Le Vaguerès concludes that the problem was that Boursault was being too innovative for the audience's taste: 'le sujet présente la double originalité d'être à la fois moderne et anglais, qualités que l'on pourrait considérer comme à l'origine de cet échec'.[325]

 In his preface to *Germanicus,* Boursault claims that Corneille 'parla si advantageusement de cet Ouvrage à l'Académie qu'il luy échapa de dire qu'il ne luy manquoit que le nom de M. Racine pour estre achevé'.[326] This opinion, genuine or not, is worth examining in light of the impact of an author's reputation. Corneille's comment suggests indirectly that Boursault's reputation may have hindered the success of some of his plays. As Donneau de Visé writes:

> lorsqu'un auteur s'est une fois acquis de la réputation, son nom fait du moins autant de chefs-d'œuvre que lui. L'on regarde tout ce qui part de sa plume au travers de l'éclat de ce même nom, et cet éclat, préoccupant les esprits, les aveuglant et les empêchant de blâmer tout ce qui sort de l'esprit d'une personne si célèbre, fait que l'on fouille, pour ainsi dire, jusques au fond de ses ouvrages pour y reconnaître l'art et pour y découvrir des beautés que l'on y veut absolument trouver.[327]

It is plausible that a poor reputation could have the reverse effect of convincing an audience that nothing such a writer produced would be of good quality. This would suggest that Boursault needed, at this stage in his career, to focus on accumulating cultural capital in order to enhance his reputation with theatre-goers. Nevertheless, the Abbé de La Porte concludes: 'Si cette Tragédie n'est pas digne de l'éloge de *Corneille*, si elle est fort inférieure aux chefs-d'œuvre de *Racine*, elle mérite, du moins, d'être mise au rang de celles qu'on lit encore avec plaisir'.[328]

Boursault appears to have waited until he was in a position of financial security before experimenting with a genre in which he had little experience. He could afford for *La Princesse de Clèves* to be a failure because he now had reliable economic capital provided by his post as tax collector. When beginning their careers, writers may have tried out different genres before specialising in one form in which they were most successful. Some, like Racine, then sought to perfect their specialist form, while others, like Boursault, continued to experiment throughout their careers. It may have been a prudent decision by some authors to wait until later in their

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[325] Boursault, *Marie Stuard, Reine d'Ecosse*, ed. by Chloé Le Vaguerès (2002-2003), 'Création, représentations et réception de *Marie Stuard* >Un échec annoncé?'.
[326] Boursault, *Germanicus*, 'Avis'.
[327] Jean Donneau de Visé, *Les Nouvelles Nouvelles*, ed. by Claude Bourqui and Christophe Schuwey, 3 parts (Département de langues et littératures de l'Université de Fribourg), III, Section 189-90.
[328] Joseph de La Porte, *L'Observateur littéraire,* 4 vols (Amsterdam: Veuve Bordelet, 1760), II. p.81.

careers before attempting to take risks. By the time they made some of their most risky and innovative changes, both Boursault and Quinault were well-known within literary circles. Quinault was a member of the Académie française and Boursault was an established figure at court with supportive patrons. Both had also enjoyed financial success, and would have known that if their innovation was unsuccessful, they could return to their original writing styles, as indeed Boursault quickly did following the failure of *La Princesse de Clèves*.

Among his other occasional works were an attempt to move into the fashionable genre of opera or *tragédie lyrique*, with a work entitled *Méléagre*, which was set to music by Lully, and a one act lyrical divertissement, *La Fête de la Seine*. His opera was apparently written at the request of Madame de Maintenon in 1694, who intended it as a surprise performance for the king, but she changed her mind and it was not performed.[329] An attempt in 1691 at writing a *grande comédie* with aspects of *pièce à machines*, *Phaéton*, shows his awareness of trends in the theatre and his continuing willingness to experiment in dramatic forms. The play was not a success, which Boursault attributed to a cabal of his rivals. It was an expensive play to perform: Croft highlights the 'complexité des machines et coûts de production de la pièce' as a key contributing factor to the withdrawal from performance. Boursault then returned to a more familiar and more successful form with *Les mots à la mode*, described as an 'amusante petite pièce sur les locutions et tournures en vogue vers la fin du siècle'.[330]

Goldsmith considers that 'Boursault's reputation as a writer who was exceptionally good at discerning fashionable trends and exploiting them in his own works is borne out in three plays he wrote in the last ten years of his life'.[331] Boursault made yet another change of genre, writing a 'comédie moraliste', *Esope*, in 1690.[332] D'Estrée sees Aesop as 'l'homme de bon sens et d'esprit agréablement railleur, à la conscience pure et au cœur généreux, qui n'épargnera aucun travers, aucun ridicule, aucun vice'.[333] According to Goldsmith, 'this didactic drama was extremely popular in its time and drew more spectators in the parterre than any other seventeenth-century play'.[334] Croft provides details of the success of *Esope*: 'En tout, 23,000 spectateurs vinrent à ces 42 représentations d'affilée, une preuve incontestable de

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[329] Boursault, *Chef d'Œuvres de Boursault* (Paris: Petite Bibliotheque des Théatres, 1786), p.38.
[330] Association des Amis de la Lecture et du Patrimoine de Mussy-sur-Seine, *Dossier Edme Boursault*, 'Boursault et le Théâtre'.
[331] Goldsmith, p.149.
[332] For publication in March 1690 Boursault modified the original title of *Esope* to *Les Fables d'Esope.* This changed again to *Esope à la ville* after the performance and publication of *Esope à la cour* in 1701.
[333] D'Estrée, p.247.
[334] Goldsmith, p.149.

l'extraordinaire réussite de la pièce'.[335] She considers *Esope* as the high point in Boursault's career, describing it as 'une œuvre majeure qui marque un tournant dans l'histoire du théâtre en inaugurant le genre de la comédie moralisante. Par l'insertion de fables et la mise en scène du philosophe Esope, le dramaturge fusionne la morale et la comédie.'[336] According to Clotilde Thouret, *Esope* included a number of original features: 'la nouveauté de la forme, qui allie fables et comédie dans une structure dramatique en parade, et […] la dimension moralisante d'une pièce finalement assez différente de la production comique contemporaine'.[337] The Abbé de La Porte, in reviewing both of Boursault's *Esope* plays, highlights the originality of the work: 'Elles joignent le mérite de la nouveauté à une morale fine […] *Boursaut* tenta le premier ce nouveau genre dramatique'. He also sees that it was a daring enterprise: 'La seule hardiesse […] d'oser mettre, le premier, *les Fables d'Esope* sur la scene, & de s'approprier, pour ainsi dire, ces précieuses dépouilles de l'antiquité, ne pouvoit partir que d'un génie du premier ordre'. His conclusion demonstrates that Boursault was able to reap the benefits of his originality, since 'c'est principalement sur ces deux Pièces qu'est fondée la réputation de *Boursaut*'.[338]

In his early plays, Boursault was transparently imitating other playwrights but, as he gained experience, he showed more originality. Gevrey identifies his approach as a professional writer pursuing his career: 'il sut atteindre un large public en pratiquant tous les genres qui préparaient la modernité et en les faisant évoluer'.[339] He responded to fashionable trends but, within the new genres, he was innovative. This boldness is seen by Croft as 'tout à fait cohérente avec le désir de reconnaissance littéraire auquel il aspire'.[340] Nevertheless, he was not reckless. He built on his talents in light comedy and could move readily into the style of the gallant novel. His epistolary novels were a development of his gazettes. He made adept use of satire in his witty comedies. Nor did he slavishly follow fashion. He was prepared to follow his own beliefs in seeking to move away from topics from antiquity and he sought to introduce moral elements of *honnêteté* in his plays. Viola considers that 'On retrouve dans ses œuvres une progression à la fois poétique et morale car Boursault a débuté par un style d'écolier naïf [reiterating Taillandier's early assessment] pour aboutir aux leçons de sagesse qu'il délivre dans ses deux Esope'.[341]

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[335] Croft, *Boursault*, p.309.
[336] Croft, p.336.
[337] Boursault, *Les Fables d'Esope: Preface*, ed. by Clotilde Thouret, 'Présentation'.
[338] La Porte, II, p.83.
[339] Gevrey, p.26.
[340] Croft, p.337.
[341] Boursault, *Deux Frères Gémeaux,* ed. by Vanessa Viola, 'Esquisse bio-bibliographique> Ses œuvres'.

Boursault was evidently aware of the risk in embracing new genres: 'j'avoüe que j'ay tremblé plus d'une fois, & que s'il y a de la gloire à acquerir à mettre quelque chose de nouveau au jour, il y a beaucoup de danger à craindre',[342] but, presumably, he saw the importance of novelty in maintaining audience awareness and in gaining 'reconnaissance littéraire'. Donneau de Visé set out his 'rules from Parnassus' which may have confirmed Boursault's own view of the value of novelty to attract audience attention:

> Les auteurs qui pourront trouver quelque chose de si nouveau que chacun demeure d'accord de n'avoir jamais rien vu de semblable seront les plus estimés, quand même leurs ouvrages n'auraient pas la dernière perfection.[343]

As Croft concludes:

> L'opportunisme social et littéraire que pratique l'écrivain est l'indice incontestable de la sensibilité d'un auteur qui sait analyser les pratiques dramaturgiques de ses contemporains et la réception de leurs œuvres avant de concevoir ses propres pièces. Cela tend à démontrer que chacun de ses choix est mûrement réfléchi et pesé.[344]

Victor Fournel makes the point that Boursault was able to overcome his early educational disadvantages and succeed in a career as a writer: 'Edme Boursault est un des plus notables exemples de ce que peuvent le travail, la persévérance et le talent naturel, dénués même du secours de ces études préliminaires qui semblent indispensables à tout écrivain'.[345] Boursault's obituary in *Le Mercure Galant* records the range and diversity of his œuvre and concludes 'Mr Boursault passoit aisément du serieux à l'enjoüé, du Comique à la Morale, de la Poësie sublime à la Poësie lyrique, sans estre étranger en aucun endroit; & dans quelque genre qu'il écrivist, c'estoit toûjours celuy où il écrivoit le mieux'.[346]

Quinault

Philippe Quinault was born in Paris in June 1635. His father was a master baker, though, as Norman points out, some of his relatives held important administrative posts and he received a formal education at the Collège du Cardinal Lemoine.[347] He studied law and Agnès Elthes notes that he was registered as 'avocat en Parlement' on his marriage contract in 1660.[348] His early

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[342] Boursault, *Les Fables d'Esope* (Paris: Girard, 1690), 'Préface nécessaire', [p. a viii].
[343] Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles Nouvelles*, III, Section 143.
[344] Croft, *Boursault,* p.339.
[345] Victor Fournel, *Les Contemporains de Molière: Receuil de Comédies rares ou peu connues, jouées de 1650 à 1680*, 3 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1863-75), I, p.93.
[346] *Le Mercure Galant* (September 1701), pp.397-98.
[347] Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, p.364.
[348] Agnès Elthes, 'Réminiscences juridiques dans les œuvres de Quinault pour le théâtre', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 76 (1998), 803-15 (p.804).

career was in a role that would have introduced him to literary *milieux*. Tallemant describes him as 'le valet de Tristan [l'Hermite]'[349] though Gros notes that Quinault described himself as 'l'élève, jamais comme le valet de Tristan'.[350] The role, whether of valet or of 'élève', to an established writer, who was himself in the service of the Duc de Guise,[351] would certainly have helped Quinault; Brooks quotes Perrault, who reported that Quinault was able to 'bénéficier de sa [Tristan's] protection et de ses conseils pour exceller dans la poésie'.[352] In 1656 Quinault was able to style himself as a 'Gentilhomme de M. de Guise', having taken Tristan's place in the Duc's household, following Tristan's death in 1655.[353]

Jacques Truchet suggests that Quinault's career falls into:

> trois périodes d'inégale longueur et d'inégale fécondité: la première, très féconde, se termina, en 1660, par le mariage, et par l'acquisition d'une charge de valet de chambre du roi; la deuxième, de 1660 à 1671, beaucoup moins riche en pièces de théâtre, s'acheva par l'entrée à l'Académie française et à la Chambre des comptes; la troisième, de nouveau très féconde, vouée au théâtre lyrique, se prolongea jusqu'en 1686.[354]

Quinault wrote more plays than either Boursault or Racine; his œuvre for the spoken stage consists of eight tragi-comedies, five tragedies and three comedies. His early works were mostly comedies. Brooks describes him as 'precocious': Quinault wrote his first play, *Les Rivales,* in 1653 when he was only seventeen or eighteen. He describes the play as 'loosely based on an elderly text by Rotrou'[355] and Norman suggests that he had the help of Tristan.[356] The following year Quinault wrote another comedy, *L'Amant indiscret.* The choice of setting was quite innovative: as Brooks points out, 'not only does Quinault locate the action amongst the ordinary people of contemporary Paris, but also he makes the opportunity to comment with dry humour on certain aspects of contemporary life, thus sketching an early example of the *comédies de mœurs*'.[357] Quinault's dedication confirms the success of the play, referring to 'tout le bruit qu'il s'est acquis sur nostre Theatre'.[358]

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[349] Tallemant des Réaux, II, p.373.
[350] Gros, p.8.
[351] Tallemant des Réaux, II, p.373.
[352] Brooks, p.33.
[353] Gros, p.39.
[354] Jacques Truchet, 'Quinault', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle,* ed. by Jacques Truchet, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), II, p.1536.
[355] Quinault, *L'Amant indiscret, ou le maistre estourdi*, ed. by William Brooks (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Online Series, 2003), p.7.
[356] Norman, *Touched by the Graces,* p.364.
[357] Quinault, *L'Amant indiscret*, ed. by Brooks, p. 26.
[358] Quinault, p.51.

Quinault's innovative play *La Comédie sans comédie* was also performed in 1654. Fournel describes it as 'une pièce d'un genre nouveau, ou plutôt une réunion de pièces détachées, […] où l'on voit défiler tour à tour une pastorale, une comédie, une tragédie et même une tragi-comédie mêlée de chants et de machines'; he considers that 'elle a été composée dans le but évident de faire une sorte d'*exhibition* pittoresque de la troupe du Marais et de lui permettre de montrer ses talents dans les genres les plus divers'. He regards Quinault as 'à peu près le premier qui ait réuni dans une seule pièce des échantillons de toutes les familles dramatiques'. For a young author, this was a challenge but the play was successful, with Fournel grudgingly remarking 'l'ouvrage a dû plaire aux spectateurs par cette variété, si décousue qu'elle soit'.[359] Quinault thus demonstrated his readiness to experiment with the range of dramatic genres; he showed considerable self-confidence in presenting such a different type of play at an early stage in his career. He was also influenced by fashionable trends: Antoine Adam, recognising that 'on était au temps où le théâtre espagnol connaissait sa plus grande vogue', identifies Calderon as a source for two of Quinault's plays.[360] Sylvain Cornic considers the influence of 'la préciosité' and 'la lecture des romans dans les salons', especially in the early part of Quinault's career where he would have acquired the 'goût fondé non sur l'obsession pédantesque des règles, mais sur le souci de la réception par un public d'élite'.[361] Brooks also sees the influence of the popular sentimental novel: Quinault 'inserted the fine dissection and discussion of sentiments' into his work.[362] Quinault was using the contemporary literary field to learn his craft and develop his own style. He learned quickly and demonstrated his prolific output: by the age of twenty-five, he had had eleven plays performed.

La Généreuse Ingratitude was also performed during this period. The title page of the 1656 published edition describes it as a 'tragi-comedie pastorale'.[363] The Abbé d'Aubignac explains: 'nous avons ôté le nom de *Tragédie* aux Pièces de Theatre dont la Catastrophe est heureuse, encore que le Sujet & les personnes soient Tragiques, c'est à dire heroïques, pour leur donner celui de *Tragi-Comedies*'.[364] Hélène Baby identifies the key characteristics of the genre: 'malgré son issue heureuse et la légèreté de son sujet, réduit à l'accomplissement d'une relation

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[359] Fournel, III, pp.71-72.
[360] Antoine Adam, *Histoire de la Littérature Française au XVIIe siècle,* 2nd edn, 3 vols (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997), II, p.353.
[361] Sylvain Cornic, *Philippe Quinault ou la Naissance de l'Opéra Français* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Paris IV Sorbonne, 2007), p.57 and p.59.
[362] Brooks, p.160.
[363] Quinault, *La Genereuse Ingratitude* (Paris: Toussainct Quinet, 1656).
[364] François Hedelin Abbé d'Aubignac, *La Pratique du Theatre,* 3 vols (Amsterdam: Jean Frederic Bernard, 1715), I, p.133.

sentimentale, l'action principale est faite de violences et de grands périls […] susceptibles de constituer l'intrigue d'une tragédie'. In addition, the characters are people of high rank and 'la qualité élevée de ce personnel fait que le genre échappe à la médiocrité comique'.[365] Her summary of the nature of the genre is 'un théâtre d'aventures où la destination finale et sereine est inscrite d'avance'.[366] Baby considers that tragi-comedy was at its most popular earlier ('de 1628 à 1634, cinquante tragi-comédies sont publiées, seulement seize comédies et dix tragédies paraissent') and that by the 1650s its popular appeal was in decline.[367] According to Gabrielle Jeanselme,

> on reniera même le nom de tragi-comédie, et l'on déguisera la tragi-comédie sous le nouveau nom de « comédie héroïque ». Si entre 1659 et 1665, 12 tragi-comédies sont jouées, entre 1665 et 1671, ce sont seulement 3 tragi-comédies et 4 « comédies héroïques » qui sont représentées, et le nouveau terme montre le discrédit où est tombé le genre. Le goût a résolument changé. Corneille va même jusqu'à débaptiser ses deux tragi-comédies pour les appeler tragédies: *Clitandre* (1660) et le *Cid* (édition de 1648 changée en 1660). C'est le désaveu cornélien.[368]

Truchet considers that 'il y a quelque chose de paradoxal à voir un débutant si brillant et si avisé se consacrer à un vieux genre voué à une disparition prochaine'.[369] Nevertheless, the majority of his plays for the spoken theatre were written in this genre, so he clearly had a preference for this form of light entertainment written in a gallant style, pre-figuring his libretti. His tragi-comedies were a notable success: Boscheron speaks of 'quatre Tragi-Comedies qui eurent le même sort que ses autres Pieces, c'est-à-dire, qu'elles lui attirerent encore de nouveaux applaudissemens'.[370] *Amalasonte* was well received and according to Loret, 'nostre Roy, mesme,/Qui, Mercredy, le vid joüer,/Prenant plaizir à la loüer':[371] even at this early stage in his career, Quinault's plays were appealing to members of the royal family. *Le Feint Alcibiade* (1658) was also a success; Gros mentions the performance attended by ex-Queen Christina of Sweden and he concludes 'Quinault comptait une admiratrice nouvelle'.[372] *Stratonice* (1660) was another success: Loret describes it as 'fort applaudie/Par un grand nombre de ces gens/Que l'on appelle intelligents'.[373] Truchet notes that from Quinault's first play in 1653 to 1660 'furent

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[365] Hélène Baby, 'Littérarité et généricité: l'exemple de la tragi-comédie en France au XVIIe siècle', *Loxias 8 Emergence et hybridation des genres* (2005), (paras. 14 and 15 of 63).
[366] Baby, (para. 42 of 63).
[367] Baby, (para. 9 of 63).
[368] Quinault, *Le Fantôme amoureux*, ed. by Gabrielle Jeanselme, (2008-2009) 'Présentation>De l'escarpin de la tragédie au cothurne de la comédie >Hybridité et tragi-comédie'.
[369] Truchet, p.1536.
[370] Boscheron, I, p.8.
[371] Jean Loret, *La Muze Historique ou Recueil des Lettres en Vers contentant les Nouvelles du Temps [...] 1650-1665,* ed. by Charles-Louis Livet, 4 vols (Paris: P.Daffis, 1877-78), II, p.407.
[372] Gros, p.47.
[373] Loret, III, p.150.

créées coup sur coup onze pièces, qui réussirent presque toutes, et dont certaines […] eurent un immense succès'.[374]

Among his contemporaries, Quinault had a reputation for excessive *tendresse* in his work: Boileau comments 'jusqu'à *je vous hais,* tout se dit tendrement'.[375] Adam argues that

> Quinault, très au courant des goûts de son temps, s'attarde à une sorte de métaphysique amoureuse. Il rappelle l'empire universel de l'amour, son caractère inévitable, les joies qu'apporte le martyre d'aimer; il humilie l'ambition et la soif de l'or et leur oppose l'innocence de l'amour.[376]

Le Journal des Savants, reporting on the success of *Astrate*, draws attention to this same characteristic: 'cette piece a de la tendresse par tout, & de cette tendresse delicate qui est si propre à Monsieur Quinault'.[377] Adrien Baillet reports: 'On dit que la principale qualité des Piéces de cet auteur, est la tendresse qu'il sait exprimer de la maniére du monde la plus touchante'.[378] Saint-Evremond criticises his sentimental style: 'Dans les Tragedies de Quinaut, vous desireriez souvent de la douleur, où vous ne voyez que de la tendresse'.[379] In 'Le Florentin', his anti-Lully satire, La Fontaine includes Quinault in his target with a play on his name:

> Du doux, du tendre, et semblables sornettes,
> Petits mots, jargons d'amourettes
> Confits au miel; bref, il m'enquinauda.[380]

Gilles Revaz describes a form of 'tragédie galante' invented, in his opinion, by Quinault and Thomas Corneille, as 'un genre « mixte », combinant les traits de la galanterie avec les nécessités de l'écriture dramatique'.[381] Elthes suggests that there was a fashion for 'la même galanterie qu'elle [la majorité du public] goûtait dans les romans des la Calprenède et des Scudéry' and she considers that Quinault 'a exploité le roman précieux dans la forme rigide de pièces structurées'.[382] Cornic confirms that *Astrate* was a great success: 'la pièce tint l'affiche

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[374] Truchet, p.1536.
[375] Boileau, p.24.
[376] Adam, II, p.354.
[377] *Le Journal des Sçavans* (23 March 1665), pp.142-43.
[378] Adrien Baillet, *Jugemens des Savans sur les Principaux Ouvrages des Auteurs*, 7 vols (Paris: Charles Moette, 1722), V, p.398.
[379] Charles de Saint-Evremond, 'Sur les caractères des tragédies', in *Œuvres en prose*, ed. by René Ternois, 4 vols (Paris: Didier, 1966), III, pp.326-37 (p.332).
[380] Jean de La Fontaine, *Œuvres Complètes,* 2 vols, Vol II ed. by Pierre Clarac (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), II, p.614. Clarac (p.956) notes: ' La Fontaine n'a pas publié cette satire que le roi, féru de Lulli, n'eût sans doute pas tolérée […] Elle parut pour la première fois dans une édition subreptice des *Contes et Nouvelles en vers* (Amsterdam, chez Henri Desbordes, 1691).'
[381] Gilles Revaz, 'Peut-on parler de tragédie « galante » (1656-1667)?', *Dix-septième siècle,* 216 (2002), 469-484 (p.482).
[382] Elthes, p.803.

presque trois mois de suite, fortune exceptionnelle' and attributes this success 'en bonne partie au mélange, apprécié de la cour et du public parisien […] d'un argument héroïque […] et d'un traitement galant de la matière historique'.[383] He compares Quinault's treatment of his play with that of *Alexandre* by Racine and what might be considered their 'respect' for historical sources:

> Si Quinault, en plaquant des noms historiques sur des intrigues amoureuses imaginaires, paraît se servir de l'Antiquité pour renforcer l'illusion théâtrale dans la conception de la vraisemblance qui prévalait à l'apogée de la tragi-comédie, Racine, au contraire, semble utiliser l'Antiquité pour le surcroît de gravité et de vraisemblance qu'elle apporte à l'action, comme s'il tentait, grâce à elle, d'estomper le caractère essentiellement galant – malgré les vigoureuses dénégations exprimées dans sa préface – de sa tragédie.[384]

Quinault uses his historical settings to add a veneer of authenticity to the action in his plays. Gros considers that 'l'histoire n'est pour Quinault qu'un cadre commode; s'il donne à ses personnages des noms antiques, s'il situe son action dans l'antiquité, c'est uniquement […] parce qu'il se conforme à une habitude et qu'il suit une tradition'.[385] Charles Perrault recognises the prejudice of some of his contemporaries:

> Les Comedies de M. Quinault furent pendant dix ou douze ans les délices de Paris & de toute la France, quoyque les Connoisseurs de Profession prétendissent qu'il n'y en avoit aucune où les regles fussent bien observées: imagination toute pure & qui n'avoit point d'autre fondement que la fausse prévention où ils estoient, qu'un jeune homme qui n'avoit pas estudié à fond la Poëtique d'Aristote ne pouvoit faire de bonnes Pieces de Theatre.[386]

Gros concludes that 'la tragédie de Quinault est souvent une œuvre agréable: elle est à plus d'un égard une œuvre curieuse et intéressante; mais c'est aussi une œuvre facile et lâchée; elle se plie au goût du jour et s'y adapte; elle n'est écrite qu'en vue du succès'. He compares this with the approach of Racine who 'faisait au public les concessions nécessaires; mais il avait de son art une trop haute opinion, il était trop artiste pour sacrifier au désir de plaire ses idées et ses théories. Il ne cherchait pas à s'abaisser au niveau du spectateur; il cherchait à élever le spectateur jusqu'à lui'.[387] Racine regularly used his prefaces to defend his work and justify his poetics; Quinault seems to have been content to focus on producing work designed to appeal to popular taste. As Brooks concludes: 'There is no evidence that explicit critical comments or

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[383] Cornic, 'L'*Astrate* de Quinault et l'*Alexandre* de Racine: deux illustrations divergentes de la galanterie des anciens', *Littératures classiques,* 77 (2012), 129-42 (p.129).
[384] Cornic, pp.129-30.
[385] Gros, p.342.
[386] Charles Perrault, *Les Hommes Illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce Siècle,* 2 vols (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1696-1700), I, p.81.
[387] Gros, pp.501-02.

critical trends moved Quinault'.[388] In an updated review of the history of Quinault criticism, Brooks challenges many of the negative points noted by earlier critics who 'maintain that Quinault's theatre is a manifestation of fashion rather than a productive influence in its own right' and he provides a spirited rebuttal of the 'laughable accusation' made by Gros, among others, that 'Quinault seeks to please his audience': 'as if that were not the aim of every dramatist'.[389] Jeanselme also challenges some of the criticisms of Quinault's work in her recent analysis of *Le Fantôme amoureux*. She analyses how Quinault refines and re-works his play, asserting that 'Quinault soigne et polit autant sa pièce, afin qu'elle ne choque pas par des mélanges détonants, mais divertisse, émeuve et amuse par une diversité discrète'.[390] She considers that 'le choix fait par Quinault de la forme et de la longueur du vers, son utilisation sobre du monologue, et son traitement raffiné de la stance sont d'un ton très juste'.[391] Her conclusion provides a reassessment of his style: 'De ses premières à ses dernières pièces pour le théâtre, le style de Quinault s'affine, se raffine, gagne en souplesse et en élégance'. [392]

Elthes sees Quinault as occupying a mid-way position in the development of tragic drama: 'Les tragi-comédies et les tragédies de Quinault […] incarnent un moment de transition entre l'héroïsme de Corneille et les passions tragiques de Racine'.[393] Quinault was experimenting in the different genres of theatre popular at the time, moving easily between comedies, tragi-comedies and tragedies. Brooks tracks Quinault's development in his dramatic writing and notes that his last play for the spoken theatre (written in 1670), the tragedy, *Bellérophon*, 'marks the term of his steady shift from the kind of complex plots that tragi-comedy could accommodate towards complexity of attitude and character within a simple plot'.[394] Cornic sees an example of Quinault's response to fashionable trends: '*Bellérophon* montre un auteur sensible à la vogue de la mythologie grecque'.[395] Quinault's choice of the more serious dramatic form of tragedies with a theme from antiquity at this stage in his career may have been influenced by his aim of achieving membership of the Académie française, since this genre would have been considered as more suitable for an *homme de lettres*.

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[388] Brooks, p.445.
[389] Brooks, pp.17-18.
[390] Quinault *Le Fantôme amoureux*, ed. by Jeanselme 'Présentation>De l'escarpin de la tragédie au cothurne de la comédie >Hybridité et tragi-comédie'.
[391] Quinault, 'Présentation>De l'escarpin de la tragédie au cothurne de la comédie >Les stances de Climène ou l'éclosion du lyrisme'.
[392] Quinault, 'Présentation> Quinault: une carrière brillante semée d'embûches'.
[393] Elthes, p.803.
[394] Brooks, p.438.
[395] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.91.

In parallel with his career path as a dramatic author, Quinault was pursuing a route to favour at court. Lough considers that it was thanks to a wealthy marriage that Quinault was able to purchase in 1661 a minor position at court and later a position in the *Chambre des Comptes*.[396] Gros suggests that this was a means of gaining access to Louis XIV: 'c'était, pour lors, son unique ambition et il ne manquait aucune occasion d'attirer sur lui l'attention royale'.[397] Brooks says that when *Agrippa* (performed in 1662) was published, Quinault 'made sure no one could mistake his rise in the world, dedicating this work to the king'.[398] In 1671 Quinault purchased the position of *auditeur à la Chambre des Comptes*, a role which would have brought him into regular contact with the king. Boscheron reports some opposition to Quinault's appointment because of his low status as a professional playwright: 'Messieurs de la Chambre des Comptes disoient qu'il n'étoit pas de l'honneur d'une Compagnie aussi grave que la leur, de recevoir dans leur Corps un homme qui avoit paru pendant plusieurs années sur les Theatres pour y faire represeter ses Tragedies & ses Comedies'.[399] Whilst Quinault had acquired a reputation as a successful *homme de lettres*, it was apparently not considered sufficient to make him acceptable to this elite company. According to Kurzman *et al.*, 'High status groups can never fully accept the "parvenu"'.[400] Quinault became a member of the Académie française in 1670 and later was made Director, and he became a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Médailles in 1674. While continuing to write for the spoken stage, Quinault was becoming increasingly involved with the ballets and other musical spectacles popular at court ('les divertissements du roi'); according to Norman, 'he wrote more than 60 airs that were published in various collections between 1660 and 1674 and he collaborated on several court ballets'.[401]

The 1670s saw the next development for Quinault: Cornic refers to the start of a second career, 'plus brillante encore que la précédente' and concludes that Quinault 'pouvait prétendre, en 1672, à être désormais pleinement associé au culte royal'.[402] Quinault began collaborating with the musician Lully to take advantage of the public's taste for opera. Gros says that '[d]epuis longtemps le public se montrait friand, au théâtre, de musique et de spectacle […] Les opéras italiens exercèrent, à partir de 1647, une influence décisive'.[403] Although Quinault cannot be

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[396] Lough, 'The Earnings of Playwrights in Seventeenth-Century France', *The Modern Language Review,* 42 (1947), 321-36 (p.336).
[397] Gros, p.63.
[398] Brooks, p.285.
[399] Boscheron, p.19.
[400] Kurzman *et al*, pp.349-50.
[401] Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, p.365.
[402] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.66.
[403] Gros, p.97.

said to have created the first French opera, he played a key role, along with Lully, in popularising it. Opera was initially not a great success, as Jérôme de La Gorce explains: 'des paroles mal comprises pouvaient dérouter l'auditeur, la musique fut généralement peu goûtée et les six, voire huit heures qu'exigeait la représentation […] ne manquèrent pas de susciter l'ennui'.[404] Interest was, however, revived in 1669, when a minor poet and lyricist, Pierre Perrin, applied for a *privilège* to found an 'académie' dedicated to music and opera. However, this enterprise was not without its problems, as Perrin 'dut sous-estimer les problèmes matériels qu'entraînerait la réalisation de son projet'.[405] The first opera staged was *Pomone* in March 1671 and was very successful. The *Anecdotes Dramatiques* report that *Pomone* 'fut représenté huit mois de suite, avec un applaudissement universel'.[406] La Gorce confirms the large takings of somewhere between 1,000 and 4,000 *livres* per performance;[407] in comparison, La Grange suggests that, for the same year, Molière's company took between 143 and 1,388 *livres* per performance.[408] However, despite the popular success of the work, Perrin found himself in considerable financial difficulties. Perrin's failure appears to have been exacerbated by his lack of professional experience of theatrical performance and the fact that he had not built up sufficient reserves of vocational and economic capital before undertaking a risky venture in writing the new genre of opera. When the matter of the *privilège* went to trial, Lully persuaded Perrin to renounce all claims in exchange for an annual pension and in 1672, Lully received from Louis XIV a new *privilège* in his name.[409] Lully then asked Quinault, with whom he had collaborated on *Psyché*, to help write the first opera under this new *privilège*.

Blair Hoxby considers that 'Quinault and Lully really deserve the credit for inventing *tragédie en musique*' but he believes that the nomenclature was a mistake: 'had Quinault put "opera" rather than "tragedy" at the head of his *livrets*, Boileau would have judged the form on its own terms'.[410] It was the direct comparison with the model of classical tragedy which led to confusion and criticism since it did not conform to the rules expected of the tragic form: 'peu d'opéras sont proprement dit tragiques. Ils se contentent généralement d'être imprégnés d'un «parfum de tragique» et finissent sur une note optimiste […] une tragédie en musique ne peut

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[404] La Gorce, pp.9-10.
[405] La Gorce, p.17.
[406] Clément and La Porte, *Anecdotes Dramatiques*, I, p.365.
[407] La Gorce, p.21.
[408] La Grange, pp.119-30.
[409] Ralph Henry Forster Scott, *Jean-Baptiste Lully: The Founder of French Opera* (London: Owen, 1973), pp.59-60.
[410] Blair Hoxby, 'All Passion Spent: The Means and Ends of a "Tragédie en Musique"', *Comparative Literature*, 59 (2007), 33-62 (p.36 and p.33).

raisonnablement être écrite comme une tragédie déclamée.'[411] Hoxby outlines the format of their *tragédies en musique,* commencing with

> an allegorical prologue that glorified Louis XIV, then presented the dramatic action itself in five acts that culminated in divertissements – spectacles of choral song, dance, and spectacular machine effects. [...] Quinault thus looked for subjects that would lend themselves to eruptions of the marvelous, magical, or infernal so that he could integrate these divertissements into the action without flaunting the dramatic laws of necessity, propriety, and verisimilitude.[412]

Isherwood emphasises the importance of the new genre in political propaganda: 'both court and public were treated to the spectacle of sumptuous music-dramas which contributed to Louis XIV's image of power and grandeur'. He identifies an innovation introduced by Quinault: 'The drama no longer served as the insignificant setting for vocal acrobatics as it did in Italian opera. Quinault's scenes were logically connected, and even the colorful divertissements were dramatically justified and integrated into the plot'.[413] Cornic refers to 'un genre à la fois nouveau et issu de la fusion de genres antérieurs'. He considers that 'Le théâtre lyrique, loin de constituer une innovation poétique radicale [...] peut être analysé comme un héritage du théâtre parlé (pastorale, tragi-comédie, tragédie) et du théâtre musical (tragédie à machines, comédie-ballet et ballet de cour)'.[414] Many of the roots of the new genre can be seen in Quinault's earlier work, perhaps most obviously in his court 'divertissements', but also in elements of his spoken plays and in his awareness of the demands of theatrical performance. Gros sees the continuation of Quinault's style from his spoken plays developing into his operatic work: 'ces qualités de finesse et ce charme délicat, ce parfum d'élégance, font le principal attrait des livrets d'opéra'.[415] Cornic argues that the main qualities which led to Quinault's success in the new genre were: 'le sûr métier d'un dramaturge chevronné et l'adaptabilité d'un esprit moins féru de réflexion doctrinale que soucieux de chercher des formules toujours nouvelles'.[416]

By building on his acquired competence in a range of dramatic genres, Quinault was able to select and develop the most appropriate aspects and quickly adapt his style and technique to the new form. As with his spoken drama, Quinault was very productive in this period, writing 11 *livrets* between 1673 and 1686. In making what could have been a risky career change from the spoken stage, Quinault demonstrates his sensitivity to early indications that opera would be a

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[411] Site Lully, *Librettistes> Philippe Quinault* (2010), (para. 4-5 of 8).
[412] Hoxby, p.36.
[413] Robert M. Isherwood, 'The Centralization of Music in the Reign of Louis XIV', *French Historical Studies,* 6 (1969), 156-71 (p.171 and p.170).
[414] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.34.
[415] Gros, p.512.
[416] Cornic, p.34.

success and to what was likely to appeal to audiences. He made a strategic decision to change genres in order to gain a considerably greater amount of capital and he was confident in his own ability to work in a new genre. Norman highlights Quinault's previous experience as a successful playwright as invaluable in his understanding of how to appeal to a theatrical audience.[417] In contrast, Perrin is described by Cornic as a 'théoricien important mais auteur dramatique plus incertain'.[418] Quinault was a writer of renown both at court and in the mind of the theatre-going public, with the additional prestige of being a member of the Académie, all of which would have made him an attractive collaborator to Lully.

The model of the 'established/outsider' relations, outlined by Elias and Scotson, provides some useful insights when reviewing the replacement of Perrin. He was 'established' as being already in possession of the *privilège*: he had sufficient credibility that the king was persuaded to award him the *privilège*, prior to the undoubtedly successful *Pomone*. Quinault and Lully were relative newcomers to opera but, unlike Perrin, Quinault was already an established dramatist with a strong reputation. He therefore succeeded in replacing Perrin, even though Perrin was more established and legitimately recognised in this genre. Marta Bucholc, in a more recent study using Elias and Scotson's model, considers that 'the key to the status of an outsider is the reaction of the established'. She argues that 'it is perfectly possible to imagine the Winston Parva case [Elias's original case study] the other way round: the newcomers gaining control and slowly but surely casting the "old families" out into the margins of social life'. Her argument that 'it would depend on organisational and networking capabilities of both groups and their motivation in striving for power, but also on their cultural resources and mobilization'[419] illustrates some of the factors which enabled Lully to gain the *privilège* and Quinault to become the accepted librettist. Quinault had acquired sufficient social capital and connections at court to make him attractive as a partner to Lully and enough economic capital that he would not be in immediate financial difficulty if the opera was not successful. He had the legitimisation of membership of the Académie and, unlike Perrin, Quinault had already established his cultural and vocational capital through his spoken plays, leading the audience and Lully to anticipate that his new operas would be well-written. While he was an outsider to the world of opera, his experience of writing spoken plays had enabled him to acquire the strong network and cultural resources that Bucholc feels are required to marginalise the established

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[417] Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, p.7.
[418] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.288.
[419] Marta Bucholc, 'Outside the Moral Circle. Polish Political Refugees in Norway: Between the Established and the Outsiders', *Human Figurations,* 2 (2013), Section 3.

figure. Perrin may have felt inferior to Quinault, who enjoyed significant success in the theatre, and his troubles with the academy of music and his short emprisonment would have had a negative effect on his social position: as Bucholc explains, 'being (and feeling) relatively more powerless than the established is a part of an outsider's status'. Quinault was the newcomer but he had a network of influential connections including, once he had demonstrated his skill in writing libretti, the king, so his position was assured.

Quinault's reputation was therefore very high at this stage in his career. The contemporary reports in the *Mercure Galant* support this view by saying that 'Si cet Ouvrage [*Isis*] merite quelque gloire elle est deuë à Monsieur Quinault. Le Sujet et les Vers de cette Tragédie sont dignes de cet illustre Autheur, et ne lui ont point fait perdre la réputation qu'il s'est acquise'.[420] The *Mercure Galant* notes in its review of *Persée*: 'Je ne vous parleray point de la disposition, ny du tour aisé des Vers de ce nouvel Opéra. Je vous diray seulement qu'il est de M. Quinault'.[421] Merely stating the name of the author was enough to convince readers of the quality of the work. This acts as further evidence to support Bednarz's view that an author's name alone could symbolise his cultural capital.[422] The *Mercure's* review of Quinault's play *Proserpine* similarly uses the author's name as a symbol of its quality, saying 'je ne vous répete point qu'il est digne de Monsieur Quinault […] qui en est l'Autheur'.[423] As another example of this use of the author's name as a guarantee of the quality of the work, the *Mercure's* review of *Bazajet* states that the play 'passe pour un ouvrage admirable. Je croy que vous n'en douterez pas, quand vous sçaurez que cet ouvrage est de Monsieur Racine, puis qu'il ne part rien que d'achevé de la plume de cet Illustre Autheur'.[424] These contemporary reports demonstrate that an author could reach the point where the association of his name with a play was enough to convince the audience of that play's quality: a clear measure of the author's celebrity within the literary field. The vocational and cultural capital built up by an established author would act as a means of convincing the audience that a new work could be relied on to be of a high quality, even if it was an experiment in a different genre.

While Quinault and Lully were working together, opera became the most popular form of entertainment in Paris. Norman refers to the need for special ordinances to be passed to control the crowds for performances, adding 'it was not unusual for spectators to see the same opera at

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[420] *Le Nouveau Mercure Galant,* ed. by Donneau de Visé (Paris: Girard, March 1677), p.27.
[421] *Le Mercure Galant* (April 1682), p.329.
[422] James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001) p.15.
[423] *Le Mercure Galant* (November 1680), p.191.
[424] *Le Mercure Galant* (January-April 1672), pp.65-71.

least ten or fifteen times in a season'.[425] Gros confirms that 'l'opéra avait des succès retentissants qui rejetaient au second plan […] tous les auteurs dramatiques, quels qu'ils fussent'.[426] He suggests that part of the reason why operas were so fashionable is that they were regularly performed at court,[427] confirming that the views of people with considerable social capital influenced the cultural tastes of the broader theatre-going public. Moreover, as Norman notes, operas enjoyed much longer runs in the public theatres, as a 'new opera could have a run of as many as 150 performances, at least three times a week over a period of almost fifty weeks. By comparison Racine's tragedies rarely had a first run of much more than thirty, and the greatest box office success of the century, Thomas Corneille's *Timocrate*, only had about eighty'.[428]

The first fruit of Quinault's collaboration with Lully, *Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus*, was performed in November 1672, with the libretto described by La Gorce as 'un pastiche composé des plus belles pages du *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, des *Amants magnifiques*, de la *Pastorale Comique*, de *Georges Dandin*'.[429] According to Ralph Scott, the work was 'gratifyingly well received'.[430] The first opera written entirely by Quinault and Lully, without recourse to scenes borrowed from other authors, was *Cadmus et Hermione*, which was first performed in April 1673. It was so popular at court that the king gave Lully the right to use the Palais-Royal as his theatre and 'pour témoigner sa satisfaction à Quinault, lui accorda, dit-on, une pension de 2,000 livres'.[431] According to Gros, 'devant un succès pareil, [Lully] résolut de s'attacher Quinault par un contrat définitif' and they agreed a contract under the terms of which Quinault would write the words for one opera a year, and in return receive 4,000 livres a year.[432] Lough reports: 'these were undoubtedly the best paid dramatic works of the century'.[433]

However, there were some who were envious of the monopoly enjoyed by Quinault and Lully,[434] and this had an impact on the success of the next opera on which they collaborated, *Alceste*. It was received well at court: Louis XIV 'la faisait répéter à Versailles dans

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[425] Norman, *Touched by the Graces*, p.1.
[426] Gros, p.114.
[427] Gros, p.153.
[428] Norman, pp.8-9.
[429] La Gorce, pp.36-37.
[430] Scott, p.67.
[431] Gros, p.107 and p.105.
[432] Gros, p.105.
[433] Lough, 'Earnings', p.336.
[434] Gros, p.105.

l'intimité '.[435] However, in Paris 'the applause was somewhat muted […] such clapping as there was, was mixed with whistling and grumbles of disapproval'. Scott attributes this initial response, not repeated on other nights, to 'damaging reports of the rehearsals, circulated by the enemies of Lully and Quinault'.[436] Cornic refers to 'une cabale parisienne qui compromit la réussite du nouvel opéra' and 'une telle hostilité que seul l'appui personnel de Louis XIV, qui se rendit à une représentation […] tempéra les critiques'.[437] Some attempts were even made to have Quinault replaced: Mme de Thianges and Mme de Montespan suggested that La Fontaine should write a libretto instead, but when La Fontaine submitted a libretto to Lully, the musician judged it to be so poor that it was never performed.[438] La Fontaine thus gained a career opportunity based on his social capital, namely the support of two of the most influential women in the kingdom; however, his writing style was not easily transferable to libretti. Although social capital could offer authors opportunities to impress, there was no guarantee that the author would be successful without skills and talent in the genre. According to Cornic, 'Lully ne trouvant aucun remplaçant qui fût autant à son goût que Quinault, Louis XIV confirma ce dernier dans sa tâche'.[439]

Following the performance of *Alceste*, Quinault wrote *Thésée* in 1675, *Atys* in 1676 and *Isis* in 1677. Shortly afterwards, Quinault found himself out of favour. Although Gros attributes Quinault's brief retirement to the relative failure of *Isis*,[440] the contemporary report from the *Mercure Galant* suggests that the opera was not a failure. Scott provides a more plausible explanation by suggesting that Quinault was banished from court. *Isis* was performed at the time when Mme de Ludres had become Louis's favourite mistress, replacing Mme de Montespan, and the courtiers were quick to identify Mme de Ludres with the title character, with whom Jupiter falls in love, while Mme de Montespan was linked with the jealous Juno. As Scott notes, some 'of Quinault's verses were so *à propos* that the courtiers got it into their heads that they were deliberate'. In response, Mme de Montespan 'imperiously insisted that Quinault should be disgraced and that he should no longer be employed in writing operas'.[441] However, shortly afterwards Mme de Montespan fell into disfavour herself, and Quinault was restored to favour at court.[442] He rapidly showed that he had learnt from his mistake and, as

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[435] Gros, pp.107-08.
[436] Scott, p.70.
[437] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.41.
[438] Scott, p.72.
[439] Cornic, p.41.
[440] Gros, pp.121-22.
[441] Scott, p.89.
[442] Scott, pp.90-92.

Gros highlights, whereas in previous prologues he had praised love and glory, in the prologue to *Persée* in 1682, he highlighted glory and virtue in an attempt to appeal to changing tastes at court:[443] 'sans la Vertu [...]/On n'a point de bien véritable'.[444]

Quinault had sufficient social capital to survive any minor or occasional unintentional indiscretions. As a mark of his revived high standing at court, Quinault was asked to write the epitaph for the Queen when she died in 1683.[445] For *Amadis* in 1684, Gros believes that the subject matter may have been directly suggested by the king: 'Louis XIV prit l'habitude de mander son librettiste auprès de lui et de se faire lire les œuvres en cours. [...] Le roi donnait son avis et ne dédaignait pas quelque fois d'indiquer un sujet pour l'opéra suivant'.[446] Furthermore, at the marriage of Quinault's oldest daughter, Marie-Louise, in 1685, among the witnesses to the contract were the king, the dauphin and the dauphine.[447] Cornic sees this stage in his career as 'le couronnement d'une carrière entamée précocément par un jeune homme aux origines modestes mais très ambitieux'.[448]

Three further operas were written by Quinault and Lully, after which Quinault eventually stopped writing for the theatre entirely. The Marquis de Dangeau's journal entry for 5 April 1686 records: 'On sut que Quinault avait fait demander au Roi de le dispenser des opéras; dans sa dernière maladie, il a eu des scrupules pour cela, et Sa Majesté a trouvé bon qu'il n'en fît plus'.[449] Cornic refers to letters suggesting that 'la maladie fut la principale cause de son renoncement au théâtre lyrique'; he died of tuberculosis in November 1688.[450] Various of his biographers, including Gros and Fournel, have suggested as a contributing factor to his retirement that Quinault felt that the popularity of opera was waning and that it would be advisable to stop before it ceased to be the pre-eminent genre. Gros, in particular, remarks that the 'beaux jours de la tragédie en musique, sous Louis XIV, étaient passés'.[451] If Quinault had merely felt that opera was no longer as fashionable as it had been, he could have gone back to writing spoken plays for the theatre. However, Scott believes that Quinault's religious conversion was genuine[452] and, tellingly, many of Quinault's contemporaries seemed

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[443] Gros, p.142.
[444] Philippe Quinault, *Livrets d'Opéra,* 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1999), II, p.57.
[445] Gros, p.144.
[446] Gros, p.114.
[447] Brooks, p.347.
[448] Cornic, *Philippe Quinault*, p.286.
[449] Le Marquis de Dangeau, *Journal du Marquis de Dangeau 1684-1685-1686,* 19 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1854), I, p.319.
[450] Cornic, p.45.
[451] Gros, p.164.
[452] Scott, p.111.

convinced that he was retiring for religious reasons. Quinault was doubtless aware of the king's increasing religious devotion, and he may have felt that his interests would be best served by following the king's example and leaving the theatre, which was regarded by clerics as sacrilegious. Gros says that opera in particular was the object of attacks by the Church, 'car il était beaucoup plus que le roman et la Comédie une constante apologie de l'amour'. He explains the basis of the condemnation: 'Tout y semblait fait pour énerver les sens; tout semblait concourir à répandre dans les âmes une impression de volupté molle et langoureuse'.[453]

Quinault's decision to stop writing could therefore be viewed as the final strategic step in a carefully planned career. He had adopted a range of tactics to promote himself and his works, from dedicating his plays to influential nobles to writing operas as soon as they became popular. Quinault was well aware of the need to build his career and reputation on a network of contacts within the court; recognising the change in attitudes at court and retiring from writing for religious reasons might have been the final step to ensure he remained in favour within those circles. His final piece of writing in 1687 was a religious poem glorifying the king and containing a farewell to his own early verses celebrating love:

> Je n'ay que trop chanté les jeux, et les Amours.
> Sur un ton plus sublime il faut me faire entendre;
> Je vous dis a Dieu Muse tendre
> Je vous dis a Dieu pour toujours.
> C'est à des actions d'eternelle Memoire
> Que je dois consacrer mes vers[454]

A study of Quinault's career is particularly useful because of his willingness to diversify and to risk a major change in genre in writing for the *théâtre lyrique*. Voltaire gives him credit for his achievements:

> Quinault, dans un genre tout nouveau, et d'autant plus difficile qu'il paraît plus aisé, fut digne d'être placé avec tous ses illustres contemporains. […] Le véritable éloge d'un poëte, c'est qu'on retiene ses vers: on sait par cœur des scènes entières de Quinault; […] la simple et belle nature, qui se montre souvent dans Quinault avec tant de charmes, plaît encore dans toute l'Europe à ceux qui possèdent notre langue, et qui ont le goût cultivé. Si l'on trouvait dans l'antiquité un poëme comme Armide ou comme Atys, avec quelle idolâtrie il serait reçu! mais Quinault était moderne.[455]

Quinault's career change appears on first inspection to support the theory that playwrights struggled to sustain a career; certainly Quinault appears to have been better paid as a librettist than as a dramatist. However, the evidence suggests that Quinault would not have been as

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[453] Gros, pp.715-16.
[454] Quinault, 'Poème sur l'Hérésie', in Norman, *Philippe Quinault*, 'L'Oeuvre>Poésies diverses'.
[455] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV* (Paris: Charpentier, 1874), p.441.

successful a librettist, or even have had the opportunity of working with Lully, without first having built up his vocational capital and competence working as a dramatist. Quinault's plays had allowed him to build up sufficient financial capital to survive any hardship if the initial operas were unsuccessful. He had carefully planned to acquire enough social capital to survive attempts to replace him and to overcome his brief disgrace, as well as to limit any initial risks he and Lully might have faced. Quinault's change to writing operas therefore demonstrates the value of establishing oneself first with a known genre before attempting to experiment. Success as a librettist would have brought the same levels of fame as success as a dramatist. His primary motivation for this career change therefore seems to have been a desire for greater and possibly more secure financial rewards and greater social capital offered through the royal interest in the new genre.

This therefore confirms the argument that playwriting was an effective way of acquiring the forms of capital necessary to build a successful career. Quinault is an example of a writer who succeeded in rising very rapidly from humble beginnings to achieve a high place in court society, illustrating authorial strategies adopted by an 'outsider' seeking social capital. Truchet's description of him as 'riche, admiré, nanti de titres prestigieux, il avait pleinement réussi sa carrière' recognises this career progress.[456]

Racine

Jean Racine was born at La Ferté-Milon in Picardy in December 1639 into a family of the upper bourgeoisie. He was orphaned at a young age and was raised by his grandparents. He received a good classical education at Port-Royal, including the study of Greek. Racine moved to Paris to finish his studies and then began helping his cousin, Nicolas Vitart, who was the *intendant* of the Chevreuse family. In a letter dated January 1661, Racine says that most of the time 'je lis des vers, je tâche d'en faire',[457] illustrating his early interest in writing poetry. His choice of topic for some of his poems was significant: the celebration of royal occasions, clearly intended to draw the attention of potential patrons. *La Nymphe de la Seine* was one such poem, written on the occasion of the marriage of Louis XIV in 1660. Racine actively sought the advice of more established authors on matters of style. Viala confirms that 'pour devenir écrivain, il s'est montré avide d'avis, et puis attentif à les suivre, soumis aux autorités du métier'.[458] From the beginning of his career he was keen to build links with established figures, such as Chapelain,

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[456] Truchet, p.1538.
[457] Racine, *Œuvres de Jean Racine: Lettres de Jean Racine,* ed. by Louis Racine, 5 vols (Paris: P. Didot L'Aîné,1813), V, p.17.
[458] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.20.

and use their support to help him to become successful, recognising the value of professional advice and connections. Racine confirms his willingness to act upon advice in a letter of 13 September 1660: '[M. Chapelain] a marqué quelques changements à faire, je les ai faits'.[459] Writing to Colbert in 1663, Chapelain mentions that 'j'auray dans peu de jours une ode françoise d'un jeune homme appelé Racine, qu'il m'a apportée et qu'il repolit sur mes avis'.[460] This refers to an ode on the recovery of Louis XIV from a slight illness in 1663, which secured Racine the promise of a pension. He followed this by another ode, *La Renommée aux Muses,* in praise of the king and, in a letter to Le Vasseur in 1664, he reports that '*La Renommée* a été assez heureuse. M. le comte de Saint-Aignan la trouve belle; il a demandé mes autres ouvrages'.[461] Racine thus succeeded in gaining the interest of a patron for his works. In 1660, he wrote his first play, *Amasie,* which was never performed and has not survived. The next year he began another play, *Les Amours d'Ovide*; this is also lost. These early attempts represent a key career decision to begin writing drama. Viala reports how Racine 's'était tourné vers le théâtre, après ses débuts en poésie, en particulier parce que c'était le genre qui offrait l'occasion des succès les plus rapides et les plus rentables'.[462]

Racine wrote his first performed play, *La Thébaïde*, in 1664. The play borrowed heavily from classical sources and also has echoes of Rotrou. When editing his collected works in 1675, Racine recognised some of the weaknesses in this early work: 'Le lecteur me permettra de lui demander un peu plus d'indulgence pour cette pièce. […] J'étais fort jeune quand je la fis'.[463] The Abbé d'Olivet confirms the author's own somewhat dismissive view, advising 'qu'on ferme les yeux sur l'essai d'un jeune homme'.[464] Racine was still in the early stages of his career as a dramatist but he demonstrated sensitivity to popular taste in his treatment of *Alexandre le Grand* in 1665: it was described by Forestier and Sylvain Garnier as 'en accord cette fois avec le goût galant de l'époque'. However, they note the dangers in following the fashion of 'l'esthétique romanesque alors en vogue' and suggest that the purpose of Racine's preface is 'démontrer que son œuvre respecte la conception élevée de la tragédie – celle qui se fonde sur l'Histoire et le goût pour l'Antiquité – et que sa pratique s'apparente davantage à celle d'un

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[459] Racine, *Lettres*, V, p.12.
[460] Jean Chapelain, *Lettres de Jean Chapelain,* 2 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1880-83), II, p.313.
[461] Racine, V, p.70.
[462] Viala, *Naissance*, p.109.
[463] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.115.
[464] L'Abbé d'Olivet, *Remarques de Grammaire sur Racine* (Paris: Gandouin, 1738), p.8.

Corneille que d'un Quinault'.[465] The play was also a political success, celebrating the monarch by a flattering comparison with Alexander: Racine was developing his skills as a courtier in addition to his playwriting skills. Cornic explains that the theme of 'une célébration de la magnanimité – vertu royale par excellence – ne pouvait […] que séduire le roi.' Louis showed his approval of the play in allowing it to be presented at court and 'en acceptant, malgré la renommée encore naissante de l'auteur, d'en être le dédicataire au moment de sa publication. De fait, *Alexandre le Grand* fut la tragédie qui fit connaître Racine'.[466] Sayer sees a 'leap of quality from competence to masterpiece'[467] between *Alexandre* and Racine's next play *Andromaque*. As a sign of the regard in which he was held at court, *Andromaque* was premiered at the Louvre in November 1667 and it was dedicated to Henriette d'Angleterre.

In 1668 Racine made a rare experiment in writing his one performed comedy, *Les Plaideurs*. He maintained his fidelity to classical sources, basing the work on Aristophanes' *Wasps*: as Picard concludes, 'il s'abrite derrière le prestige des Anciens'.[468] However, the setting was contemporary, again unusual in the works of Racine. The preface provides Racine's justification for the play as being the desire of his friends to see 'si les bons mots d'Aristophane auraient quelque grâce dans notre langue'.[469] According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, '[les] spectateurs parisiens ne furent pas très enthousiastes lors des premières représentations […] mais à Versailles, elle a obtenu tous les suffrages, et Paris a finalement suivi ce mouvement d'enthousiasme'.[470] Picard considers that at this stage in his career he was sufficiently sure of himself and his reputation to indulge himself with his 'amusement':[471] '*Les Plaideurs* sont un rapide faux pas qu'il peut enfin se permettre'.[472] He suggests that Racine's motive in choosing a comedy was to teach 'une bonne leçon à ceux dont le pauvre métier est de faire rire le monde, et de se poser en défenseur de la moralité du théâtre'.[473] Forestier and Céline Fournial consider that 'la comédie des *Plaideurs* permet au jeune dramaturge de montrer la plasticité de son talent dramatique' and that his preface demonstrates that 'Racine cherche […] à mettre en valeur sa

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[465] Racine, *Alexandre le Grand*: *Préface de 1666*, ed. by Georges Forestier and Sylvain Garnier, 'Présentation'.
[466] Cornic, 'L'*Astrate* de Quinault', p.134.
[467] Sayer, p.105.
[468] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.139.
[469] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.309.
[470] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Le Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne,* 2 vols (Paris: Nizet, 1968), II, p.136.
[471] Racine, I, p.309.
[472] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.141.
[473] Picard, p.140.

pièce et à promouvoir une esthétique comique différente'.[474] Racine declares that he has achieved his goal 'sans qu'il m'en ait coûté un seul de ces sales équivoques, et de ces malhonnêtes plaisanteries, qui coûtent maintenant si peu à la plupart de nos écrivains et qui font retomber le théâtre dans la turpitude d'où quelques auteurs plus modestes l'avaient tiré'.[475] Like Boursault and Quinault, Racine may have felt that the time for literary experimentation must be carefully planned so that reputation is not compromised and potential failure can be cushioned through a secure position. His recent successes with *Alexandre le Grand* and *Andromaque* provided him with sufficient cultural and vocational capital for him to venture into a new genre. However, having proved to his own satisfaction that he could be successful in this genre without falling into the bad taste of some authors, he returned to writing tragedies. As Picard concludes: 'Il a surtout montré la souplesse déconcertante de son génie. Mais il demeure fidèle à la dignité tragique'.[476]

1669 saw the premiere of *Britannicus* but the play did not meet with the same immediate success as *Andromaque*. Racine's choice of a subject from Roman history might be seen as a challenge to Corneille and Picard wonders: 'le poète songerait-il à vaincre son grand rival avec ses propres armes?'[477] There were accusations that a cabal had been organised by his rivals for the premiere. Boursault (a friend of Corneille's) refers several times to the fact that the play failed to meet expectations: 'la Piéce n'a pas eu tout le succès qu'on s'étoit promis'; 'le chef-d'oeuvre de Monsieur Racine, ou du moins ce qu'on croyoit qui le dût être'; and he implies that by the third act 'l'Auteur se soit lassé de travailler'.[478] Sayer points out that while Racine's first preface defended his work, by the later edition he had made changes to address the criticisms: 'Racine the man was sharply and proudly defensive; but the writer Racine kept revising towards perfection, at the instance of friend or foe'.[479] This shows a continuing desire, dating from Racine's early writing, to improve his work and to act upon criticism he perceived as valid. *Bérénice* followed a year later and was more overtly a rival production with Corneille's own *Tite et Bérénice*; this will be discussed in a later chapter as an example of direct competition. R.C. Knight identifies Racine's belief in simplicity of plot as a key principle of his *poétique*, seeing this as part of the opposition to Corneille: 'deliberately exaggerated in *Bérénice* to show

[474] Racine, *Les Plaideurs*: *Préface,* ed. by Georges Forestier and Céline Fournial, 'Présentation' and n.18.
[475] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, pp.310-11.
[476] Picard, p.144.
[477] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.145.
[478] Boursault, *Artémise et Poliante*: *Nouvelle* (Paris: Nyon Pere, 1739), p.18, p.20 and p.17.
[479] Sayer, p.147.

up Corneille's inattention to the rule'.[480] Racine's preface expresses his aim: 'faire une tragédie avec cette simplicité d'action qui a été si fort du goût des Anciens'.[481] Francis Mathieu identifies in *Bérénice* a continuation of Racine's strategy in seeking royal favour: 'Racine participe activement à l'entreprise de propagande royale, dont la principale mission consiste à exalter le règne de Louis XIV'.[482] He concludes: 'Ce tour de force dramaturgique permet à Racine de peindre une image tout iconographique du prince par le médium de la tragédie, tel que Louis XIV aime à être représenté dans la propagande'.[483] This approach in seeking opportunities to praise the king was an important element in Racine's career plan and in his pursuit of social advancement.

Two plays, *Bajazet* and *Mithridate,* were both performed in 1672. The exotic setting of *Bazajet* was very different to Racine's otherwise classical choices for his tragedies, being contemporary and Turkish. He may have been influenced by fashion, since 'les Turcs étaient […] à la mode' following 'la visite de l'ambassadeur de la Sublime Porte à la Cour de France'.[484] John Campbell notes Racine's insistence that 'geographical distance gave a similar perspective to that afforded by classical antiquity. His two prefaces are devoted to stifling any suggestions of an inherent *invraisemblance* in his "très véritable" Turkish subject'.[485] Alain Niderst sees the underlying uniformity of his recurrent themes:

> la tragédie prend ainsi l'allure d'un exercice esthétique, qui représente de la manière la plus pittoresque une contrée et des mœurs barbares afin de faire apparaître sous des voiles d'Orient la permanence de l'humanité malheureuse et le tragique éterne.[486]

Sayer sees this change as 'a sign of his confidence. He is no longer struggling to match or oust Corneille'.[487] Racine returned to classical history as the setting for *Mithridate*. As with *Alexandre*, his choice of topic would have been influenced by a desire to please at court, allowing him to describe Louis as 'héroïque, infatigable, audacieux, capable d'une hauteur de

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[480] R. C. Knight, 'The Evolution of Racine's "Poétique"', *The Modern Language Review,* 35 (1940), 19-39 (p.31).
[481] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.465.
[482] Francis Mathieu, 'Panégyrique, sacré et exemplarité dans "Bérénice" de Racine', *The French Review*, 82 (2009), 788-99 (p.788).
[483] Mathieu, p.797.
[484] Forestier, pp.423-24.
[485] John Campbell, '*Bajazet* and Racinian Tragedy: Expectations and Difference', *Dalhousie French Studies,* 49 (1999), 103-18 (p.104).
[486] Alain Niderst, 'Les harmonies raciniennes', *Dalhousie French Studies*, 49 (1999), 28-37 (p.31).
[487] Sayer, p.182.

vues qui n'est donnée qu'aux rois'.[488] According to Sayer, Racine was successful in this aim as '*Mithridate* would remain the king's favourite'.

In 1674 Racine wrote *Iphigénie*, which was premiered at Versailles, an honour that only two other plays (Corneille's *Othon* and Molière's *Le Tartuffe*) had enjoyed, serving to underline the support that Racine now had from the king.[489] Knight sees the choice of play and its treatment as Racine's response to the increasingly popular genre of *tragédie lyrique*. He cites Gros, who sees the use of this term as implying, far more truly than 'legitimate' tragedy, that it was the inheritor of the Attic stage, because it re-incorporated song, spectacle and the dance. He concludes: 'Racine, who knew, none better, what Greek tragedy had been, and was not far removed from claiming proprietary rights in his knowledge, must have been furious'.[490] As was seen with some of his earlier works, and according to Knight, Racine may have been aiming to demonstrate his own superiority: 'Quinault was taking classical subjects, and taking them from legend; […] he had chosen Euripides as source. *Iphigénie* was to show him how it should be done'.[491] According to Françoise Jaouën, this play marked a key stage in his career:

> Racine poursuit une stratégie entamée de longue date, visant à se faire consacrer comme premier auteur de sa génération. Pour cela, trois publics sont à conquérir: ses pairs, le public et le roi. Pour ce dernier, l'exercice consiste à faire l'éloge royal; pour ses pairs, il lui faut non pas se rallier le public pour lutter contre les critiques (ce qui fut la stratégie de Corneille), mais faire la preuve écrasante de sa supériorité.[492]

She suggests that Racine uses the preface to *Iphigénie* to defend his source, Euripides, but also to demonstrate how he surpasses him: 'si Racine parvient à faire mieux que sa source, il devient plus grand que le plus grand'. Owing to his knowledge of Greek (which was unusual among his contemporaries and critics), 'Seul Racine […] peut à la fois rétablir la gloire de son illustre prédécesseur et faire sa critique, pour enfin doubler son propre prestige en faisant mieux que son maître'.[493]

1677 saw the performance of *Phèdre*, again drawn from Euripides. Because of a rival production of *Phèdre et Hippolyte* by Pradon and a well-organised cabal by his enemies, the play was not a success at its premiere. Picard quotes a contemporary comparison between the two plays, 'celle "de l'illustre Racine" et celle de Pradon': 'On a trouvé la première dans le goût

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[488] Forestier, pp.449-50.
[489] Forestier, p.499.
[490] Knight, p.33.
[491] Knight, p.34.
[492] Françoise Jaouën, '*Iphigénie*: poétique et politique du sacrifice', *Littérature, Signe, Chiffre, Ecriture,* 103 (1996), 3-19 (pp.13-14).
[493] Jaouën, p.19.

des Anciens, mais la dernière a plus donné dans celui du public'.[494] However, as Forestier notes, the subsequent response was more positive, including a surprisingly favourable review for the published play from the previously hostile Donneau de Visé in *Le Mercure Galant*: 'ses vers sont trop beaux pour ne pas donner à la lecture le même plaisir qu'ils donnent à les entendre réciter au théâtre'. Some critics having attributed the success of a play to the talent of the actors, Forestier points out that Donneau de Visé's 'éloge vaut son pesant d'or'.[495] Racine's preface to *Phèdre* provides an indication of his self-assessment of the status of his play. Forestier considers it as 'une préface qui respire la tranquille certitude de s'être véritablement surpassé'.[496] Racine's career aims had become more ambitious with the series of successful tragedies and he was no longer looking simply to please an immediate audience ('la principale règle est de plaire et de toucher' as stated in the preface to *Bérénice*[497]) but 'autant à instruire [les] spectateurs qu'à les divertir'. He was pursuing his strategy to write for posterity and gain long-term renown: 'je laisse et aux lecteurs et au temps à décider de son véritable prix',[498] and the confidence that he will be judged as a major tragedian is apparent.

Compared with Boursault and, to an extent, Quinault, the range of Racine's work was limited and he was less experimental than either. His clear preference is for tragedy and he explored different settings, sources and types of tragedy in his work. He worked according to his own poetical beliefs and he wrote extensively in his prefaces to explain and justify his poetics. Racine described classical tragedy as 'une école où la vertu n'était pas moins bien enseignée que dans les écoles des philosophes'[499] and this reflects his belief in the moral value of tragedy. One of his key principles, stated repeatedly in his prefaces, was that of respect for the historical or legendary source material. Niderst suggests that 'Racine, qui se fait la plus haute idée de la tragédie […] cherche autant que possible à remonter à ses illustres modèles. […] Il est un «ancien», parce que pour lui c'est fondamental pour ennoblir son art'.[500]

Racine had been made a member of the Académie française in November 1672. Sayer concludes: 'his election confirmed his favoured position as part of the establishment'.[501] He was later elected to the post of Director, reflecting the respect he had gained from his peers.

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[494] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.238.
[495] Forestier, p.558.
[496] Forestier, p.566.
[497] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.467.
[498] Racine, I, p.747.
[499] Racine, I, p.747.
[500] Niderst, p.34.
[501] Sayer, p.216.

Racine's early career aims could now be considered as largely met: he was established as a successful author with a series of successful plays, he was an academician and he was increasingly gaining social standing at court. In 1677 Racine's marriage contract was witnessed by a large number of influential people, including the Prince de Condé, the Duc d'Enghien, the Duc de Chevreuse, Colbert and the Marquis de Seignelay. Sayer observes that 'the world of the theatre is absent from the list' and he suggests 'the witnesses to the contract indicate Racine's direction': moving away from the theatre.[502] Forestier remarks that 'c'était le Trésorier de France qui se mariait et non l'auteur dramatique'.[503]

In 1677 Racine made a major career change when he was appointed as a Royal Historiographer. This would have significantly increased his social capital and his connections at court. The economic capital offered by the role was clearly significant: Racine was paid 6,000 *livres* per annum as Royal Historiographer,[504] about three times the average income to be expected from a play, so his financial security would be further enhanced. His appointment came in the same year that he married, so the more reliable source of income offered by this role would also have been attractive (although his wife had her own personal fortune). It is interesting to note that when Racine and Boileau were appointed to the role, there were already two other Royal Historiographers, Pellisson and Vertron.[505] This suggests that Racine's and Boileau's appointment may have had more to do with advancing them socially than with the necessity of filling a position. Racine may have been appointed because his plays had demonstrated his cultural capital and talent as a writer, or he may have been offered the role because during his career as a playwright he had gained the support of influential people at court, or because of a combination of the two. Picard sees his appointment as the attainment of a long-term career objective: 'les treize années de théâtre ont rempli leur objet, qui était de lui valoir sa renommée, et de le faire connaître du Roi'.[506] It can therefore be maintained that Racine's renown as a writer was integral to his royal appointment, since he would not have gained the position without the opportunities to gain and display cultural and vocational capital that his writing had given him. His career provides evidence that it was possible to make a very good living as a consequence, if not a direct result, of his writing, although Racine must be seen as an exceptional case.

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[502] Sayer, p.269.
[503] Forestier, p.587.
[504] Viala, *Stratégie,* p.200.
[505] Sayer, p.283.
[506] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.284.

A contemporary reaction to Racine's appointment appears in the *Mémoires de la Cour de France pour les années 1688 et 1689*,[507] lamenting a significant loss to the theatre: he is described as 'le meilleur Poète du temps, que l'on a tiré de sa Poésie, où il était inimitable, pour en faire, à son malheur et à celui de ceux qui ont le goût du Théâtre, un Historien très imitable'.[508] Racine's status derived from writing for the theatre is seen as a key reason why he gained a royal appointment. Sayer cites a letter from Gaignières reporting that 'le Roi, après avoir vu un panégyrique à sa louange, que Despréaux et Racine avaient fait sur sa dernière Campagne, leur a fait donner deux mille écus et ordonné de travailler à son histoire'.[509] The reward of the position seems to have been initiated, at least partly, by evidence that Racine was still able to write appropriately celebratory odes; as Picard notes: 'il revient, mais avec quel lustre maintenant, aux années 1660 à 1663, où il chantait le Roi dans des Odes'.[510] Mathieu argues that 'Si le pur talent littéraire de Racine lui permet de s'assurer les bonnes grâces du Roi-Soleil, son adresse à louer la gloire royale joue un rôle essentiel dans la reconnaissance que lui marque le monarque'.[511] Jean-Pierre Battesti and Jean-Charles Chauvet also see the appointment as recognition of literary talent: 'l'historiographe est nommé par le roi. Celui-ci peut […] favoriser un homme de lettres dont il a reconnu le talent'.[512] Forestier believes that the 'historien n'oubliait pas que, s'il devait sa nouvelle importance à son « emploi » auprès du roi, c'était son théâtre qui avait fait de lui « l'illustre M. Racine »'.[513]

According to Sayer, Racine's 'approach to a responsibility which would engage him for twenty-two years was serious'. He suggests that Boileau undertook the role 'more by order than by inclination' whereas 'Racine went about it meticulously', accompanying the king on his campaigns.[514] Racine's experience as a poet and playwright and his well-educated background would have given him a clear competence in writing and recording history. Sayer highlights some of the skills Racine could demonstrate in this role: 'his prefaces show his skill in arguing from the historical evidence of the ancients' and he refers to the evidence of his 'well annotated

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[507] Mme de La Fayette*, Œuvres Complètes,* ed. by Camille Esmein-Sarrazin (Paris: Gallimard, 2014). *Mémoires de la Cour de France pour les années 1688 et 1689* was published in 1731 under the name of Mme de La Fayette, an attribution which was unchallenged until relatively recently. Esmein-Sarrazin summarises the current scholarship on the attribution of this work on p.1541.
[508] Mme de La Fayette, p. 1153.
[509] Sayer, p.270.
[510] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.284.
[511] Mathieu, p.788.
[512] Jean-Pierre Battesti and Jean-Charles Chauvet, *Tout Racine* (Paris: Larousse, 1999), p.102.
[513] Forestier, p.679.
[514] Sayer, p.286 and p.288.

readings of classical historians',[515] concluding: 'he records with meticulous correctness and carefully checked detail'.[516] All Racine's manuscripts for the royal history were destroyed by fire after his death: only campaign notes and fragments survive.

Picard considers that: 'Faire l'histoire du règne de Sa Majesté, c'est continuer à pratiquer les belles-lettres, mais c'est aussi avoir un emploi à la Cour'.[517] The position of Royal Historiographer made Racine and Boileau part of the royal court and 'il s'agissait désormais d'être toujours là où était le roi [...] cette position impliquait pour eux d'être présents au milieu des courtisans aux moments clés de la journée, c'est-à-dire aux heures du cérémonial'.[518] Viala confirms that for a writer this position would have represented 'la suprême consécration, la façon de devenir un « professionnel », justement, de la plume'.[519] Picard sees it as a particularly suitable appointment: 'le seul poste auquel sa gloire littéraire le rendît propre, et qui pût faire de lui une sorte de personnage à la Cour'.[520] Forestier emphasises that the post of historiographer was a very prestigious one: 'Dans la hiérarchie des lettres, l'histoire était jugée aussi glorieuse que la poésie, plus glorieuse même auprès de nombreux esprits du fait qu'elle était du côté de la vérité et non point de la fiction et du divertissement'. For Racine, '[D]evenir l'historien du «plus grand roi du monde» après avoir été le plus illustre des poètes de son temps [...] c'était une chance qu'aucun autre écrivain n'avait connue avant lui'.[521]

Racine's decision to retire from writing for the stage was a major career change occurring at the height of his prestige as a playwright and no doubt a number of factors influenced this decision. The cabal against *Phèdre* may have affected him, though it is unlikely to have been a fundamental reason for his abandoning public theatre. According to Viala, 'une étape nouvelle de sa carrière littéraire s'offrait, et des plus avantageuses. Il n'allait même pas se poser de questions: le roi l'embauchait, il écrirait ce qu'on lui dirait d'écrire'.[522] He could hardly have refused such a prestigious appointment as Royal Historiographer, even in the unlikely event that he wished to do so, but the nature of the role did not automatically preclude all other forms of writing. Forestier suggests that Racine could have continued with his playwriting: 'il avait accédé au statut idéal de l'honnête homme qui pratique à temps perdu la poésie: il n'avait qu'à

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[515] Sayer, p.286.
[516] Sayer, p.344.
[517] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.284.
[518] Forestier, p.602.
[519] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.196.
[520] Picard, p.316.
[521] Forestier, pp.579-80.
[522] Viala, p.196.

continuer à écrire sur un rythme encore plus lent […] pour conforter sa gloire poétique sans plus passer pour homme de théâtre'.[523] However, Forestier recognises that 'c'est précisément leur talent poétique qui en retenant l'attention du roi a conduit Racine et Boileau au renoncement, le roi se réservant l'exclusivité de leur activité pour sa haute gloire'.[524] Unlike Boursault's royal appointment, Racine's role kept him at the heart of the court and ensured that he did not need to publish other works to maintain his visibility and social capital as Boursault was obliged to. There was no danger of any of his contemporaries believing that an absence of plays by Racine was a result of his death.

Leaving the theatre to assume his new duties near the king, he was, at the same time, leaving the socially disadvantageous and religiously suspect situation of a playwright. Racine could therefore now effect a rapprochement with the Jansenists at Port Royal. Like Quinault, he became more ostentatiously devout, in keeping with the prevailing religious attitudes at court. It is interesting to compare the words he gives his character, Mathan, in his final play *Athalie* with his own change of career and his acceptance of the role of courtier:

> […] j'entrai dans une autre carrière,
> Et mon âme à la cour s'attacha toute entière.
> J'approchai par degrés de l'oreille des rois,
> Et bientôt en oracle on érigea ma voix.[525]

Racine's published speech at the Académie française for the reception of Thomas Corneille in 1685 provides an insight into his personal view of the posthumous glory of great poets. While worded in the context of an elegy for Pierre Corneille, much of this speech could be taken as Racine's aspiration for his own poetic reputation and an *apologia* for the status of writers at this period:

> du moment que des esprits sublimes, passant de bien loin les bornes communes, se distinguent, s'immortalisent par des chef-d'œuvres comme ceux de Monsieur votre frère, quelqu'étrange inégalité que durant leur vie la fortune mette entr'eux et les plus grands héros, après leur mort cette différence cesse. La postérité qui se plaît, qui s'instruit dans les ouvrages qu'ils lui ont laissés, ne fait point de difficulté de les égaler à tout ce qu'il y a de plus considérable parmi les hommes; fait marcher de pair l'excellent poëte et le grand capitaine. […] Ainsi, lorsque dans les âges suivans l'on parlera avec étonnement des victoires prodigieuses, et de toutes les grandes choses qui rendront notre siècle l'admiration de tous les siècles à venir, Corneille, n'en doutons point, Corneille tiendra sa place parmi toutes ces merveilles.[526]

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[523] Forestier, p.577.
[524] Forestier, p.579.
[525] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.910.
[526] Racine, *Réponse au discours de réception de Thomas Corneille*.

Racine could be seen to be looking ahead to his own celebrity and immortal reputation, a concern which is apparent in some of his prefaces. In addition, and controversially for this period, he is clearly stating his view that great writers are equal with 'les plus grands héros'. Richard Lockwood argues that 'in making this strong claim, Racine is talking about Corneille; he is talking about the Academy; and of course he is also talking about a speaker such as himself, […] conferring immortality through this speech'.[527] For a writer whose own career was aimed at attaining a high social position in a society where the position of a writer was a lowly one, the concept of gaining equal status and being recognised as one of the marvels of the age would have been very appealing. In his analysis of Racine's speech, Lockwood recognises the danger of claiming that the activity of writers 'is in fact necessary to the immortalization of the King's glory', which was 'supposedly absolute'. He highlights Racine's care in composing his speech so that 'Corneille's glory becomes a reflection of that of Louis rather than an addition to it'.[528] Racine is clearly demonstrating his skill as a courtier: 'he had situated himself, the historiographer, and the rest of the universe, as rapt onlookers at the King's marvelous, miraculous, and inexpressible public activities […] which write their own history'.[529]

His interest in the theatre did not altogether cease with his retirement: he prepared new editions of his works in 1687 and in 1697. Knight notes also that 'he circulated epigrams against plays and playwrights he disliked', so he was still interested in the contemporary literary field.[530] After an interval of over ten years, Racine wrote two further plays, *Esther* in 1689 and *Athalie* in 1691, both of which were written for the religious school, Saint-Cyr (the patron of which was Madame de Maintenon, the king's second wife) and not initially intended for the public theatre. The circumstances of the creation of *Esther* and *Athalie* are set out in detail by Anne Piéjus, explaining the desire of Mme de Maintenon to provide the pupils of Saint-Cyr with suitably edifying material for their dramatic productions. Piéjus considers that, in commissioning the plays by Racine, she demonstrated a 'trait marquant de [sa] personnalité: son audace pédagogique', taking the closest interest in the composition and performance of the plays.[531] Sayer, illustrating Racine's readiness to follow the will of the court, notes 'if the royal household requests him to compose morally instructive or religious plays for school pupils, he

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[527] Richard Lockwood, *The Reader's Figure: epideictic rhetoric in Plato, Aristotle, Bossuet, Racine and Pascal* (Geneva: Droz, 1996), p.185.
[528] Lockwood, pp.186-87.
[529] Lockwood, p. 193.
[530] Knight, p.36.
[531] Anne Piéjus, *Le Théâtre des Demoiselles: tragédie et musique à Saint-Cyr à la fin du grand siècle* (Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, 2000), p.98.

does so.'[532] For the first time in his career he worked on Biblical themes rather than classical sources. Knight argues that Racine was influenced in his work on these plays by the contemporary success of opera, identifying 'in Quinault's libretti two elements which could claim some connexion with ancient tragedy, and which Racine could not hope to reintroduce on the commercial non-lyrical stage. These were the chorus and the use of singing'. He explains how Racine made use of singing in *Esther* 'but not the use Lulli made of it; as in Greek tragedy the dialogue is still spoken. Hence an important new step towards the Greek model – a singing chorus separating the acts'.[533] Racine's preface shows his aim 'qui était de lier, comme dans les anciennes tragédies grecques, le chœur et le chant avec l'action'.[534] This innovative approach was developed in *Athalie*, written two years later. Gros describes Racine's continuing pursuit of 'une sorte de restauration de la tragédie antique'. He discusses the influence of Quinault on Racine and concludes 'les chœurs d'*Esther* et d'*Athalie* sont une conséquence du succès de l'opéra […] ils sont aussi, en un sens et au point de vue du lyrisme dramatique, une réplique de Racine à Quinault'.[535] Picard reviews Racine's achievement with his final play: 'Jamais peut-être sa technique dramatique n'a été plus sûre, ni plus habile […] la maîtrise de Racine s'est affirmée, mais, de *La Thébaïde* à *Athalie*, les caractères généraux de la technique dramatique sont restés les mêmes'.[536] Even in 'retirement' and for his final tragedy Racine was still trying to perfect his art and seeking to maintain his poetic principles with a return to the Greek model. He was writing for posterity: as he declared in his preface to an earlier play, *Britannicus*, 'Les critiques se sont évanouies; la pièce est demeurée'.[537]

In 1691 Racine was made one of only twenty-four *Gentilhommes Ordinaires de la Maison du Roi*. Forestier considers that 'c'était cette fois la vraie noblesse, celle qui faisait de son titulaire un commensal du roi, sans commune mesure avec la petite noblesse de robe que lui avait conférée sa charge de Trésorier de France'.[538] Racine's career was therefore crowned with the success which had been his principal aim. He had pursued and gained all forms of capital: economic, cultural, vocational and, most significantly for an orphan without aristocratic family connections, the highest level of social capital. It could be argued that Racine saw his theatrical career primarily as a route to greater social capital, and the fact that he left the world of theatre

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[532] Sayer, p.336.
[533] Knight, pp.36-37.
[534] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.812.
[535] Gros, p.738.
[536] Racine, I, p.865 and p.866.
[537] Racine, I, p.389.
[538] Forestier, p.725.

could be argued as proof that he had achieved his aim. Viala considers that 'devenir écrivain n'était pas un but, une valeur en soi; mais bien, là plus de doute, un moyen de parvenir'.[539] Lough's view is that Racine's retirement from theatrical writing was because he was unable to sustain a career as a writer: 'A more secure and permanent income could only be found elsewhere by using the reputation acquired in the theatre as a stepping stone to more lucrative and respectable occupations'.[540] It might therefore be assumed that his time as a writer had served its purpose by allowing him to build up his social capital, display his cultural capital and present himself as both an *honnête homme* and *homme de lettres*: all of which were necessary to help him to achieve what might be seen as his main aim of obtaining a position at court. However, such a view suggests that he was less concerned with perfecting his art and gaining recognition as a great dramatist. On the contrary, the evidence from this analysis of his literary production shows his craftsmanship and he clearly demonstrates in his prefaces a desire to attain poetic glory and a concern that his plays should be judged by posterity. This does not imply that he saw his dramatic œuvre simply as a short-term route to success. He was exceptional in being able to attain both career aims with such success. As Mathieu states, 'Le triomphe de Racine est le fruit d'un succès pluriel qui conjugue simultanément réussites littéraires et mondaines. Les deux versants de sa carrière sont donc symbiotiques'.[541]

Conclusion

This comparison of the career histories of three authors writing at the same period provides evidence of the strategies they used within the same literary, social, political and economic context in order to succeed in their chosen career. No three authors can be said to be representative of other writers at this time, as their situations were specific, but they demonstrate ways in which authors planned to achieve their career aims and experimented to develop their professional skills. The examples illustrate the changing literary field; its debates and innovations are shown through the actual experiences of three practitioners.

None of the three authors had private financial means at the outset of their careers or the financial backing of their families; they were from relatively modest backgrounds, so the need to make a living must have been the key priority. The initial steps on their career trajectories were facilitated by personal connections and the accumulation of social capital would have been important in developing a network of influential supporters. They all recognised the value of writing for the theatre as a rapid means of gaining economic capital and of building their

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[539] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.197.
[540] Lough, 'Earnings', p.336.
[541] Mathieu, p.788.

reputation with the public who attended the theatres. Lough sees the economic attraction of writing for the theatre: 'a successful play brought in day by day during its first run a sum of money which must have appeared large to the impecunious author at the beginning of his career. If his luck was good, he could certainly earn more ready cash in the theatre than from any other form of writing.' He also notes, as possibly a more important benefit, that 'in a period when reputations in literature were conferred by relatively restricted circles in Paris, the theatre was the highroad to fame and renown'.[542]

All three case study authors began writing for the theatre at a very early stage in their careers and continued to produce works for performance throughout their careers. Racine was the least obviously experimental and preferred to develop his technical expertise in the genre in which he chose to specialise: tragedies. Viala suggests that 'la gloire suprême pour un écrivain est de voir son nom s'identifier à la maîtrise d'un genre'[543] and this seems to have been one of Racine's career aims. Quinault and Boursault, however, experimented with the range of dramatic genres. Quinault then chose to specialise in the new form of opera in the latter half of his career and was innovative in its development. Boursault continued with plays for the theatre and was the most versatile in the different genres in which he wrote. In the early stage of their careers they were exploring their own style and developing their craftsmanship. This indicates that they were developing vocational *habitus* and were sensitive to potential developments in the literary field. To a varying extent they were innovative in the range of literary genres. They could all be said to respond to fashion and might be considered opportunistic in their adoption of new genres. Racine seems to have maintained the same poetics assiduously, while Quinault and Boursault were relatively more flexible and less governed by tradition and literary conventions.

Viala sees some authors as following 'la stratégie du succès' which involves 'une entreprise d'innovation esthétique' and his description can be seen to apply to aspects of the case study authors' careers. He describes writers adopting this strategy as 'audacieux' and argues that they 'soumettent les normes à la loi de l'originalité qui attire l'attention du public'.[544] Prudent risk-taking including extending their repertoire in line with fashion and experimenting with different genres could be an effective strategy in promoting their work and increasing their reputations. Boursault recognised the risks of innovation: writing to his wife that 'c'est une Piece [*Les Fables d'Esope*] d'un caractere si nouveau, que jamais homme n'a eu tant de peur que j'en eus

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[542] Lough, 'Earnings', p.335.
[543] Viala, *Naissance*, p.220.
[544] Viala, *Naissance*, p.217.

pendant les trois premieres représentations'.[545] Nevertheless, even in the later stages of his career he was still prepared to experiment with a different genre. All three authors took risks at various stages in their careers, though they tried to ensure that they had sufficient economic and social capital in case their innovation was not successful.

All three authors succeeded in making a living as a result of their writing, though not purely from the returns on their writing. They were dependent, in addition to such income, on support from patrons and from gratifications or royal appointments, as was the norm at the time. Racine's example emphasises the importance of becoming established as a writer and accepted socially as a pre-requisite for attaining a high position at court; the examples of Boursault and Quinault illustrate some of the consequences of losing the favour of the court. All three authors were awarded official appointments based on their talents as writers: talents that they were only able to display through their plays and other works. This suggests that without a career as a writer they would not have been considered suitable for such appointments.

All three authors were sensitive to influences on the literary field brought about by changes in society and particularly at court. Later in their careers both Racine and Quinault decided to stop writing for the public theatre partly because of personal religious scruples and in response to the increasingly devout atmosphere at court and to the strongly negative attitude towards the theatre that prevailed in religious circles. Boursault had lost a *privilège* early in his career when accused of mocking the Capucin religious order and would have been aware of the impact on a writer's career of the disapproval of the Church. He therefore took pre-emptive action in prefacing the 1694 edition of his works with a *Lettre sur les Spectacles*, written by an unnamed theologian who argued that the theatre should not be seen as sacrilegious: 'Tant qu'on ne donnera au Public que des Comédies comme celles que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de soûmettre à mon jugement, il n'y aura ni crime à les faire, ni crime à les représenter, ni crime à les voir, avec la modération'.[546] Nevertheless, Boursault's final works for the theatre reflect a more moral tone in comparison with some of his earlier comedies and novels.

There emerges from the comparative study of these authors' careers a pattern of continuing professional re-invention, through conscious changes, including innovation in genre, responsiveness to opportunities to further their careers and reconsideration of their priorities in order to ensure success as writers. Viala considers that to be successful, 'il leur faut avoir une manière propre qui puisse être associée à leur nom comme une marque spécifique, et en même

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[545] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.244.
[546] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, p.90.

temps varier leurs effets, se renouveler pour que leur nom ne se dévalue pas, pour ne pas passer de mode'.[547] The strategic decisions they made from an early point in their careers and at subsequent stages had a significant impact on their career paths and enabled them to have successful, viable and sustainable careers. Subsequent chapters will analyse other influences on their career decisions.

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[547] Viala, *Naissance*, p.225.

CHAPTER 4 – LITERARY CONTROVERSY

Having analysed the career histories of the case study authors and the general strategies they employed to manage their careers, it is appropriate to examine another, perhaps less immediately obvious, mechanism used by some writers at this time for self-publicity and to promote their careers: the manufacture and manipulation of literary quarrels and the deliberate use of such quarrels and controversy as a tactic in the pursuit of success.

This period was notable for the number and intensity of literary quarrels. Viala notes 'l'abondance de disputes, querelles et controverses qui la traversent'.[548] Paul Fièvre echoes this point: 'les disputes, cabales et affrontements peuplaient la vie intellectuelle de l'époque'.[549] It is not within the scope of this thesis to explore the full range and nature of quarrels at this time, though it may be helpful to refer to a selective listing based on research for the project AGON [see Appendix 4] of 43 seventeenth-century quarrels to illustrate the extent of contemporary controversies.[550] The focus instead will be on the use that authors made of such controversy to further their careers, with illustrative examples from the case study authors. François Lecercle describes theatre at this time as having the 'vocation de mettre en scène la dispute'; theatre is seen as 'un objet intrinsèquement conflictuel'.[551] He presents a key reason for this conflict:

> La transformation des spectacles en entreprises professionnelles rentables a en effet créé des antagonismes vifs en instaurant un régime doublement concurrentiel. Elle a suscité entre les troupes une concurrence économique (il fallait attirer le public en le détournant des troupes rivales) et «politique» (il était essentiel de s'attirer les faveurs et les gratifications des grands).[552]

This chapter will examine how the element of competition can underlie some of the motivations for indulging in literary controversy, including that of generating publicity, and the tensions inherent in such involvement. Emmanuelle Hénin emphasises the particular role of the theatre in literary quarrels: 'structurellement, le théâtre suppose une réception immédiate par un large public, assurant du même coup une large publicité à la polémique'.[553] The strategic manipulation of publicity, including the creation of controversial situations purely to attract public attention, could be a tactic of self-promotion. As Hammond suggests, 'the more public

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[548] Viala, 'Un Temps de Querelles', *Littératures Classiques,* 81 (2013), 5-22 (p.5).
[549] Paul Fièvre, 'Racine en Querelles', *Littératures Classiques,* 81 (2013), 199-210 (p.210).
[550] Banque de données AGON. La Dispute: cas, querelles, controverses & création à l'époque moderne, *Liste Intégrale des Querelles* (Projet ANR Agon, 2014).
[551] François Lecercle, 'Dispute dramatique et théâtrophobie', *Arrêt sur Scène/Scene Focus,* 3 (2014), 161-76 (p.161).
[552] Lecercle, p.162.
[553] Emmanuelle Hénin, 'Introduction', in *Les Querelles Dramatiques à l'Age Classique XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles,* ed. by Emmanuelle Hénin (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 2010), pp.1-22 (p.2).

the squabbles, the more likely the plays would succeed at the box office'.[554] Mona Narain recognises that 'to achieve fame, as well as to gain optimum exposure for one's ideas, a combination of publication and a well-known public identity was essential, even if it led to some notoriety'.[555] This could be considered necessary by aspiring authors in order to gain attention for their works. Lang and Lang suggest that for artists involved in controversy about their work 'a controversy […] can serve as a peg on which to hang references to the name'.[556] Clarke considers the impact of controversial subject matter, saying that part of the considerable success of Thomas Corneille's *La Devineresse* was a result of 'la notoriété du sujet'[557] which was based on the topical and sensational *Affaire des Poisons*.[558] Julia Prest describes *La Devineresse* as 'd'une actualité brûlante' and she concludes that 'la pièce lui doit son succès éclatant'.[559] Hammond considers that 'the many literary arguments which abounded in France at that time furnished the literate public with the same kind of prurient enjoyment that tabloid newspapers provide today'.[560] If notoriety is effective in promoting a play or a writer, it could be argued, as Zoey Chen and Jonah Burger suggest in a present day context, that 'common intuition is that more controversy generates more buzz'.[561] However, they point out that, beyond a moderate level of controversy, additional controversy can be counter-productive: controversy 'simultaneously increases interest (which increases the likelihood of discussion) and discomfort (which decreases the likelihood of discussion)'.[562] Thus, involvement in controversial situations needs to be managed to ensure the right level of public interest and of personal reward.

Given the potential overlap between words such as 'querelle' and 'dispute' it is useful to determine the precise meaning of 'querelle' and its usage in connection with literary debates. The contemporary *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Françoise* defined 'querelle' as 'dispute avec

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[554] Hammond, *Creative Tensions*, p.36.

[555] Mona Narain, 'Notorious Celebrity: Margaret Cavendish and the Spectacle of Fame', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association,* 42 (2009), 69-95 (p.75).

[556] Lang and Lang, p.99.

[557] Clarke, 'La Fin d'une si longue Carrière: de nouvelles recherches à propos de Thomas Corneille', in *Thomas Corneille (1625-1709): une Dramaturgie Virtuose,* ed. by Myriam Dufour-Maître (Rouen: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2014), pp.218-35 (p.229).

[558] The *affaire des poisons* was a murder scandal in 1677-82. A number of prominent members of the aristocracy were implicated and sentenced on charges of poisoning and witchcraft. 36 people were executed.

[559] Thomas Corneille and Donneau de Visé, *La Devineresse, ou les Faux Enchantemens,* ed. by Julia Prest (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2007), p.1.

[560] Hammond, p.26.

[561] Zoey Chen and Jonah Berger, 'When, why and how Controversy causes Conversation', *Journal of Consumer Research,* 40 (2013), 580-93 (p.580).

[562] Chen and Berger, p.581.

aigreur et animosité'.[563] Richelet's dictionary, which also dates from the end of the seventeenth century, defines 'se quereller' as 'se dire des injures'.[564] Viala maintains that 'la querelle est agressive, et elle inclut la mise en cause personnelle' whereas '[la] dispute correspond en particulier à une pratique du débat contradictoire et ordonné, en forme d'argumentation raisonnée, entre lettrés'.[565] The distinction between a polemical 'querelle' and 'agréables disputes'[566] will be explored later but, unlike Viala's work, this study will focus less on establishing that such a difference exists and instead on how the two different types of controversy could be used to achieve different aims.

A *querelle* can be considered as aggressive, often personal and usually controversial. Any quarrel which involved aggression and personal attacks would be considered to have transgressed the principles of *honnêteté*, described by Alain Montandon as presenting an 'idéal de modération et facteur de civilisation'; he continues, 'l'honnête homme est un modèle de comportement raisonnable et tempéré'.[567] David Bensoussan echoes this criterion of *honnêtété* as displaying moderation in behaviour: 'Il faut ramener tous les élans et emportements passionnés à la douceur saine et délectable du bon sens'.[568] The expected compliance with the norms of behaviour could be compromised if civilised intellectual debate were seen to degenerate into vulgar personal insults. Nevertheless, literary quarrels were a common feature of the period. Marie-Frédérique Pellegrin recognises the significant impact of literary controversy, claiming that quarrels 'semblent même constituer un moteur essentiel dans l'évolution des productions littéraires'.[569] Viala acknowledges the profit motivation in involvement in controversy: 'il apparaît que l'un des enjeux premiers est de stimuler la production et la vente d'imprimés: l'esclandre fait vendre'.[570]

The important issues for this study lie in exploring the deliberate employment and strategic manipulation of literary polemics by playwrights as a means for self-promotion. This is in contrast to the quarrel being a dispute of literary convictions between authors, the attendant

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[563] *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Françoise*, II, p.354.
[564] Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire de la Langue Françoise Ancienne et Moderne,* 2 vols (Amsterdam: Au depens de la Compagnie, 1732), II, p.525.
[565] Viala, 'Un Temps de Querelles', p.10.
[566] Viala, 'La Querelle des *Bérénice* n'a pas eu lieu', *Littératures Classiques,* 81 (2013), 91-106 (p.101).
[567] Montandon, p.228.
[568] David Bensoussan, 'L'Honnêteté chez Saint-Evremond: élégance et commodité', in *L'Honnête Homme et le Dandy*, pp.77-106 (p.104).
[569] Marie-Frédérique Pellegrin, 'La « Querelle des Femmes » est-elle une querelle?', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies,* 35 (2013), 69-79 (p.69).
[570] Viala, 'Un Temps de Querelles', p.18.

publicity being simply a by-product of the controversy. Hénin refers to the fact that the creation of literary quarrels would have increased the public's awareness of those involved: 'C'est pourquoi la querelle est elle-même théâtralisée et livrée au public […] les libelles et contre-pièces assurant une large publicité à la polémique'.[571] However, this fails to explore the possibility, proposed by this study, that a playwright may have become involved in a quarrel primarily for the resulting publicity. Lecercle is more specific on this point, referring to 'les auteurs qui entraient en conflit, pour des raisons de prestige et d'intérêt'.[572] He recognises the ambivalence in their attitude:

> la rivalité, la concurrence et l'irritation mutuelle sont indéniables, mais elles n'excluent pas une part de jeu et de théâtralisation. La raison en est simple: la querelle est un moyen de faire courir le public.[573]

Simon-Augustin Irailh discusses examples of literary quarrels but he does not examine the manoeuvres used in the various quarrels nor the motives behind them. [574] He recognises that literary quarrels appeal to the audience, but takes a negative view of such behaviour, saying 'aujourd'hui les gens d'esprit combattent pour divertir les sots'. His primary aim appears to be to discourage future authors from becoming involved in quarrels. However, he acknowledges that true literary debate and exchange of opinions can often 'faire découvrir la vérité'.[575] This negative perception of quarrels will be explored as a possible deterrent to authors who were more concerned by the damage a quarrel might do to their social position than by the short-term benefits of publicity for their work.

The quarrel relating to Corneille's *Sophonisbe* in 1663 illustrates some factors influencing involvement in controversy. Donneau de Visé wrote a critical review of the celebrated playwright's latest work: 'si cette Tragédie étoit d'un autre que Corneille, elle seroit trouvée très méchante'.[576] He complains that 'tout y ennuie,' and 'il ne se passe rien sur la Scéne qui puisse attacher & divertir tout ensemble l'Auditeur'.[577] He insists that he is only giving a personal opinion and concludes 'je ne crois pas passer pour critique, mais peut-être que je ne me pourrai exempter du nom de téméraire', offering the excuse: 'la témérité appartient aux

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[571] Hénin, 'Introduction', p.3.
[572] Lecercle, p.162.
[573] Lecercle, p.163.
[574] Simon-Augustin Irailh, *Querelles littéraires, ou Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Révolutions de la République des Lettres, depuis Homère jusqu'à nos jours,* 2 vols (Paris: Durand, 1761), I, p.xi.
[575] Irailh, p.vi.
[576] Donneau de Visé, 'Critique de la Sophonisbe', in *Recueil de dissertations sur plusieurs tragédies de Corneille et de Racine,* ed. by François Granet, 2 vols (Paris: Chez Gissey et Bordelet, 1740), I, pp.118-33 (p.118).
[577] Donneau de Visé, I, p.129.

jeunes gens' (he was 25 at the time).[578] However, following the publication of an article by the Abbé d'Aubignac,[579] which was also critical of Corneille, Donneau de Visé wrote a second article, contradicting his initial opinion. He explains this change of heart, professing that 'je n'avois alors été voir Sophonisbe que pour y trouver des défauts' and that having seen the play a second time he now sees that he has been in error: 'n'y ayant découvert que des beautés'.[580] He admits that an author who was still at an early stage in his career might have 'osé reprendre le Prince des Poëtes François, afin de trouver de la gloire'.[581] This explanation suggests that authors in the seventeenth century saw controversy and polemics as a means of making a name for themselves, and that a young author could see incentives in attacking a well-established author, even if it was only to be defeated 'par un ennemi dont la valeur est connue, & à qui personne n'a jamais pû résister'.[582] Clarke attributes Donneau de Visé's change of opinion in his reviews of *Sophonisbe* to his realisation that 'he would gain more publicity by defending Corneille than attacking him'.[583] Jeanne-Marie Hostiou and Sara Harvey consider that 'cette querelle révèle des enjeux politiques concernant les jeux de pouvoir au sein du champ littéraire et théâtral, et l'influence de Corneille et de son clan auquel le jeune Donneau de Visé prend stratégiquement le parti de se rattacher'.[584] Corneille himself entered the fray in the 'Au Lecteur' of the published *Sophonisbe* to defend his own play against d'Aubignac, who later responded by publishing further essays criticising two more of Corneille's plays and Corneille himself in a 'critique chaque fois plus féroce', though Hammond and Hawcroft judge the dissertations to be 'précieux documents sur les pièces dont elles traitent'.[585] In Hostiou's and Harvey's view, 'la polémique a pour effet d'opposer l'orthodoxie doctrinale du critique et théoricien qu'est l'abbé et la pratique créatrice du dramaturge Corneille'.[586] This quarrel illustrates some of the key elements publicly aired for self-promotion: personal animosity

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[578] Donneau de Visé, 'Critique de la Sophonisbe', I, p.133.

[579] Aubignac, 'Première dissertation concernant le poème dramatique', in *Dissertations contre Corneille,* ed. by Nicholas Hammond and Michael Hawcroft (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995), pp.5-16.

[580] Donneau de Visé, 'Deffense de la Sophonisbe de Monsieur de Corneille', in *Recueil de dissertations sur plusieurs tragédies de Corneille et de Racine*, I, pp.154-94 (p.194).

[581] Donneau de Visé, I, p.156.

[582] Donneau de Visé, I, p.156.

[583] Clarke, *The Guénégaud Theatre in Paris 1673-1680,* 3 vols (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998-2007), III, p.43.

[584] Jeanne-Marie Hostiou and Sara Harvey, *Querelle de Sophonisbe*, Banque de données AGON (2015), 'Enjeux' (2).

[585] Aubignac, *Dissertations*, p.v and p.xxx.

[586] Hostiou and Harvey, 'Enjeux' (4).

between writers and the opportunistic tactics of an aspiring writer in trying to get his name known in order to gain entry to influential literary circles.

The way in which playwrights could profit from quarrels is evident in works which formed part of the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*. Forestier and Claude Bourqui attribute the beginning of the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* to Molière's desire to use controversy, seeing it as 'provocation calculée'.[587] They base this on the preface to *L'Ecole des Femmes*, which announced in early March 1663 that Molière was preparing a response to his critics, yet this response did not appear until June, a delay they attribute to the fact that 'Molière avait découvert que faire suivre une grande pièce d'une petite comédie permettait de ranimer l'intérêt du public […] il convenait donc de garder cette *Critique* en réserve jusqu'à ce que les conditions matérielles rendissent son apparition opportune'. This strategic timing by Molière is an important skill in the promotional tactics of his play. Maximum impact can be gained by careful calculation of the optimum moment for publicity: 'relancer *L'Ecole des Femmes*, absente de la scène depuis le relâche de Paques, tout en créant *La Critique* représentait une conjonction idéale'.[588] Molière also demonstrates his *habitus* by the nature of his reaction to the reception of *L'Ecole des Femmes*. Instead of a written response 'sur la voie d'une simple discussion de poétique théâtrale' which was the usual mode of reply, he chose his own 'terrain, celui de rire […] en offrant une image ridicule de ces détracteurs mêmes, introduits sous l'apparence de caricatures théâtrales'.[589] Molière directly acknowledges the possibility that a playwright might use a literary debate for self-promotion when he says in *L'Impromptu de Versailles* '[Boursault] m'attaque de gaieté de cœur, pour se faire connaître de quelque façon que ce soit'.[590] Similarly, Philippe de la Croix highlights the financial motivations in his *La Guerre Comique ou la défense de L'Ecole des Femmes* and he suggests that the *querelle* is being allowed to continue since it is financially profitable for the writers and actors, saying '[au] lieu de vuider leur querelle/ Ils vuident plustost l'escarcelle'. This is further supported by Cléone, one of the characters, stating that in *Le Portrait du peintre* there was no intention of attacking Molière's solid reputation, 'on cherchoit seulement le moyen de gagner de l'argent à la faveur de son nom'.[591]

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[587] Forestier and Claude Bourqui, 'Comment Molière inventa la querelle de *l'Ecole des Femmes*', *Littératures Classiques,* 81 (2013), 185-98 (p.188).
[588] Forestier and Bourqui, p.189.
[589] Forestier and Bourqui, p.188.
[590] Molière, I, p.695.
[591] Philippe de La Croix, *La Guerre Comique* (Geneva: Gay, 1868), 'Dialogue Burlesque' and 'Dispute Dernière'.

Writers acknowledged that controversy was effective in promoting their plays. Pradon recognises that the unexpected success of *Phèdre et Hippolyte* was due in part to the controversy surrounding it: 'je me sens obligé d'en remercier […] mes Ennemis mesme, de tout ce qu'ils ont fait contre moy'.[592] Likewise, Boursault admits in the dedication to *La Satire des Satires* that perhaps it 'doit une partie de sa réputation à l'injustice qu'on luy a renduë':[593] the fact that people had heard of the play was partly as a result of the quarrel it had caused. Viala's study of Racine's career acknowledges that 'rumeurs, polémiques, débats de plume, [étaient] tout bon pour entretenir les curiosités, Racine savourait sa notoriété resplendissante'.[594] Racine, though, courted controversy in a different way to Boursault, for instance, by giving one of his plays to Molière's troupe and to the Hôtel de Bourgogne at the same time: at this period, troupes expected '[un] temps d'exclusivité, au moins une saison'. Viala sees this as a purely cynical move on Racine's part, saying that Racine '[avait] voulu l'effet de scandale'. This implies that Racine was aware of the controversial nature of what he was doing, but was equally well aware that this would have a positive effect in publicising his play. The financial success of his strategy is underlined by Viala who says that the Hôtel de Bourgogne 'faisait salle pleine [et] Racine y toucha plus du triple de ce qu'il perdait' by abandoning Molière.[595] Viala also claims that '[Molière] savait bien qu'un bon scandale de polémique est le meilleur moyen de tenir la salle tous les jours pleine'.[596]

Direct competition

A tactic used by playwrights that could generate controversy, and hence publicity, was that of directly competing with a rival author: two or more playwrights each writing a play about the same subject and performed at approximately the same time. Picard reports that '*Doubler* une pièce était une pratique courante'.[597] This tactic provided the opportunity for the theatre audience to compare directly and immediately the talents of the writers when dealing with the same subject. An early example of such competition was two comedies written by Pierre Corneille and Jean Claveret, both called *La Place Royale,* and both appearing at approximately the same time in 1633. Colette Scherer argues that Claveret's appeared slightly before Corneille's play and quotes Claveret's letter to Corneille reproaching him for using the same title for his play, identifying his motives as 'ou pour satisfaire votre passion jalouse, ou pour

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[592] Jacques Pradon, *Phèdre et Hippolyte*, ed. by Olive Classe (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1987), 'Preface', p.4.
[593] Boursault, *La Satire des Satires* (Paris: Ribou, 1669), p.iii.
[594] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.124.
[595] Viala, p.111.
[596] Viala, p.89.
[597] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.232.

contenter celle des Comédiens que vous serviez'.[598] Scherer confirms, 'il n'était pas rare qu'une troupe donne une nouvelle pièce portant le même titre que celle qui se jouait dans un autre théâtre, pour profiter de son succès. Mais c'est quand même, pour le moins, un acte inamical.'[599] A second example can be found with the appearance in 1636 of comedies by Scudéry and Bouscal, both entitled *L'Amant libéral*. Eveline Dutertre also acknowledges 'cette coutume d'écrire deux pièces sur un même sujet' but sees it, in this instance, as representing 'une rivalité de troupes' rather than 'une rivalité d'auteurs'.[600]

In 1638 both Chapoton and Chevreau wrote tragedies called *Coriolan*. Chapoton subtitled his play *Le Véritable*, implying that Chevreau's play was merely an imitation and in his 'Avertissement au Lecteur' he says, 'je te prierai si l'on te présente quelque tragédie supposée sous le nom du même Coriolan, de ne me point blâmer des défauts d'un auteur inconnu':[601] presumably a veiled reference to Chevreau's play. Another example is provided by two tragedies, both called *Rodogune*, one by Pierre Corneille and one by Gilbert. Corneille's was the first to appear, as confirmed by the *Anecdotes*: 'Lorsque Corneille travaillait à *Rodogune*, une personne indiscrète, à qui il confia son projet, le trahit et communiqua son plan à Gilbert, qui fit une *Rodogune*, dont le second, le troisième et le quatrième Acte étaient tout-à-fait semblables à ceux de Corneille'.[602] This provides some indication of how authors might have found out what their rivals were working on, enabling them to compete directly with each other. Subsequent plays falling into this category were comedies by Thomas Corneille and Paul Scarron, both based on a work by Calderón. Scarron's play was called *Le Gardien de soi-même*, while Corneille's was called *Le Geôlier de soi-même*. Corneille's play was described as 'à-peu-près le même sujet que le *Gardien de soi-même*',[603] suggesting that Scarron's was the earlier. Alexandre Cioranescu confirms this and suggests that Corneille was asked by the Marais company to copy the play 'dans l'intention de faire concurrence au spectacle fourni par Scarron à la troupe rivale'.[604] Another example of direct competition probably initiated by a rival acting troupe is seen in two comedies entitled *La Foire Saint-Germain*. The first to appear, in 1695, was a collaborative effort by Regnard and du Fresny, the second, by Dancourt, appeared in

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[598] Jean Claveret, *L'Esprit Fort: Comédie,* ed. by Colette Scherer (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), pp.15-16.

[599] Claveret, p.16.

[600] Eveline Dutertre, *Scudéry Dramaturge* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), p.223.

[601] François de Chapoton, *Le Véritable Coriolan* (Paris: Quinet, 1638), p.viii.

[602] Clément and La Porte, II, pp.136-37.

[603] Joseph de Laporte and Sébastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort, *Dictionnaire Dramatique,* 3 vols (Paris: Lacombe, 1776), II, p.11.

[604] Alexandre Cioranescu, *Le Masque et le Visage: du baroque espagnol au classicisme français* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1983), p.300.

1696. Charles Garnier argues that the success of Regnard's and du Fresny's play was such 'au point d'exciter la jalousie des comédiens françois. Dancourt, pour le contre-balancer, donna à ce théâtre une comédie sous le même titre'.[605]

In 1678 both Claude Boyer and Thomas Corneille wrote tragedies entitled *Le Comte d'Essex,* with Corneille completing his version first. It is likely that Boyer attempted to use competition with Corneille's play to increase interest in the performance of his own work. Florence de Caigney notes the difference in success of the two plays, with Boyer's work only managing eight performances and Corneille's being performed 281 times; she reports Boyer's allegation that this was the result of a cabal.[606] In his 'Au Lecteur', Boyer admits that he was concerned that if his play had not appeared at the same time as Corneille's it might have been a failure since it 'n'avoit ny la grace de la nouveauté, ny les avantages de la concurrence'. When he came to publish his play, competition with Corneille would no longer have been an advantage, and Boyer sought to distance himself from the tactic, denying that he was '[un] de ceux qui par chagrin ou par émulation ont doublé les pieces de Theatre'.[607] This suggests that it would not have been seen as behaviour suitable for an *honnête homme*. He also sought to avoid allegations that he had copied Corneille directly, claiming that they were both inspired by a play written 30 years earlier by La Calprenède: 'Monsieur Corneille et moy nous avons puisé les idées d'un mesme sujet dans une mesme source'.[608] He admits 'que je l'ay imité [La Calprenède] dans quelques endroits, et que mesme je me suis servi de quelques vers de sa façon'. His justification is interesting:

> J'ay crû que puisque nos meilleurs Autheurs se picquent d'emprunter les sentimens et les vers des Anciens qui nous ont devancés de plusieurs siecles, que nous pouvions aussi emprunter quelque chose de ceux qui ne sont plus et qui nous ont precedés de quelques années.[609]

These examples of direct competition demonstrate that, as Gros says, '[la] "concurrence" [...] était à la mode: comédiens et auteurs y trouvaient également profit'.[610] Publicity-seeking motives were the basis for actors encouraging playwrights to write works on the same subject and playwrights appear to have complied willingly, recognising the potential benefits. Given

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[605] Jean-Francois Regnard, *Œuvres de J.F. Regnard,* ed. by Charles Garnier, 6 vols (Paris: E. A. Lequien, 1820), VI, p.137.
[606] Florence de Caigny, '*Le Comte d'Essex* de Claude Boyer: Élisabeth ou la confusion des rôles', *Études Épistémè: Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation XVI-XVIIIe siècles*, 16 (2009), 113-29 (p.113).
[607] Claude Boyer, *Le Comte d'Essex* (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1678), p.a ii.
[608] Boyer, p.a ii-iii.
[609] Boyer, p.a iii.
[610] Gros, p.77.

the number of authors who used direct competition, this may also indicate that authors felt that there were risks in innovation and that it was safer to follow trends set by other writers. By engaging in direct competition authors were able to use genres and themes with which the audience was familiar. Direct comparison with another author, especially a popular established author, involved risks but could be a source of vocational capital, if successful. There were also risks inherent in being perceived as too closely imitating or simply copying another writer or source.

The concept of *émulation* was an important one at this period and was particularly influential into the next century. The implications are specific and it is worth clarifying its meaning in this context to differentiate its higher aims – an inspiration and spur to greatness and great works – from servile imitation. The Abbé Roubaud defines the term and expands on its meaning. He emphasises the ennobling aspect of emulation: 'un sentiment vif qui nous porte à faire de généreux efforts pour surpasser, égaler, ou même suivre de près ceux qui font quelque chose d'honnête'. He contrasts emulation with rivalry: 'l'émulation ne désigne que la concurrence; & la rivalité dénote le conflit. Il y a émulation, quand on court la même carrière; & rivalité, quand les intérêts se combattent'. He emphasises the harmonious nature of relationships based on emulation: 'Deux émules vont ensemble; deux rivaux l'un contre l'autre'. The issue of rivalry is relevant when considering competition among authors and his summary is particularly pertinent: '[L]'émulation veut mériter le succès, & la rivalité l'obtenir. L'émule tâche de surpasser son concurrent; le rivale supplantera le sien, s'il le peut.' The key point is that '[L]'émulation suppose en vous de l'estime pour vos concurrens: la rivalité porte la teinte de l'envie.'[611] Pradon stresses the positive benefits of direct competition, arguing that the public will be entertained by having several dramatists producing plays on the same subject and that this will 'faire naître cette noble émulation qui est la cause des plus beaux Ouvrages'. Interestingly, he refers to authors who 'se rencontrassent quelquefois dans les mesmes Sujets' which suggests a harmonious meeting of minds rather than a combative rivalry, in line with Roubaud's definition. He also seeks to justify the practice of direct competition: 'on n'a jamais trouvé mauvais dans la Peinture, que deux Peintres tirassent diverses Copies du mesme Original; & je me suis imaginé que […] le Poëme Dramatique, qui est une Peinture parlante, n'estoit pas de pire condition'.[612] Direct competition and emulation could give authors the

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[611] L'Abbé Roubaud, *Nouveaux Synonymes François; ouvrage dédié à l'Académie Françoise par M. L'Abbé Roubaud,* 4 vols (Paris: Chez Moutard, 1785), II, pp.86-87.
[612] Pradon, 'Preface', p.4.

opportunity to increase their cultural and vocational capital by displaying their talent compared with their peers.

Direct competition, to a twenty-first century audience, raises the question of plagiarism and the potential for an author to damage his self-presentation as a creative writer by being accused of stealing from his peers. The 'theft' of an artistic work can be seen as stealing another writer's cultural capital or economic profit and impinges on the accumulation of vocational capital as it would represent unethical professional behaviour and transgress the expectations of *honnêteté*. Contemporaries seem to have been divided on the issue. Saint-Sorlin, the first Chancellor of the Académie française, appears contemptuous of the practice, referring to imitators as 'des moutons' and saying

> L'invention [...] est comme une fontaine publique dans laquelle chacun va chercher de l'eau, faute d'avoir une source chez soy. Mais quiconque a une source en sa maison n'a pas besoin d'aller puiser ailleurs, et même n'y pense pas: car il aurait plus de peine à sortir de lui-même pour aller puiser chez autrui avec peu d'honneur, que de puiser chez soi.[613]

The practice of plagiarism seems to have been very common. La Fontaine satirised plagiarists in one of his *Fables*, comparing them to a jay disguised in the borrowed feathers of a peacock:

> Il est assez de Geais à deux pieds comme lui,
> Qui se parent souvent des dépouilles d'autrui,
> Et que l'on nomme plagiaires. [614]

Writers openly acknowledged their use of other sources; Corneille says, 'Je vous avais bien dit que *Le Menteur* ne serait pas le dernier emprunt ou larcin que je ferais'[615] and 'je n'ai point fait de scrupule d'enricher notre Langue du pillage que j'ai pu faire'.[616] While Corneille and others drew freely on classical and foreign sources, there was more disagreement about the acceptability of plagiarism from French sources and from more recent authors. Boyer's view was that it was acceptable practice provided the author was dead 'de quelques années'. La Mothe le Vayer declares, '[prendre] des Anciens, et [faire] son profit de ce qu'ils ont écrit, c'est comme pirater au-delà de la Ligne; mais voler ceux de son siècle, en s'appropriant leurs pensées et leurs productions, c'est tirer la laine au coin des rues, c'est ôter les manteaux sur le Pont neuf'.[617] Boileau takes an equally strong view, stating 'quand je fais des vers, je songe toûjours

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[613] Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, *La Comparaison de la Langue et de la Poësie Françoise et Les Amours de Protée et de Physis* (Paris: Chez Thomas Jolly, 1670), pp.89-90.
[614] La Fontaine, *Œuvres Complètes,* 2 vols, Vol I ed. by Jean-Pierre Collinet (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), I, Fables IV, 9, 'Le Geai paré des plumes du Paon', p.152.
[615] Corneille, II, p.95.
[616] Corneille, I, p.1077.
[617] François de La Mothe Le Vayer, *Œuvres Complètes,* 2 vols (Paris: Courbé, 1662), II, p.1052.

à dire ce qui ne s'est point encore dit en notre Langue'.[618] Plagiarism was widespread, however, suggesting either that the disapproval of other writers was not a strong deterrent, or that such objectors were sufficiently in the minority that authors felt justified in ignoring them. Brooks summarises the differing views, suggesting that '[sur] le plan légal, la coutume de doubler les pièces d'autrui est un élément normal de la vie théâtrale au XVIIe siècle'. However, he recognises that, morally, the issue seems to be slightly more complicated and 'l'auteur froissé criait parfois au plagiat […] mais personne n'y portait attention'.[619]

This period represents an important transitional point with respect to the emergence of intellectual property rights. There was a tension caused by the idealised concept of emulation which positively encouraged respectful imitation in order to learn from, and be inspired by, great art as opposed to the production of original work. Viala sees some basis for the confusion: 'La doctrine de l'imitation n'aurait pu être fondée en valeur si l'emprunt d'idées n'avaient été considéré comme légitime et même positif'. Like Brooks, he identifies two contradictory attitudes: 'l'une qui utilisait le plagiat, l'autre qui le dénonçait à cor et à cri'.[620] The legal situation of an author's rights is described by Viala as 'un écheveau de difficultés et de contradictions'[621] and he confirms 'la législation ni la jurisprudence ne comprennent aucun texte protégeant le droit de paternité littéraire'. Viala sees the start of a war against plagiarism: 'L'accusation de pillage y devint une des armes les plus employées dans les polémiques littéraires' and one of the main forms of defence was 'la réprobation publique contre les plagiaires'.[622] While plagiarism may have been common practice earlier, there was a gradual shift so that obvious imitation of another's work became less acceptable. Before formal legislation of an author's property rights, writers were starting to lay claim to ownership of their works as they discussed the creation of their plays in published notices addressed 'Au Lecteur'. As they became more aware of their rights there would be a reciprocal recognition of the rights of other authors and the beginnings of professional ethics. Professional codes of conduct had yet to be fully established. The concept of vocational capital is particularly pertinent in this context as, analogous with the accumulation of social capital being dependent on adherence to social norms, the acquisition of vocational capital can be seen to depend on conforming to professionally-acceptable behaviour. Part of the function of the literary *querelles* so prevalent

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[618] Boileau, p.797.
[619] Quinault, *Pausanias: Tragédie (1668)*, ed. by Edmund Campion, intro.by William Brooks (Geneva: Droz, 2004), p.12.
[620] Viala, *Naissance*, p.90.
[621] Viala, p.104.
[622] Viala, p.93.

at this time could have been the exploration and tacit agreement of the ground rules to govern professional conduct.

The involvement of Quinault, Racine and Boursault in direct competition

The first play by one of the case study authors to fall into the category of direct competition was Quinault's work of 1655, *Les Coups d'Amour et de Fortune*, which had the same title and a very similar subject to one written by Boisrobert that had recently appeared. Quinault was still at an early stage in his career: this was only the fifth play he had had performed. According to the *Dictionnaire Dramatique* '[c'est] dans l'une et dans l'autre le même fond, la même intrigue, le même dénouement, et de plus, les mêmes noms d'acteurs'.[623] Boisrobert claimed that Quinault had copied his idea ('l'on avoit imité de mauvaise grace'[624]) and, perhaps tellingly, Quinault made no response to these allegations.[625] Both Gros and Brooks discuss the accusation of copying and suggest that the original impetus came from the actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who asked Tristan to write a competing version to Boisrobert's play; however, as Tristan was too ill, he passed the task on to his protégé, Quinault.[626] Chappuzeau describes the actors' 'petits strategemes': 'quand une Troupe promet une piece nouvelle, l'autre se prepare à luy en óposer une semblable'. He adds that the troupe would have 'spies' to check the date when the play would be presented by their rivals and would hold back their own version ready to perform at the same time.[627] It seems probable that as Quinault was at a relatively early stage in his career, the opportunity to test his vocational capital against another writer would have been even more attractive if it came with the added bonus of potentially earning him the gratitude of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Quinault was again involved in direct competition in 1662, with his play *Agrippa*, which is very similar to Boyer's play *Oropaste* in subject matter. This was Quinault's thirteenth play and since he wrote seventeen plays before turning to opera, this is relatively late in his career as a dramatist. Although Quinault's play seems to have been premiered up to a month before Boyer's, Brooks is of the opinion that Quinault was once again copying a plot in order to help the actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne compete with Molière, remarking that 'the history of the relationship between Quinault and the Hôtel makes it virtually certain that this is what

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[623] La Porte and Chamfort, I, p.325.

[624] Boisrobert, Abbé de Chastillon, *Les Coups d'Amour et de Fortune ou l'Heureux Infortuné* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1656), 'Epistre', p.a.ii *v*.

[625] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre du Marais*, II, p.84.

[626] Brooks, pp.72-78; Gros, pp.29-32.

[627] Samuel Chappuzeau, *Le Théâtre François,* with notes by Georges Monval (Paris: Jules Bonnassies, 1876), p.117.

happened'.[628] In a third example of its type, Quinault's play *La Mère Coquette* was apparently written to compete with Donneau de Visé's play of the same name, which was to be performed by Molière's troupe in 1665.[629] Gros suggests that the initial request again came from the actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne[630] and the frequency with which Quinault engaged in direct competition makes it plausible that he would have complied readily. Quinault's play once again appears to have been written after his rival's. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, 'de Visé déclare aussitôt que sa comédie a été composée avant celle de Quinault et que cet auteur a tout simplement plagié sa pièce'.[631] Contemporary evidence, provided by Robinet, supports this, suggesting that 'On ne verra l'Original/Que dedans le Palais Royal', where Molière's troupe performed, and he recommends:

> Attendons, Lecteur, qu'on les joue
> Et, pour lors enfin nous verrons
> Qui le plus des deux nous louerons,[632]

which underlines an important function of direct competition in offering the audience the opportunity to judge the calibre of the two competing works. Brooks acknowledges Quinault's tactic in doubling several of his plays, but he argues that:

> bien qu'on doive céder l'honneur de la nouveauté aux pièces rivales, c'est à Quinault, dans tous les cas ou presque, que revient celui du brio artistique, de l'intérêt dramatique et surtout la réussite devant le public.[633]

Direct competition allowed Quinault to display his literary talent through comparison with another writer's treatment of the same subject matter. However, the dangers inherent in such competition are illustrated in one final instance, which brought him into competition with Racine. In 1668, with the fortunes of the Hôtel de Bourgogne once again threatened by Molière's success, Quinault was asked to write a play designed to take advantage of the success the Hôtel had recently enjoyed with Racine's *Andromaque*.[634] In his *Pausanias*, Quinault copied the opening of *Andromaque* and the relations between the characters (though changing their names). Because Racine's play had already finished its run before Quinault's *Pausanias* was premiered, the competition was less immediate. However, the two plays were close enough together in performance that *Andromaque* would still have been fresh in the public's mind, especially as the same actors took on the key roles. Brooks suggests that this was an example

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[628] Brooks, p.289.
[629] Brooks, p.310.
[630] Gros, p.78.
[631] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, II, p.125.
[632] *Les Continuateurs de Loret*, I, p.322.
[633] Quinault, *Pausanias*, p.11-12.
[634] Brooks, p.326.

of less direct competition: 'les acteurs lui [Quinault] auraient suggéré de doubler une pièce vieille déjà d'un an et créée par eux-mêmes: la troupe jouissant donc déjà pleinement des droits moraux'.[635] This appears to be an occasion when the strategy worked against Quinault since, as Deierkauf-Holsboer reports, *Pausanias* 'n'a eu que peu de succès, probablement parce que le sujet présentait beaucoup de similitude avec l'*Andromaque* de Racine'.[636] Although Brooks is at pains to point out the many differences between the works, *Pausanias* has often been seen as a poor imitation of Racine's work: 'the relationship of *Pausanias* to *Andromaque* has usually prevented its being appreciated for its own qualities'.[637] Direct competition can highlight the qualities of the superior writer but prevents the less talented demonstrating his own originality.

After *Pausanias* Quinault wrote only one further play before turning to opera. There is no evidence that the failure of *Pausanias* was linked to Quinault's change of career but it may have led to his abandoning the strategy of direct competition, since, although the tactic could still have been used in opera, Quinault makes no further use of it. Both Quinault and Racine wrote four plays that fall into the category of direct competition. All four of Quinault's suggest that he was copying someone else's subject matter. By contrast, two of Racine's plays appeared before a play with the same subject (*Andromaque* and *Phèdre*). The first of Racine's plays to fall into this category, however, was certainly written after another author had dealt with that subject. Racine's *Alexandre* appeared shortly after Boyer had also written a play about Alexander the Great. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the Hôtel de Bourgogne's initial response to the announcement that Molière's troupe would be performing Racine's play was to start a second run of Boyer's version.[638] From the actors' point of view this would have been an easy way to take advantage of the publicity surrounding Racine's successful play by engineering some competition without having to wait for an author to write a play. However, soon afterwards, amid controversial circumstances, the actors at the Hôtel abandoned Boyer's version and began performing Racine's play, even though it was still being performed by Molière's troupe. There are conflicting views as to how this situation came about, with Lancaster claiming that Floridor, the leading actor of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, realising the superiority of Racine's play, decided to drop Boyer's and asked Racine directly for permission to perform his play,[639] while Picard says, 'étant donné le caractère vague et discuté des droits

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[635] Quinault, *Pausanias*, p.12.
[636] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, II, p.137.
[637] Brooks, p.325.
[638] Deierkauf-Holsboer, II, p.126.
[639] Henry Carrington Lancaster, *A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century,* 5 parts in 9 vols, *Part III: The Period of Molière 1652-1672,* 2 vols (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), II, p.492.

d'auteur, il aurait pu s'agir […] d'un vol pur et simple de l'Hôtel'.[640]   This illustrates the extremely limited authorial rights a writer had over his plays. Theoretically a playwright could decide which company performed the first run, but thereafter the play could be performed by anyone.

The other example of a play written by Racine competing directly with that of another playwright has become extremely well-known, since it involved competition between the two great tragic playwrights of the period. It occurred in 1671, when Racine and Pierre Corneille both chose to write about Titus and Berenice. Forestier believes that Corneille was the first to decide upon this subject; he suggests that it was the actors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne who encouraged Racine to write a rival version to allow them to compete with Molière's troupe.[641] Viala's opinion is that 'la sortie concomitante des deux tragédies de même titre ne pouvait que suggérer une confrontation délibérée' and he adds that the intensity of the quarrel was aggravated because Molière and Racine had already quarrelled over *Alexandre* and it was Molière's troupe that was performing *Tite et Bérénice*.[642] This, however, overlooks the significant attraction that writing a play to rival Corneille would have had for Racine. Certainly one of Racine's contemporaries, the Abbé de Villars, attributes Racine's decision to his desire to enter 'en lice avec Corneille'.[643] It could, however, equally be seen as emulation in his seeking to learn from a great author and being inspired to surpass him. Viala refers to 'la dynamique de l'émulation' whereby the two playwrights 'doivent rivaliser de zèle pour plaire au roi'.[644]

Deierkauf-Holsboer refers to a suggestion that Henriette d'Angleterre had asked both authors 'de traiter chacun séparément ce sujet'. However, she, like most other scholars, does not give much credence to this, continuing: 'il est plus vraisemblable que la troupe royale au moment où elle apprend que Corneille cède son *Tite et Bérénice* à Molière […] ait prié Racine de composer *Bérénice*'.[645] Racine would have increased his social capital by agreeing to the request of Hôtel de Bourgogne, which was the royal troupe. Picard concludes that '[la] seule

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[640] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.109.
[641] Forestier, pp.385-86.
[642] Viala, 'La Querelle des *Bérénice*', p.96.
[643] Nicolas-Pierre-Henri de Montfaucon de Villars, *La Critique de Berenice* (Paris: Louis Bilan, 1671), p 37.
[644] Viala, p.101.
[645] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, II, p.142. See also Clément and La Porte, I, p.142.

explication possible reste donc que c'est Racine qui a eu connaissance du sujet sur lequel travaillait Corneille et qui a souhaité ce duel avec son vieil adversaire'. He continues:

> étant donné la situation respective de Corneille et de Racine, et le fait que celui-ci n'a pu avoir connaissance du texte définitif de la pièce de son rival, il ne s'agit pas dans ce cas d'un manque d'inspiration, d'une paresse à inventer ou de la tentation du plagiat, mais bien d'une concurrence.[646]

Moncond'huy also views this as part of a larger competition between the two playwrights: 'le "duel" [...] se jouerait directement, les "armes" à la main, avec les spectateurs et les lecteurs pour témoins – et à partir du même sujet'.[647] This 'duel' between Racine and Corneille can be seen as a struggle to prove which of the two possessed the greater cultural and vocational capital. Gérard Defaux and Michael Metteer concur, saying 'it is less the extreme simplicity of the plot itself that motivated Racine than the appealing idea of being able finally to measure himself directly, body to body, text to text, against the old but always formidable champion'.[648]

In a contemporary commentary, Robinet declared a preference for Corneille's play, but he was a critic hostile to Racine. While he generally admits Racine's plays have been successful, he is often grudging in his praise, describing Racine as 'adroit'[649] or giving the credit for the success to the actors, for instance 'du *Mytridate* de Racine/Joüé d'une façon divine'.[650] Robinet does not make any reference to the plays competing and the fact that he does not accuse Racine of plagiarism, or even mention the similarities between the plays, either suggests that this was accepted as normal, or that an accusation of plagiarism would not have been particularly damaging.

A further interesting aspect is raised by Viala who, having identified as deliberate the confrontation between Racine and Corneille, goes on to explore the debate surrounding the two plays and sees elements of a change towards 'agréables disputes', suggesting a more positive outcome: 'il s'agit d'animer l'émulation, non de nourrir des affrontements, d'animer des disputes stimulantes et non de tomber dans des querelles'.[651] This seems to mark the start of a transitional stage in the literary field with the beginnings of professional debate and constructive criticism. However, Viala also cautions that personal motives and vested interests continue to

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[646] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.159.

[647] Jean Racine, *Bérénice,* and Pierre Corneille, *Tite et Bérénice,* ed. by Dominique Moncond'huy (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1998), p.9.

[648] Gérard Defaux and Michael Metteer, 'The Case of *Bérénice*: Racine, Corneille and Mimetic Desire', *Yale French Studies,* 76 (1989), 211-39 (p.214).

[649] *Le Théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent*, p.137.

[650] *Le Théâtre et l'opéra vus par les gazetiers Robinet et Laurent*, p.145.

[651] Viala, 'La Querelle des *Bérénice*', p.100.

underpin many of the quarrels of the time: Boileau attacked Chapelain because he and his friends had not been included in the lists of 'gratifications'; and the Académie attacked Furetière in an attempt to preserve its exclusive right to produce a dictionary. There was 'autant la multiplication des querelles que l'émulation zélée et bienveillante'.[652]

Authors who gained membership of the Académie française might have felt they could abandon direct competition as a tactic for self-promotion and publicity. Such public legitimisation of their status and renown as established playwrights would have reduced the motivation for competition. Of all of the plays discussed in this section, only one (Boyer's *Le Comte d'Essex*) was written by someone who was already a member of the Académie when he wrote the play, and even then, Boyer was at pains to suggest that he was not directly copying one of his contemporaries. Both Racine and Quinault stopped using the tactic immediately after they became members of the Académie. This therefore suggests that one of the appeals of direct competition was to display an author's cultural capital; election to the Académie provided symbolic proof that they had been fully accepted by their peers and they no longer needed to prove themselves by competition.

Nevertheless, there was a final example of direct competition involving Racine. Shortly after the appearance of *Phèdre* in 1677, Pradon used a similar theme in his *Phèdre et Hippolyte*. There is no doubt that Racine wrote his play first and Pradon (who was never a member of the Académie) admitted that 'ce n'a point esté un effet du hazard qui m'a fait rencontrer avec Mr Racine, mais un pur effet de mon choix'.[653] Viala sees a key element in the conflict as reflecting the different dramatic approaches: 'Pradon est plus romanesque et plus galant, Racine plus « Ancien » et de morale sombre'. Clarke argues that some plays had a short-lived renown caused by immediate notoriety of current scandals or by direct competition with rival authors: 'la *Phèdre et Hippolyte* de Pradon tira tout son intérêt de sa rivalité avec la *Phèdre* de Racine'.[654] Picard considers that 'on [a] trouvé courageuse et sympathique la tentative de Pradon contre un auteur illustre, qui faisait un peu trop l'homme de Cour, et tout se passe comme si le public s'était amusé du bon tour qu'on lui jouait'. He refers to 'l'audace de Pradon, louée par tous les ennemis de son rival' which aroused 'une curiosité générale dont sa pièce a bénéficié; on devine qu'elle avait plus besoin de cette publicité que celle de Racine'.[655] In a modern re-edition of Pradon's *Phèdre et Hippolyte*, Olive Classe compares the two plays, recognising Pradon's

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[652] Viala, 'La Querelle des *Bérénice*', p.102.
[653] Pradon, 'Preface', p.4.
[654] Clarke, 'Comment définir mineur/majeur?', p.201.
[655] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* pp.237-38.

plagarism and Racine's superiority: 'il y eut plagiat, mais non transfert d'idées. Pradon ne récolta apparemment […] que des éléments – structuraux ou verbaux – superficiels, qu'il encastra dans une tragédie elle-même toute en surface'.[656] She identifies in the text occasional 'tournures mélodieuses qui ne manquent pas de grâce'[657] but her overall evaluation is rather dismissive: Pradon 'offrait tout simplement à son public une intrigue amoureuse, d'un ton moderne et français, où la situation initiale se résolvait au moyen d'une longue série de violents rebondissements dont la vivacité semble avoir plu un certain temps'.[658] The quarrel developed further with the involvement of Boileau in support of Racine and became known as 'L'Affaire des sonnets' following an exchange of hostile verses. Viala identifies a contributing factor as 'Une rivalité de groupes socio-littéraire, le salon de Bouillon, Pradon et Mme Deshoulières, avec le soutien du Duc de Nevers, apparaissant comme des Modernes et galants, Boileau comme chef de file des Anciens'.[659] This influence of the salons in partisan support of their members would extend the controversy.

Alone of the three case study authors, Boursault was never admitted to the Académie and so his use of the strategy of direct competition forms a useful point of comparison. As part of the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, Boursault wrote *Le Portrait du Peintre*, which is an almost direct reversal of Molière's *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* and which appeared at the Hôtel de Bourgogne shortly after *La Critique*. A detailed comparison of the main aspects of the two plays may be helpful to illustrate the extent of and the principal elements within direct competition. Building on unpublished research by this author,[660] it is possible to demonstrate some key similarities and to show that large portions of Boursault's play are a direct mirroring of *La Critique*. Both plays share the same basic plot and both plays develop with characters arriving throughout and renewing the argument with each arrival until all are on stage for the final scene when the debate is at its most intense. In both plays similar use is made of three characters pretending to be presenting an opposing voice; one of the 'sensible' women sarcastically agrees with everything the Marquise says, thus Elise's mockery of Climène in *La Critique* is echoed directly in Clitie's mockery of Oriane in *Le Portrait*. Both plays make use of the same character types: the sensible hostess and her playful female relation, a gallant young man, a comical Marquis, a ridiculous nobleman and a jealous author, who is initially reluctant

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[656] Pradon, *Phèdre et Hippolyte,* ed. by Olive Classe, p.XLIII.
[657] Pradon, pp.XI-XII.
[658] Pradon, p.XLIII.
[659] Viala, *Querelle des deux Phèdre,* Banque de données AGON (2014), 'Enjeux'.
[660] This section draws on research for my MA Thesis: Michael James Foulkes, *The reasons behind La Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes* (Durham University, 2013).

to give his views. Although Boursault has added a second ridiculous nobleman (and given him the name of Molière's chief supporter in *La Critique*), Dorante is for most of the play merely repeating the Count; for instance, they base their refusal to listen on the fact that the other is not listening ('Moy? Je n'écoute pas si le Comte n'écoute'). The Count and Dorante's singing is also a direct echo of the Marquis's response, in *La Critique*, to any serious argument which is put to him and serves the same purpose as the farcical responses in *La Critique*, which prevent boredom but also hinder reasoned debate. Both plays share the same stock characters of servants who provide comic elements and are openly rude and disobedient to the 'ridiculous' characters, showing that if lowly servants will not take them seriously then neither should the audience. The scene in *La Critique* when Galopin claims his mistress is out, even though the Marquis can see her, is echoed by the stubborn ignorance of the servant announcing Dorante. Both plays end in a similar way with the announcement that dinner is ready and in both plays the characters agree that a play should be written about their discussion.

This analysis provides clear evidence for imitation in all aspects of the play and may illustrate a double purpose: criticism of Molière's original play, veiling the second function, which is that of a little-known author copying Molière closely, and thereby trying to outdo him. Because the plays have very few differences in form, the comparison between the quality of the writing is obvious and, if Boursault did succeed in writing a play that attracted a larger audience than Molière's, he would gain popular acclaim. Thus the most obvious motive for Boursault's involvement in this controversy was that he was at an early stage in his career and wanted to get his name known quickly. Opportunistically entering into direct competition with a famous writer could have been a deliberate and strategic move calculated to generate publicity, as Emile Colombey concludes: '*Le Portrait du Peintre* […] mit brusquement en vedette le nom de Boursault'.[661]

The influence of the acting companies has been seen to be important in other examples of direct competition and may have played a role here. Croft, noting that *Le Portrait du Peintre* was premiered at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, suggests that Boursault's motivation may have been 'plaire aux comédiens de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, à qui la troupe de Molière faisait ombrage'.[662] There may well have been a further source of competition between the two plays, which would also have increased audience interest. Although there is no direct contemporary evidence to support Roger Duchêne's claim that *Le Portrait* shows actors 'en train de parodier ceux d'une

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[661] Boursault, *Lettres à Babet*, pp.4-5.
[662] Croft, *Boursault,* pp.78-79.

troupe rivale',[663] it could be that the actors from the Hôtel de Bourgogne may have used the play as a chance to imitate their rivals in Molière's troupe. Duchêne highlights the actor playing the Comte who, while claiming that a play can only be appreciated when seen on stage, replicates Arnolphe's 'Ouf' and therefore attempts to copy Molière's acting style.[664] The similarities between lines in *La Critique* and Boursault's play would certainly have been more amusing if the actors in *Le Portrait* impersonated the original actors from Molière's troupe. Scene 1 of *L'Impromptu de Versailles* also contains the line 'ayant entrepris de vous [Molière] peindre' implying that Molière had been impersonated during the *querelle*, probably in *Le Portrait*. There does not seem to have been any other attempt to depict Molière prior to *L'Impromptu*, and the similarities between the two plays would have meant that the audience would be likely to recognise any attempt to impersonate Molière.

Le Portrait du Peintre represents Boursault's only, though significant, use of direct competition, and he used it only as part of a wider polemical quarrel. Since Boursault never became a member of the Académie française, there is no symbolic moment of his acceptance by his fellow writers that can be put forward as an explanation for why he chose to abandon direct competition. It is true that this tactic appears to have become less common as the century went on, though Boyer and Thomas Corneille were still making use of it in 1678 and Regnard, du Fresny and Dancourt were in direct competition in 1696. The most plausible explanation is that Boursault found the tactic to be both ineffective and a challenge to his skills as a playwright. His play was less successful than Molière's and so he did not make the gains he might have anticipated in economic and cultural capital. In the examples of direct competition examined earlier, some of the elements of similarity included the title, the plot, the names of characters and the source material. However, the analysis of *La Critique* and *Le Portrait* demonstrates a significant difference. Boursault was not using and adapting the plot of another play but was closely following the format of Molière's play in a mirror version to refute the points Molière makes. This required Boursault to adhere to the framework very closely and he had to try to make his own text as amusing as Molière's in order to appeal to the audience. For maximum impact Boursault needed to write *Le Portrait* as soon as possible after *La Critique* was performed, so, in addition to the challenge of the task he set himself, he had to meet this deadline.

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[663] Roger Duchêne, *Molière* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), p.336.
[664] Duchêne, p.337.

Authors involved in direct competition were often at pains to point out that, although the title and main characters in their play may be similar to those of a rival, the details of the story are quite different and might be based on a different historical account. This would have demonstrated the ideal of the *homme de lettres* who is knowledgeable about different historical or legendary sources for the story he wishes to dramatise: Racine acknowledges that he has taken inspiration for *Alexandre* 'de plusieurs auteurs', including Quintus Curtius and Justinius.[665] However, involvement in such literary competition would not have shown the author as being particularly *honnête* since it suggests ambition and a lack of deference to others by indulging in various forms of imitation. Both Quinault and Racine avoid mentioning in their prefaces the fact that their plays are competing with other authors, an apparent attempt to downplay their involvement. Nevertheless, competing with another playwright (if the doubled play was more successful) would have allowed an author to gain vocational capital amongst his peers and fame with the theatre audience, even if this fame could be tinged with notoriety.

Motivation for involvement in direct competition appears to have been many-layered. There is clear evidence that the acting troupes encouraged authors to 'double' plays and a playwright would need to win the favour of such companies, especially early in his career. Writers as well as actors would value the interest and publicity generated by direct competition. They would have recognised that it provided a vehicle whereby the audience could choose which play they preferred, so that, if they wished to compare themselves with a rival out of jealousy or even genuinely wished to emulate a successful peer, they could leave the audience to judge the more successful play and hope to gain greater renown as a result. Writers appear to have employed direct competition as a publicity tactic mainly in the early stages of their careers. Once their cultural capital had been 'objectified' in the form of their successful plays and their vocational competence had been recognised as legitimate by their peers and their audiences (particularly by what could be likened to the 'institutional recognition'[666] conferred by the Académie), they could then focus on acquiring other forms of capital.

The involvement of Boursault, Racine and Quinault in polemics
Polemics represent an obvious type of literary controversy engaged in by writers at this period. Rather than competing with other playwrights through imitation or plagiarism of their works, writers would openly attack other authors and aggressively criticise their works in diatribes. The resultant publicity could be expected to increase the visibility of the writer in the literary

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[665] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, pp.179-80.
[666] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.248.

field but could also polarise opinion, meaning that authors ran the risk of being condemned for using this strategy. The *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* is a prime example of writers using this type of quarrel for their personal profit and previous research by this author on the reasons behind this quarrel will form the basis of a detailed analysis of Boursault's involvement in polemics.[667] Croft discusses Boursault's reputation, both with his contemporaries and to the present day, for involvement in literary controversy: 'Il est indéniable que ces conflits ont contribué à faire connaître l'auteur y compris, probablement, à son époque'.[668] Gevrey confirms this: 'Dans les premiers temps, la réputation de Boursault s'est cristallisée autour d'écrits polémiques ou satiriques qui ont fait de lui un témoin de la vie théâtrale et littéraire de son époque', querying, 'le jeune provincial avait-il vocation à devenir « gladiateur de plume » ?'[669] The key quarrels in which Boursault was involved will be examined to explore the rationale and effectiveness of this strategy and to consider if this could be seen as part of a wider planned approach. Boursault's use of this strategy will be compared to that of Quinault and Racine, who were not involved in polemics in the same way, to contrast their possible motivations and the impact of their differing strategies.

The first quarrel in which Boursault was involved was the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, which lasted from 1662 until 1664. It was not typical of literary quarrels at the time, since it was carried out in the theatres, whereas previously polemical debates had taken the form of pamphlets, letters or prefaces aimed at winning over academic critics and members of the Académie française. By using plays designed to gain the approval of the theatre audiences, authors had a greater opportunity for financial reward and for wider acclaim than that associated with the academic renown offered by the *doctes*. Hénin identifies Molière's original approach in *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*: 'loin de répliquer à ses adversaires par de pesantes démonstrations, il le fait par des comédies'.[670] Both Dandrey and Hélène Merlin-Kajman underline the unusual nature of the quarrel by referring to the audience as witnesses in a court case, the theatre itself representing the courtroom and the verdict being delivered immediately by their laughter, not after lengthy debate: '[Molière] prenant solennellement le public à témoin, transforme la scène théâtrale en tribunal'.[671] All three scholars agree that Molière's innovation marked a key development in the importance of approval by the theatre audience. Dandrey

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[667] Foulkes, '*The reasons behind La Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes*'.
[668] Croft, p.76.
[669] Gevrey, p.11.
[670] Hénin, 'Introduction', p.6.
[671] Dandrey, 'Molière Polémiste? La Chicane et la prouesse', in *Les Querelles Dramatiques à l'Age Classique XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles*, pp.85-96; Hélène Merlin-Kajman, 'Indignité comique et public en débat', in *Les Querelles Dramatiques à l'Age Classique XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle*, pp.97-114 (108).

discusses the public's sanction of the essence of the comedy: 'le rire […] est le but légitime de la comédie; le rire qui ne se conteste pas, parce que le public s'y entend mieux et mérite le respect plus que tous les doctes en corps'.[672]

Although this revolutionary step was undoubtedly Molière's inspiration, it should be noted that Boursault was the first playwright to follow him in this direction. Forestier and Bourqui underline Boursault's innovative response: 'c'était la première fois qu'on prétendait faire en plein théâtre la satire directe d'un contemporain'.[673] The specific nature of this literary quarrel may have appealed to Boursault. Hostiou sees it as a creative process for Molière – 'C'est la première fois qu'une pièce de théâtre est entièrement consacrée à débattre d'une autre pièce, et à faire rire'[674] – and Boursault may have been inspired to follow this process to try out his own abilities in a new format as well as in competing with the greatest comic author of the day. He was very soon copied by other authors during the *querelle*: Molière was also attacked by Donneau de Visé and Montfleury *fils*, who provide further examples of less well-established authors seeking to use quarrels as a means of increasing their notoriety and economic capital.

Despite Deierkauf-Holsboer's claim that '[nous] ignorons la raison pour laquelle Boursault prend part à cette lutte',[675] several possible reasons have been suggested. Scholars have tended to quote Boursault's granddaughter, who, in her introduction to a posthumous edition of his works, claims 'qu'on l'obligea, presque malgré lui, à faire la Critique d'une des plus belles Comédies de Molière, qui est *L'Ecole des Femmes*'. The use of 'presque' suggests that Boursault was not wholly opposed to the idea, perhaps because he was aware of the possible financial and reputational benefits he could gain from attacking Molière. Hiacinthe Boursault also says that he was forced to 'obéir à ceux qui l'y avoient engagé, et à qui il ne pouvoit rien refuser'.[676] This should be treated with caution, as she may well have been attempting to downplay her grandfather's role in attacking Molière. She does not name those whom she claims pressured her father, leaving room for speculation as to their identities or even existence. Pierre Mélèse suggests that this pressure may have come from Pierre Corneille.[677] Certainly Boursault is believed to have enjoyed a close relationship with both Pierre and Thomas Corneille. Taillandier says that Boursault was referred to by Pierre Corneille as 'mon enfant'

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[672] Dandrey, 'Molière Polémiste?', p.92.
[673] Forestier and Bourqui, p.194.
[674] Hostiou, *Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes,* Banque de données AGON (2015), 'Enjeux' (2).
[675] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne,* II, pp.111-12.
[676] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, 'Avertissement' [p. a vi *v*].
[677] Mélèse, *Un Homme de Lettres au Temps du Grand Roi, Donneau de Visé, Fondateur du Mercure Galant* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1936), p.1.

and Boursault declared himself a disciple and friend of the Corneilles in 1653 ('un disciple toujours prêt à épouser leurs querelles avec passion').[678] Croft refers to an additional social pressure: 'la possibilité que les comédiens et les salons précieux aient pu eux aussi influencer l'auteur. C'est sans doute le cas, si l'on considère que plusieurs des hôtesses et auteurs que Boursault fréquentent [*sic*] sont hostiles à Molière'.[679] Boursault needed to build connections in the literary field and increase his social capital. He already had links in the *salons précieux* and with the Corneille brothers and might have seen involvement in the *querelle* as a way of cementing these useful contacts; moreover, he could have relied on them for protection in any counter-attack by Molière.

Boursault's reaction to the suggestion by Molière that he was not the author of the *Le Portrait du Peintre* is, however, a reason for casting doubt upon the idea that Corneille pressured Boursault into responding in this way. In *L'Impromptu de Versailles* Molière suggests that *Le Portrait* was the work of many hands presented under the name of 'un auteur sans réputation'.[680] However, in the preface to the published edition, Boursault vehemently maintained his authorship of the play. If it had been written to defend Corneille, or even primarily to criticise Molière, Boursault would have been less concerned about Molière's claim that he had not written the play. If Boursault was motivated by a desire to increase his reputation it would have been vital that the public knew that it was he who was attacking Molière, without the contributions of other writers. This aspect of the *querelle* may illustrate Boursault's readiness to take offence: Gevrey describes him as having 'un tempérament quelque peu susceptible'. She suggests another possible motive for his involvement: 'Boursault […] croit se reconnaître dans le personnage du poète pédant Lysidas, qui reproche à Molière de ne pas respecter les règles, d'employer des mots bas et de ridiculiser Arnolphe par un comique « trop outré »': so *Le Portrait* could be a personal response to a perceived insult.[681] Mélèse also believes that Boursault may have felt that he had been depicted as Lysidas in *La Critique*.[682] However, Georges Mongrédien refutes this idea: since Boursault had had no obvious contact with Molière before *Le Portrait,* Molière would have had no reason to attack him.[683] René des Granges agrees that there is no reason why Molière would have wished to attack Boursault unprovoked, since

[678] Taillandier, p.31.
[679] Croft, *Boursault*, p.78.
[680] Molière, I, p.691.
[681] Gevrey, pp.11-12.
[682] Mélèse, *Donneau de Visé,* p.37.
[683] *La Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes*: *Comédies*, ed. by Georges Mongrédien, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1971), I, p.90.

he scarcely knew him, 's'il ne l'ignorait tout à fait'.[684] There does not appear to have been any lasting enmity between Boursault and Molière: Boursault describes Molière, after his death, as an 'ornement qu'il [le théâtre français] ne recouvrera jamais'.[685] Taillandier claims that Boursault did not continue the quarrel after *L'Ecole des Femmes* because '[il] avait trop d'esprit pour cela, et en même temps trop de bonté'.[686]

In this review of possible motives for Boursault's involvement in the *querelle*, it is interesting to speculate on a less obvious reason proposed by Croft: 'On pourrait aussi envisager que l'écrivain [Boursault] ait accepté de participer à une cabale orchestrée par Molière ou ses proches afin de publiciser la pièce de Molière et de lui donner la possibilité de se défendre'.[687] This would represent a cynical move on Molière's part but is in line with Forestier and Bourqui's view (discussed earlier) that the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* was a deliberate invention of Molière's. It also accords with Hostiou's view of

> la polémique suivant une logique d'auto-promotion: en offrant sa *Critique* au public, il [Molière] s'expose à recevoir des répliques et suscite l'inflation de textes métathéâtraux dont la fonction polémique cède progressivement à une logique purement publicitaire (pour Molière, la querelle est un moyen de faire parler de lui; pour les autres, notamment les jeunes auteurs peu connus, participer à la querelle permet de piquer la curiosité du public sur un thème à la mode).[688]

Self-promotion through the publicity of involvement in the *querelle* is likely to have been a key underlying motive: Croft notes that 'la comédie suscite des réactions, ce qui était bien sûr le but recherché'.[689] She provides details of contemporary reactions to *Le Portrait*: Montfleury's dialogue in *L'Impromptu de l'Hotel de Condé* suggesting popular approval of Boursault's play; Le Camus's praise in his *Refrain sur la Contre-Critique À Monsieur Boursault;* and the fact that Molière took on the character of Boursault in *L'Impromptu de Versailles.* These examples confirm the effectiveness of his strategy in attracting public attention.[690] Ada Gandini says that *Le Portrait* was the most important of Boursault's plays to date and that it was 'la seule de cet auteur qui ait fait du bruit'.[691]

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[684] René des Granges, *La Querelle de Molière et de Boursault* (Paris: A. Charles, 1899), p.18.
[685] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.295.
[686] Taillandier, p.22.
[687] Croft, *Boursault,* pp.77-78.
[688] Hostiou, *Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes*, 'Enjeux', (4).
[689] Croft, p.284.
[690] Croft, pp.285-86.
[691] Ada Gandini, 'Boursault et Boileau', *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 15 (1908), 425-29 (p.428).

If Boursault's main aim had been to criticise Molière, or, less plausibly, to defend Corneille from perceived slights in Molière's play, it would have been more effective to appeal to the *doctes* rather than to the public, since, at that time, the *doctes* were regarded as the authorities on matters of literary debate. If, however, Boursault was trying to make a name for himself, then appealing to the *doctes* would have been less successful than the route he chose. It appears that Boursault entered the quarrel with Molière voluntarily, even if he had the backing of the Corneilles and the salons and the encouragement of the actors, and he may well have had a fixed strategy of using this overtly critical approach as a way of attracting an audience to his own play. Boursault's desire to use the polemic as a means of self-promotion may explain one of the 'mysteries' in the *querelle*. In *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, Molière appeals for his private life to be left out of the *querelle*, and specifically mentions Boursault in this context; however, in the published version of Boursault's play, there is nothing unduly personal. Roger Duchêne suggests either that Molière was misinformed about the play, or that Boursault edited the play before publication in response to Molière's plea.[692] The latter seems more likely, as Donneau de Visé, Chevalier and Robinet all suggest that Molière had seen Boursault's play and would not have been misinformed, and Donneau de Visé, in *La Vengeance des Marquis*, includes a crude song about Madeleine Béjart, which he claimed had been used in Boursault's play. If true, this would suggest that Boursault was prepared to use scandal and gossip in an attempt to attract a larger audience, increasing his economic capital, but also potentially damaging his image as an *honnête homme*. By the time the play was published, the impact of the scandal would have been less and Boursault, concentrating more on his image, could have removed the contentious song. It is also possible that Boursault may have removed any particularly offensive elements from the final published version of *Le Portrait* simply because they would be humorous on stage, or could be excused as such, but would not have been entertaining in print. As Gabriel Guéret noted, just six years after this *querelle*, 'Une pièce peut être bonne pour les comédiens, et ne valoir rien pour les libraires'.[693]

Boursault's involvement in the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* can be seen to be based on a number of factors: it is likely that he was encouraged by a rival acting company and by his social contacts to engage in a polemic against Molière and this would have also contributed to making his name known, but the choice of a mirror play as the vehicle for the attack was Boursault's own. As was discussed earlier, the creation of *Le Portrait* is likely to have been a

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[692] Duchêne, p.353.
[693] Gabriel Guéret, 'La Promenade de Saint Cloud', in François Bruys, *Mémoires historiques, critiques, et littéraires*, 2 vols (Paris: Jean-Thomas Hérissant, 1751), II, p.205.

challenge for the young playwright (though probably a welcome one for an ambitious author); it could be attributed to a desire to rival Molière in imitating his innovative approach and thus implies a desire for self-promotion. None of the other explanations for his involvement seem as convincing. His attempt to copy Molière's play and the suggestions of scandalous elements imply that Boursault was attempting to attract a large audience to a controversial play, rather than to express a serious critical judgement on Molière's play, so the sincerity of his opposition to the message of *L'Ecole des Femmes* may be doubted.

Boursault's next involvement in a literary polemic came in 1669 with a play entitled *La Satire des Satires*. The title was a reference to Boileau's *Les Satires*. In defiance of usual practice, Boileau had named the authors he was satirising. Pascal Debailly describes how 'la satire nominale enclenche un processus de honte publique, où les contemporains sont invités à participer à la sanction du ridicule'[694] which then unleashed a major *querelle*. He goes on to explain that this practice 'transgresse une limite à la fois sociale et esthétique'.[695] By naming individuals, 'la satire est assimilée à l'injure'[696] and those whom Boileau attacked replied in equally defamatory publications. Debailly summarises the considerable backlash of responses, including the most extreme: the Duc de Montausier (who was Chapelain's *protecteur*) 'ne décolère pas contre le poète qu'il veut envoyer «aux galères»' and Pierre Bayle who 'assimile cette forme d'expression à un crime qui déstabilise l'État.'[697] Boileau was at an early stage in his career when he adopted the strategy and it can be argued that he cannot have failed to foresee the impact of his decision to identify the individuals he was satirising: he was using literary controversy for self-promotion and succeeded in achieving considerable notoriety. For Boursault, this controversial move explains the popularity of the work: 'chacun les [Boileau's verses] achette/Moins pour voir ce qu'il fait, que les Gens qu'il maltraitte'.[698] At least some of Boileau's contemporaries felt that he was using controversy to make his name known, much as Boursault himself did. The poet Saint-Pavin describes Boileau as

> Jaloux des plus fameux poètes,
> Dans ses Satires indiscrètes
> Il choque leur gloire aujourd'hui;
>
> En vérité, je lui pardonne,
> S'il n'eût mal parlé de personne,

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[694] Pascal Debailly, 'Nicolas Boileau et la Querelle des Satires', *Littératures classiques*, 68 (2009), 131-41 (p.144).
[695] Debailly, p.132.
[696] Debailly, p.135.
[697] Debailly, pp.138-39.
[698] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, p.23.

On n'eût jamais parlé de lui.[699]

Several possible explanations have been suggested for the quarrel between Boursault and Boileau. Given Boileau's friendship with Molière, and his defence of him during the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, it could be argued, as Irailh does, that this quarrel was merely an extension of the quarrel between Boursault and Molière.[700] However, Gandini refutes this argument, pointing out that Boursault was not the only playwright involved in the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*.[701] Furthermore, the gap between the two quarrels remains to be explained. Croft considers that '*La Satire des Satires* est clairement motivée par un désir de vengeance, mais rien ne permet d'établir si Boursault se fait le porte-parole de tous ou si cette vengeance relève d'un projet personnel': Boursault may have been concerned for the reputation of his literary friends, many of whom Boileau attacked in his verses.[702] Boursault may equally well have been provoked into responding to Boileau's mockery of him in the *Satires*. Boileau refers to Boursault several times and over the course of several years.[703] However, Boursault appears to have been unmoved, certainly by the first attack, as he wrote in a letter in 1666: 'moi qui ne me soucie pas de lui rendre dédains pour dédains, j'aime mieux ne pas lui répondre'.[704] This may simply have been a move designed to make Boursault appear as an *honnête homme* who is not offended by the opinions of others and is refusing to sink to Boileau's level. Gandini, however, suggests that Boursault was happy to let the first attack pass, but found the second attack in 1668 too much: 'une attaque redoublée avec autant d'acharnement rendait une riposte nécessaire'.[705] This would explain the apparently delayed response from Boursault; however, it is not completely convincing, since there is no evidence that Boursault felt more wounded by the second attack than he had done by the first. Moreover, in the 'Au Lecteur' of *La Satire des Satires*, Boursault says that if Boileau attacks him again, he will not respond.[706] This does not seem to correspond with the idea of a man who had been sufficiently wounded by previous attacks that he had responded at length to them.

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[699] Denis Sanguin de Saint-Pavin, *Poésies,* ed. by Nicholas Hammond (Paris: Garnier, 2012), pp.57-58.
[700] Irailh, I, p.317.
[701] Gandini, p.427.
[702] Croft, *Boursault,* p.82.
[703] In Boileau's seventh satire, which appeared in 1666, Boursault is described as a 'froid rimeur', and he is twice mentioned in the ninth satire, published in 1668, firstly (and ironically) as appearing 'comme un soleil en nos ans', and later as a poet who bores people.
[704] Boursault, *Lettres à Babet*, p.136.
[705] Gandini, p.427.
[706] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, [p. a ix.]

A further possible explanation can be found in an examination of Boursault's career at this point. His last play had been performed in 1665, and during 1665 and 1666 he had been working as a gazetteer for various nobles. The following year he published two poems, but does not appear to have published anything at all during 1668. It could therefore be argued that, rather than being deeply offended by Boileau's attack, Boursault was merely looking for a suitable pretence for a new quarrel. This would explain the contradiction between his refusal to become involved in 1666, when he had a reliable source of income as a gazetteer and needed to present himself as an author conforming to the behaviour expected by the nobility, and his later involvement when he would have been more concerned with writing a play that could attract a large audience. It would also explain why he said he would not be drawn into further arguments, since not only would this enable him to portray himself as the morally superior *honnête homme* if Boileau chose to respond, but also he had no real quarrel with Boileau. Evidence that there was no lasting ill-feeling between them is provided by Boileau, who describes them as 'amis à outrance' in a letter of 1687.[707] As with the reconciliation with Molière, this suggests Boursault became involved in a quarrel not primarily from personal grievance, but mainly from motives of self-promotion and in support of his literary friends.

It could be argued that Boursault had grounds for criticism and he rebukes Boileau for naming the individuals he is satirising, claiming that Boileau's works represent 'une Libelle diffamatoire'.[708] However, this should be placed in the context of an author who felt his opponent was behaving hypocritically, since when Boursault's play was announced, Boileau asked for the play to be banned, claiming that it would be libellous.[709] This was only partially successful; performance was banned but Boursault was still allowed to publish his play. Boursault's preface could therefore be seen as criticism of Boileau for naming his targets, yet being afraid to be named himself. In his 'Au Lecteur', in an attempt to portray himself as an *honnête homme*, Boursault includes himself among the 'gens raisonnables'. He refers to those named in the *Satires* as having 'toutes les qualitez requises pour faire d'aussi honnestes Gens qu'il y en ait au Monde', while apparently modestly excluding himself.[710] He seeks to limit any damage done to his image by stating that he will not become involved in a further polemic and repeatedly mentions the fact that he has no desire to write anything libellous about Boileau. He adopts an apparently balanced tone – 'si le peu qu'on y remarque de méchant me faisoit

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[707] Boileau, p.745.
[708] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, [p.a vii.]
[709] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, [p.a vii *v*].
[710] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, [p.a vii].

condamner tout ce qu'il y a de bon' – speaking of 'la délicatesse de sa Plume' and avoiding personalised attacks, almost offering advice so that Boileau would be encouraged to make 'un meilleur usage de son Génie'.[711]

As a further counter-argument to the idea that Boursault was personally offended by Boileau's *Satires*, it is worth examining the play's genre. Although, as previously discussed, Molière had used comedy to express his own literary theories, it was still far more common to do so in a pamphlet and that was the medium adopted by other writers in this quarrel. Taillandier feels that parts of Boursault's play would be more suited to a 'brochure intitulée *Remarques, Jugements, Observations,* suivant l'usage du temps', and that these passages are 'terriblement languissantes à la scène'.[712] He also says that the play as a whole is 'un essai de critique littéraire sous la forme du dialogue […] [et Boursault] aurait pu écrire en prose et directement ce qu'il pensait des premières satires de Boileau'.[713] This therefore suggests that Boursault was not primarily interested in successfully conveying an argument but wanted to use the mode of a public performance in order to attract a larger audience.

The next literary quarrel in which Boursault was involved was as a consequence of his play *La Comédie sans titre* which mocked *Le Mercure Galant*, of which Donneau de Visé was editor. Camusat's near-contemporary account of *Le Mercure* claims that while the novelty of the periodical was sufficient for its initial success, the later response of the readers varied: 'les gens du monde à qui tout plait pourvû qu'ils se desenniuent' continued to read the journal; however, 'de gens choisis […] passerent de l'estime au dernier mépris'.[714] Taillandier, however, notes 'quelle que fût la médiocrité du journaliste et de son œuvre, la curiosité publique s'y attacha'.[715] There are no obvious motives for Boursault's attack. There is no evidence of enemity between Donneau de Visé and Boursault: both had attacked Molière and both were friends of Pierre and Thomas Corneille. Nor did *Le Mercure Galant* represent competition for Boursault, who frequently worked as a gazetteer: Boursault was working for private individuals with specific commissions, whereas *Le Mercure Galant* was intended for a reading public of mostly bourgeois and especially female readers. There is also no evidence that *Le Mercure Galant* had been critical of Boursault. Like Boileau earlier, Donneau de Visé learned that a polemical play by Boursault was to be performed and attempted to ban it. He had less success than Boileau,

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[711] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, [p.a vi and p.a viii].
[712] Taillandier, p.60.
[713] Taillandier, p.57.
[714] Camusat, II, p.200.
[715] Taillandier, p.136.

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however, and was only able to ban the play's name. Croft states 'La comédie, qui portait à l'origine le nom de *Mercure galant*, mise sur la célébrité du périodique pour piquer la curiosité du public'.[716] It therefore appeared as *La Comédie sans titre*, a deliberately intriguing title. As had been the case in his quarrel with Boileau, the controversy caused by the court case could have resulted in extra publicity for Boursault's play, particularly in literary circles. It was premiered in March 1683 and was an undoubted success, as it was performed 80 times consecutively.[717] Croft confirms its success: 'l'œuvre de Boursault figure parmi les pièces les plus rentables et celles qui ont enregistré le plus grand nombre de spectateurs'.[718]

The authorship of *La Comédie sans titre* was originally attributed to a certain R. Poisson, an actor in the Comédie-Française, though Boursault publicly claimed his rights as author when the work was published in 1694. Croft suggests that actors in the company knew the real author and Dominique Labbé refers to a recognised 'système de la plume de l'ombre'. He discusses possible reasons for Boursault's not acknowledging his authorship earlier (in the 'Au Lecteur' Boursault simply refers to 'Monsieur Poisson, que je priay de la mettre sous son nom, pour quelques raisons que j'avois, et qui ont cessé'[719]) and concludes that because Boursault was employed as a tax collector from 1672-88 he would be constrained in the nature of works with which he might be expected to be associated: 'certaine fonction officielle – et le statut social attaché – n'interdisait pas toute production intellectuelle mais celle-ci devait avoir une certaine noblesse, ce qui n'était pas le cas de la comédie légère dont le public parisien était friand'.[720] Boursault completed the uncontroversial play, *Marie Stuart*, under his own name during this period.

Boursault, as in his other quarrels, was keen to limit the damage to his image as an *honnête homme* by pointing out that his aim was not to be offensive: 'seulement de satiriser un nombre de Gens […] qui prétendent estre en droit d'occuper dans Le Mercure Galant la place qu'y pourroient legitimement tenir des personnes d'un veritable merite'.[721] La Porte describes it as a 'satyre ingénieuse & agréable, non pas contre le *Mercure*, mais contre ceux qui y briguent une place'.[722] Boursault claimed that he was not attacking the editor personally and there are

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[716] Croft, *Boursault,* p.299.
[717] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, p.b i *v*.
[718] Croft, p.302.
[719] Boursault, *La Comédie sans titre* (Paris: Guignard, 1694), p.v.
[720] Dominique Labbé, 'Les Plumes de l'Ombre: Molière a-t-il écrit ses pieces?' (Université Inter-Ages du Dauphiné, 2014), p.6.
[721] Boursault, *Comédie sans titre,* 'Au Lecteur' [p.a iv].
[722] La Porte, II, p.82.

no direct references to Donneau de Visé. This supports the theory that Boursault's prime motivation was to attack something that was in vogue, which the gazette certainly was, in order to gain maximum publicity. Gevrey describes how 'la comédie porte le journalisme au théâtre; elle passe en revue les catégories de lecteurs du périodique et raille leur soif de publicité'.[723] Boursault makes fun of the people who are eager to have things written about themselves in the press and there is implicit criticism, in the suggestion that the *Mercure* is prepared to publish ridiculous stories to satisfy such people. There are implications that the *Mercure* is poorly written and only tells the truth by accident.[724] Overall, readers and contributors are shown to be both foolish and arrogant and, although there is no direct criticism of the *Mercure* or its staff, they are tarnished by association. Boursault may have been particularly interested in the emerging journalistic genre as a topic and he may have wanted to use the medium of comedy to present an amusing case against its excesses. The lengthy initial run of the play suggests that there was value in the tactic that Boursault was pursuing, as Croft confirms that 'la notoriété atteint des proportions que Boursault n'avait vraisemblablement pas anticipées'.[725]

Like Boursault, Racine was clearly alive to the tactic of using literary polemics for publicity purposes and, in the preface to *Bérénice* he says:

> Toutes ces critiques sont le partage de quatre ou cinq petits auteurs infortunés, qui n'ont jamais pu par eux-mêmes exciter la curiosité du public. Ils attendent toujours l'occasion de quelque ouvrage qui réussisse, pour l'attaquer. Non point par jalousie. […] Mais dans l'espérance qu'on se donnera la peine de leur répondre, et qu'on les tirera de l'obscurité où leurs propres ouvrages les auraient laissés toute leur vie.[726]

Paul Fièvre argues that 'la notoriété de Jean Racine est aussi grande que le furent ses disputes et querelles. Celles-ci l'aidèrent à bâtir sa célébrité entre 1664-1677'.[727] As has been seen with his involvement in direct competition and the scandal caused when he gave *Alexandre* to two different troupes, Racine was not afraid of using controversy for his own ends. Hénin argues that Racine 'voit dans la polémique même la preuve du succès', quoting the Preface to *Britannicus* where Racine states of this play: 'Il n'y en a point qui m'ait attiré plus d'applaudissements ni plus de censeurs'.[728] Véroniqe Lochert sees the opportunity offered by the publication of a play as having an important role in literary quarrels and she describes the

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[723] Gevrey, p.18.
[724] Boursault, p.15.
[725] Croft, *Boursault,* p.300.
[726] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.468.
[727] Fièvre, p.199.
[728] Hénin, 'Racine: un Auteur à la Mode?', in *Les Querelles Dramatiques à l'Age Classique XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles*, pp.61-83 (p.65).

preface as a 'lieu polémique'.[729] Racine responds to his critics quite vehemently in his prefaces, in particular those to *Alexandre* and *Britannicus;* they illustrate the evolution of Racine's polemical prefaces. Both plays were initially published separately, before being republished in 1676 as part of Racine's collected works. In both cases the original preface is much more aggressive in its direct response to criticism. For example, in *Alexandre*, Racine specifically mentions that certain points in the play have been criticised, and then defends them, often with a veiled attack on Corneille for committing similar faults. However, in the second edition preface, there is no direct mention of the criticisms; Racine merely clarifies certain points, and there is no attempt to attack other authors. While the points defended in both versions of the preface are the same, the tone of the later preface is much less antagonistic; this may be designed to present him as an *honnête homme* who is calmly responding to criticism. Lochert comments that authors saw later editions as 'l'élaboration d'une œuvre littéraire capable de résister au temps […] la part du discours polémique tend ainsi à reculer'. The original preface to *Britannicus* discusses the first performances of the play and responds in particular to the 'unjust' critical attacks; in the later preface this is replaced by a more neutral tone where Racine 'développe ses propres théories'.[730] Hénin considers that Racine 'utilise la polémique non seulement pour amender ses œuvres, mais aussi pour construire un discours théorique justifiant sa création aux yeux de la postérité'.[731] The preface to *Phèdre* illustrates this: 'Je laisse et aux lecteurs et au temps à décider de son véritable prix'.[732]

Fièvre refers to Racine's prefaces to his tragedies as the 'principales pièces de son corpus polémique' and he describes their function: to explain the choice of the subject and its composition; to justify and respond to criticisms; and sometimes to mount a personal attack 'souvent plus agressive que conclusive'.[733] Hénin describes how Racine, in the preface to *Bérénice*, justifies his approach: '[il] ne s'excuse pas d'avoir contourné les règles pour mieux plaire, mais se vante de les avoir mieux *suivies* pour plaire davantage'.[734] Fièvre notes Racine's caution in avoiding naming his critics – in contrast to Boileau's practice – thereby ensuring that 'ses attaques […] se placent à l'abri de toute condamnation'.[735] The cabal organised against

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[729] Véronique Lochert, '"La Méditation de la Lecture" contre "les Agréments de la Représentation": Lecteurs et Spectateurs dans les Querelles Dramatiques', in *Les Querelles Dramatiques à l'Age Classique XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles*, pp.115-32 (pp.129-30).
[730] Lochert, p.130.
[731] Hénin, 'Racine', p.65.
[732] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.747.
[733] Fièvre, p.208.
[734] Hénin, p.77.
[735] Fièvre, p.209.

Racine's *Phèdre* was followed by an exchange of anonymous sonnets which included defamatory remarks about the Duc de Nevers. According to Fièvre, this placed Racine 'en situation délicate face à un des plus grands du royaume'.[736] Viala states 'on parle de l'affaire en ville, et le bruit circule (le duc d'Aumont, ami du Duc de Nevers, le dit dans un dîner) de faire bastonner Racine'.[737] The situation was saved through the mediation of the Prince de Condé on Racine's behalf but it illustrated the dangers inherent in such polemics and may have affected his desire to become involved in quarrels. He had in fact by this period reached the pinnacle of his career as a playwright: he had accumulated a high volume of vocational capital, was a member of the Académie and had a large royal pension and a position at court. Fièvre argues that while the early phase of Racine's career was marked by quarrels,

> il a ensuite veillé, une fois sa position sociale établie, à éviter les attaques qui auraient mis en avant le statut social ou l'appartenance religieuse en prenant soin de circonscrire ses propos au plan esthétique et au sein du champ littéraire.[738]

He attributes Racine's 'intense activité polémique' to his ambition and describes 'une trajectoire, complexe, mais déterminée, d'une rapidité hors de commun et où la scansion régulière par la querelle est un moyen de préserver l'œuvre et le capital symbolique et social conquis par ses succès'.[739]

The contrast in the case study authors' involvement in polemics is perhaps most apparent in reviewing Quinault's experience. Boursault's opportunistic and partisan involvement in literary controversies and Racine's querulous personality are quite distinct from Quinault's reluctance to engage in polemics. Quinault was attacked in Boileau's *Satires,* as was Boursault. Irailh explains the cause of Boileau's attack as his objection to Quinault's tragedies being considered equal to those of Racine: 'Il décria celles de Quinault, le représenta comme un versificateur doucereux & détestable, plus occupé de la rime que de la raison.' Irailh describes Quinault's distress at the vehemence of the satires ('un chagrin mortel') and then because he was by nature 'foible & timide, il eut recours aux loix' to attempt to put a stop to the satire and to have his name removed but he was unsuccessful and 'son ennemi l'en insulta plus cruellement'. Irailh's judgement is that 'cette persécution violente contre Quinault & la douceur naturelle de son caractère, qui ressembloit à celle de ses vers, furent cause qu'il abandonna la tragédie pour l'opéra'.[740] Instead of retaliating with a vitriolic response as did many other of Boileau's targets,

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[736] Fièvre, p.206.
[737] Viala, *Querelle des deux Phèdre,* Synopsis.
[738] Fièvre, pp.209-210.
[739] Fièvre, p.210.
[740] Irailh, I, pp. 324-25.

'Quinault, as ever, did not reply', as Brooks notes, continuing, 'others rallied to his cause, none more sincerely, it seems, than Boursault'.[741] However, like Boursault, Quinault was later reconciled with Boileau. Quinault's reluctance to engage in polemics is noted by another near-contemporary, Boscheron. He describes Quinault as an *honnête homme* who was 'complaisant sans bassesse […] jamais ne parloit mal de personne'. He refers directly to Quinault's guarded view of satire: 'Il aimoit la Satire, mais il la vouloit fine & délicate. Il ne pouvoit souffrir qu'elle éclatât ni qu'elle outrageât'.[742]

Quinault was involved in the *Querelle d'Alceste* following the performance in 1673 of the second of his and Lully's *tragédies en musique*, although he appears to have been engaged more on the periphery than as a direct participant. Hostiou explains the basis of the quarrel as a reaction against the nature of the genre:

> On reproche à l'opéra de s'emparer de sources habituellement réservées aux auteurs du théâtre parlé, et de les traiter avec trop de liberté et de luxe. L'appellation de « tragédie » provoque un malentendu et prête l'opéra à des comparaisons avec les tragédies littéraires, qui conduisent à condamner l'opéra qui ne respecte pas la règle des unités, et multiplie les machines et les merveilles contraires à la vraisemblance.[743]

An anonymous *Critique d'Alceste* (attributed to Charles Perrault) appeared in 1674 to defend Quinault against 'les critiques qui jugeaient le livret ennuyeux et qui trouvaient que la conduite du sujet était «misérable» et que les vers […] «faisaient pitié»'.[744] Racine argues in his preface to *Iphigénie* that *Alceste* is not faithful to the classical model and seeks to refute the points made in its defence in the *Critique*: 'J'ai choisi la plus importante de leurs objections pour leur montrer que j'ai raison'.[745] Once again, Quinault did not take part in the polemics. Brooks notes Quinault's reluctance: 'not once in his career did he respond to personal attacks'.[746] Quinault's reportedly non-combative nature perhaps made him reluctant to take part in lengthy and personal diatribes and he may have wished to avoid the risk to his social capital which could result from involvement in literary controversy. In contrast, according to Fièvre, 'les querelles de Racine sont au cœur de son dispositif personnel de réussite sociale',[747] while Boursault's polemical tendencies are summarised by Chloé Le Vaguerès:

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[741] Brooks, p.306.
[742] Boscheron, p.10.
[743] Hostiou, *Querelle d'Alceste,* Banque de données AGON (2014), 'Enjeux' (3).
[744] Quinault, *Alceste: suivi de la Querelle d'Alceste*, ed. by William Brooks, Buford Norman and Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1994), p.xii.
[745] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.671.
[746] Brooks, p.78.
[747] Fièvre, p.210.

les attaques de Boursault ne furent jamais féroces et il ne garda aucune rancune de celles qu'on lui fit. Il reconnut au contraire rapidement la supériorité de ses adversaires lorsqu'elle existait de manière évidente. Il sut mettre un terme à des luttes dont il avait conscience qu'elles ne feraient que révéler son manque de goût et sa fatuité […] il mesura en toute lucidité la distance qui le séparait de ceux qu'il considérait au fond comme ses maîtres.[748]

Conclusion

The use of literary controversy to gain publicity was a recognised tactic in this period. Controversy has been seen to take different forms. Direct competition was a frequent and not always controversial practice; it could be the attempt of an author or a company of actors to capitalise on the success of another play or it might represent an act of emulation. Polemical plays and diatribes, on the other hand, were typically more openly negative and aggressive.

A prime motive for engagement in literary controversy seems to have been self-promotion: aspiring authors aimed to draw attention to their works and to be compared with established authors. Viala acknowledges the potential effectiveness of literary controversy: 'les querelles constituent un des moyens possibles pour tenter de conquérir la suprématie dans le champ littéraire'.[749] It was also the case that more celebrated authors became involved in controversy as a way of publicising a new work and attracting wider audiences. The influence of acting troupes has been seen to be a contributing factor, particularly in the use of direct competition. It would appeal to the actors to attempt to rival another troupe and would have increased the publicity value of the play they were performing. Playwrights, especially those at an early stage in their careers, were dependent on the actors for approval of their plays for performance, so they could have been under pressure to agree to direct competition. The amalgamation of the main theatre companies into the Comédie-Française in 1680 contributed to a decrease in the numbers of 'doubled' plays. Another source of pressure for writers to engage in controversial activity – most obviously in polemics – would have been to defend their own work and personal reputation or to support other writers whose friendship and views they shared. Polemical debate would have offered professional writers the opportunity to argue literary convictions and to express firmly-held views about their craft with their peers: this could have accumulated vocational capital through involvement in literary criticism and in public debate about developments in the dramatic genre.

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[748] Boursault, *Marie Stuard,* ed. by Chloé Le Vaguerès, 'Biographie> Rapports entretenus avec ses pairs et influences subies'.
[749] Viala, 'La Querelle des *Bérénice*', p.97.

While some of the controversies can be seen to have been effective in increasing publicity, with a resulting impact on the size of the audiences for the plays, not all authors made extensive use of controversy to gain renown. The various controversies in which authors were involved could have brought them notoriety. Loret suggests that controversial plays like *L'Ecole des Femmes* were widely discussed and attracted a large audience, calling it 'Piéce qu'en pluzieurs lieu on fronde/Mais où, pourtant, va tout le monde'.[750] Notoriety would therefore have been the easiest form of fame available, but also the most short-lived, unless it could be followed up by examples of real dramatic talent. (The short-term nature of this fame could explain why Boursault wrote three polemical plays.) Involvement in literary polemics needed to be managed to avoid the possibility of negative publicity arising from its use. Quinault refrained from aggressive polemics and Racine ensured his prefaces stayed within the bounds of acceptable literary defences of his plays. This was particularly important once they had the vocational and cultural capital that came with membership of the Académie and the social capital derived from their position at court, none of which they would have wished to have jeopardised. Writers who were perceived as indulging in petty jealousies against other more successful writers could damage their image as *honnêtes hommes*, particularly with other writers. Boileau's career may illustrate this. He came to public notice through his sometimes spiteful satires aimed at named individuals but, as Debailly points out, he was careful to limit his attacks to his fellow writers and not to satirise anyone at court: 'réduite à la République des Lettres, la satire boilévienne devient acceptable et inoffensive, puisqu'elle est justifiée par un idéal poétique'.[751] He cites Boileau's justification ('Le «nom» désigne l'*auteur* et non la *personne* dont il respecte l'honneur') to demonstrate that Boileau recognised the need to defend what many considered an unacceptable tactic. Nevertheless, his satires were resented and it was not until 1684 that he was admitted to the Académie française, but even then it was not a sign of approval by his peers. As Adam explains, 'les Académiciens furent obligés de lui donner leurs voix pour obéir à la volonté clairement manifestée de la Cour'.[752]

The potential damage of engagement in a literary controversy would differ in the different circles in which the controversy was discussed. Theatre audiences and even members of the court might have been entertained by the rivalry and enjoyed the interest generated by the polemics. However, manufactured polemics for self-promotion might not have been to the taste of those frequenting literary circles and salons. Some writers disagreed with obvious plagiarism

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[750] Loret, IV, p.6.
[751] Debailly, p.133.
[752] Boileau, *Œuvres Complètes*, intro. by Antoine Adam, p.xxiii.

and satirical writing against members of their circle and this might have galvanized a reaction against the satirist. There was a need to balance the risks involved in literary controversy and to ensure a network of partisan and influential support to shield themselves from negative consequences. The example of Boileau shows that, according to Debailly, 'Louis XIV devait considérer cette querelle comme une récréation' and the satirist was permitted to adopt the role of 'conseiller du Prince, qui dispose d'une certaine immunité dans l'exercice libre de la parole'.[753] However, as Boileau was well aware, royal tolerance and liberty of speech applied only to artistic matters. Writers needed to balance their desire to promote themselves, their views and their works in ways that would generate interest without compromising their image as *honnêtes hommes* and they demonstrated their *habitus* in being aware of what was acceptably controversial without becoming outrageous and causing offence. They would have learnt how far they could go in their polemics.

All three case study authors were involved in controversial direct competition, but this strategy would have done less damage to their image as cultured men of letters suitable for a place in society than the more aggressive polemics. Boursault was willing to risk some notoriety, particularly in the early stages of his career when attacking Molière and Boileau, but he had used his newsletters to improve his social capital before taking the risk of damaging his image in pursuit of short-term publicity benefits. He was aware of the need to appear to his audience as an *honnête homme* and his attempts to present himself as such in *Le Portrait du Peintre* and *La Satire des Satires* suggest that he was aware of the damage these polemical plays could do to his image. While Racine and Quinault appear to use controversy predominantly as a means of increasing their status within the cultural world, Boursault focused more on the greater economic capital offered by the potential of controversy to fill the theatres. In this he appears to be willing to make use of any form of publicity, good or bad, to achieve a short-term and localised fame.

A final negative aspect faced by authors engaging in literary controversy, particularly in direct competition or polemical plays, was the constraint placed upon their creativity. The tactic required them to work on the same subject and to imitate key aspects of the plot and use the same characters and even, in Boursault's case, to mirror the form and content of another writer's play. To make such imitations entertaining for the theatre audience and to complete them in a short time scale in order to maximise the impact of 'doubling' would have been challenging

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[753] Debailly, p.142.

and perhaps not as rewarding as having the freedom to select their own material and produce work which was undeniably their own.

CHAPTER 5 – PATRONAGE

This chapter will analyse the impact of patronage within the literary field at this period and the strategies used by authors to gain and retain patronage. Following this general analysis, the practice of patronage will be explored in the specific context of the case study authors in the next chapter. The focus is on literary patronage; however, it should be recognised that patronage was a complex and comprehensive system in overlapping and interconnected forms: political, social, familial and religious, as well as cultural. It was a widely-accepted mechanism for advancement. Peter Shoemaker argues that 'patronage was vastly more pervasive than it is today […] it was the predominant literary and social institution in early modern France'.[754] The key role that patronage played in enabling writers to pursue their literary careers is widely recognised: Lough refers to writers being 'driven to depend to a large extent on various forms of patronage'[755] and Marie-Odile Sweetser argues that: '[q]uel qu'ait été en effet le talent ou le génie d'un écrivain au XVIIe siècle, la nécessité d'acquérir de puissants protecteurs, de leur plaire […] restait un fait inéluctable'.[756]

Viala distinguishes between two aspects of patronage: *clientélisme* and *mécénat*. He describes 'la logique du service' which is the basis of *clientélisme*: 'autour des personnages riches et puissants se rassemblaient des individus ou des groupes qui se mettaient à leur service en échange de divers avantages'.[757] Writers could be employed as secretaries to their patrons or tutors in their households, or patrons could procure posts and benefits for their clients which offered the patron 'l'intérêt de pouvoir se montrer généreux sans devoir engager une dépense sur son budget personnel'.[758] Sharon Kettering points out the difference between appearance and reality in patron-client relations. On the one hand is the 'myth of the gracious, voluntary bestowal of patronage by a benevolent superior upon a worthy inferior [...] [that] was a more flattering portrayal of the giver and a more valuable honour for the recipient'.[759] In reality a patron needed to reward the loyal service of a client if he wanted to retain his service, and a client had to repay a patron's 'material generosity with loyal obedient service if he wanted to

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[754] Peter W. Shoemaker, *Powerful Connections: The Poetics of Patronage in the Age of Louis XIII* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p.17.
[755] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.96.
[756] Marie-Odile Sweetser, 'Le Mécénat de Fouquet', in Roland Mousnier and Jean Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat 1598-1661* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985), pp.263-72 (p.263).
[757] Viala, *Naissance*, pp.51-52.
[758] Viala, p.53.
[759] Sharon Kettering, 'Gift-giving and Patronage in Early Modern France', *French History,* 2 (1988), 131-51 (p.142).

receive patronage in the future'.[760] Richard Saller, writing in the context of Roman imperial society, identifies what he considers to be the necessary criteria for a personal patronage relationship:

> First, it involves the *reciprocal* exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange – a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals. [761]

These criteria, to the extent that they are applicable in the context of France in the seventeenth century, provide a useful framework for this discussion of specific examples of patronage relationships. Viala's view of *mécénat* emphasises that its essence is the support of a powerful protector to artists 'pour les soutenir dans l'exercice de leur art', the distinction being that 'dans le clientélisme, le service est premier; dans le mécénat, l'art est premier'. This study will demonstrate that there was considerable overlap between elements of *mécénat* and *clientélisme* and the ideology of a disinterested patron motivated purely by love of art rarely applied in practice. Nevertheless, Viala's distinction between forms of patronage can be helpful in establishing the context for an analysis of patronage. The donor himself stood to gain from a patronage relationship: Viala recognises that 'la gratification donnée à l'artiste correspond à un gain de renommée pour le personnage social du mécène'.[762] This thesis will explore the nature of 'la reconnaissance mutuelle' to identify the evidence for such relationships between patrons and writers, described thus by Viala:

> l'écrivain, en offrant son œuvre à un personnage puissant, atteste à la fois la grandeur et le bon goût de celui-ci. Il légitime le pouvoir ou la richesse du dédicataire en lui décernant un brevet implicite d'esprit supérieur. En retour, le grand personnage qui gratifie un écrivain lui octroie une reconnaissance publique de son talent. C'est un échange d'affirmations de la gloire de chacun.[763]

Royal and state patronage

The dominant source of patronage at this period was the monarchy. The interaction between writers and the monarchy was generally a mutually dependent relationship, with ministers (starting with Richelieu) keen to use culture as a means of promoting the monarchy; in return

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[760] Kettering, 'Gift-giving', p.142.
[761] Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.1.
[762] Viala, *Naissance*, p.54.
[763] Viala, pp.54-55.

the writers would receive reward or recognition. Mesnard describes the development of state patronage of the arts early in the reign of Louis XIV: 'Longtemps référence culturelle, lieu d'un goût particulièrement sûr, la Cour deviendra la source des faveurs dispensées en vertu de considérations peu ou prou politiques'.[764] The specific impact and development of royal patronage will be analysed through the involvement of the case study authors in the next chapter.

The institution of the monarchy will be understood here to extend to all members of the royal family and their intimate associates (*la Cour*), as well as the king's closest advisors and ministers. Bourdieu states that the amount of social capital an individual possesses 'depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected'.[765] Thus, the relationships writers were able to develop within the extended institution of the monarchy provided a network of support from among the most influential people in society and also a means of gaining access to the monarch himself, who had the greatest ability to reward writers through, for example, appointment to official posts or by requesting command performances. Both of these would have offered authors the highest level of social capital and royal legitimisation of their work. For Philippe Beaussant, close relations with the monarchy were 'le vrai moyen, le grand moyen de se faire entendre, tout simplement, et de donner à son œuvre le retentissement qu'elle mérite'.[766]

Patronage was used as a means of propaganda for the monarchy. Attempts were made by Richelieu to control the arts for the service of the state and later by Colbert to portray Louis XIV in the most favourable light possible as part of 'le culte du roi'. Writers receiving royal pensions and other payments sought to glorify the monarch through their plays with allegorical allusions and flattering dedications, through panegyrics at the Académie and odes celebrating his victories. Shoemaker says that under Richelieu 'one of the functions of the theater [was] to represent sovereign authority not just before the court, but also before the people'.[767] Lucien Bély describes 'un effort continu des ministres et des administrateurs d'un côté, des artistes et des écrivains de l'autre, travaillant ensemble pour élaborer des œuvres qui puissent persuader

[764] Mesnard, 'Conclusions', in Mousnier and Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.437-40 (p.440).
[765] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.249.
[766] Philippe Beaussant, *Louis XIV artiste* (Paris: Payot, 1999), p.77.
[767] Shoemaker, p.190.

les Français et le monde de la grandeur du roi'.[768] He illustrates the reciprocal process of patronage:

> le temps de Louis XIV encourage la création artistique et bénéficie d'artistes de talent, capables de se mobiliser autour de la personne royale promue comme source inépuisable d'inspiration. Chacun s'efforce de représenter le souverain en donnant de lui et de ses actions une image qui doit le flatter, mais rester aussi réaliste, tout en exprimant subtilement l'admiration de l'artiste.[769]

Racan's flattery of the king in the dedication to *Les Bergeries* provides an example which, to modern perception, may exceed the bounds of *subtil* and *réaliste* but which demonstrates 'la glorification du roi'. Racan refers to the unparalleled actions of a king who has outdone all of the heroes of antiquity and whose fame has spread far and wide, stating that posterity will think his achievements must be fictitious and that 'l'on a choisi ce qu'il y avait de plus beau dans les vies de tous les autres princes, pour en faire une qui servît de modèle à ceux qui régneront après'.[770]

The king himself was wholly committed to this process of image creation. According to Robert Isherwood, 'The king earnestly wanted his reign to be famous for its artistic brilliance, and he believed that musicians, poets, painters, sculptors, and architects could preserve his great deeds for posterity. Louis aspired not only to surpass the achievements of classical antiquity but to establish France's artistic supremacy in Europe.'[771] Mesnard considers that 'Le mécénat est un hommage que le pouvoir rend à la culture'.[772] Isherwood identifies the role of the arts in presenting to both the court and the public 'a god-like image of the king as the heroic conqueror, the benevolent peacemaker, the gallant lover, and the magnanimous ruler of a prosperous and orderly realm'.[773] Louis XIV's interest in the arts could result in direct and personal support for writers: he agreed to act as godfather to Molière's first child at the height of the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*.[774] Similarly, after *Le Tartuffe* had been condemned by key religious figures, the king publicly gave Molière's troupe an annual pension of 6,000 *livres* and allowed them to call themselves 'la troupe du Roi'.[775] Thus, at two points in his career when Molière was under attack, Louis offered him the demonstrably public support of the most influential

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[768] Lucien Bély, *Louis XIV: le plus grand Roi du Monde* (Paris: Editions Jean-Paul Gisserot, 2005), p. 69.
[769] Bély, pp.69-70.
[770] Honorat de Bueil, Sieur de Racan, 'Les Bergeries', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, I, p.287.
[771] Isherwood, p.156.
[772] Mesnard, p.439.
[773] Isherwood, p.157.
[774] Madeleine Jurgens and Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, *Cent Ans de Recherches sur Molière, sur sa famille et sur les comédiens de sa troupe* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), p.385.
[775] Beaussant, p.143.

figure in the country: a key form of symbolic capital. Beaussant is in no doubt about the importance of royal support for Molière, asking 'aurait-il écrit *Tartuffe* sans Louis XIV? Evidemment non'.[776] The approbation and support of the king provided authors with significant protection from attack, as well as increased financial security. Moreover, Caldicott argues that royal patronage offered Molière the opportunity to extend his creative repertoire: 'loin de se courber sous l'influence du Roi, l'auteur en profita pour se livrer à de nouvelles démonstrations de plus en plus hardies de son art'.[777]

Lough explains that Colbert had the idea of 'making use of royal bounty to men of letters in order to boost the prestige of the monarchy' and in 1663 he persuaded Louis to 'make a great splash with the announcement of this large-scale patronage'.[778] The 'aggregate of pensions […] increased from 79,500 *livres* in 1664 to the relatively high sum of 118,000 in 1667 […] On average the awards came to thirteen to sixteen hundred livres',[779] which was roughly equivalent to the average amount a playwright earned through the performance of a play. Lough makes it plain that the 'aim of Louis and Colbert in giving these pensions was far from disinterested [...] the money was doled out simply to encourage the production of propaganda writings which would boost the name of "Louis le Grand"'.[780] The role of writers as publicists for the king was thus institutionalised: Peter Burke says that 'what has been called a "department of glory" had been founded to organize the presentation of the king's image'.[781] As Picard summarises, 'poètes auront désormais leur place dans l'Etat ; […] Ils seront employés dans une sorte de Manufacture royale'.[782] The Bourdieusian concept of a 'rite d'institution' ('tout rite tend à consacrer ou à légitimer'[783]) could be applied to the gratifications system. A royal pension was a symbolic acknowledgement of an established writer's talent and a form of legitimisation by the court. Viala recognises its importance: 'le caractère officiel donné à l'opération conférait à la littérature une consécration très publique et retentissante'.[784] Rather than acting as an aid to new writers, these royal gratifications were intended to reward talented and well-known authors for acting as public relations officers for the king. The gratifications were not simply an attempt to portray Louis as Maecenas, a generous patron of the arts. There would have been

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[776] Beaussant, p.142.
[777] Caldicott, p.91.
[778] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.107.
[779] Andrew Trout, *Jean-Baptiste Colbert* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p.189.
[780] Lough, p.109.
[781] Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.59.
[782] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.62.
[783] Bourdieu, 'Les Rites comme Actes d'Institution', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales,* 43 (1982), 58-63 (p.58)
[784] Viala, *Naissance*, p.82.

considerable pressure on the chosen authors to paint the king in the most favourable light and Chapelain exhorts writers to give their thanks to the king 'dans les termes les plus respectueux et les plus magnifiques que vous pourriez'.[785] As Bourdieu explains, the 'acte d'institution […] *signifie* à quelqu'un son identité en lui notifiant ainsi avec autorité ce qu'il est et ce qu'il a à être'.[786]

Goldthorpe sees the importance for Bourdieu of 'the processes through which dominant classes effectively appropriate and monopolise […] resources and use them to their own exclusive benefit – above all, in preserving their position of dominance in regard to subordinate classes'.[787] Thus, another way for the State to exercise power over the arts and to utilise them in the service of the crown was through a policy of increased centralisation. Isherwood argues that the king was 'determined to centralize control of the arts and to coordinate artistic activity through a group of royal academies': Louis's reign saw the foundation of royal academies of dance, inscriptions, painting and sculpture, music and architecture.[788] The *Mercure Galant* recognised the value of the academies: 'l'établissement des Academies est une affaire tres-serieuse par l'utilité qu'en peut retirer l'Estat, elle est en mesme temps fort glorieuse à ceux qui y sont receus puis que le Roy veut bien s'en mêler'.[789] Louis was also directly involved with the Académie française. Marc Fumaroli indicates the extent to which the Académie was reliant on the support and influence of the monarchy:

> [le] mythe apollinien de Louis XIV, Roi-Soleil, dont Colbert a fait en 1672 le Protecteur de l'Académie donne aux réunions et aux cérémonies de la Compagnie, pour l'imagination lettrée européenne, le prestige de la Fable: le dieu de Delphes et les neuf Muses accueillant sur la sainte montagne les poètes laurés.[790]

The creation of such a myth can be seen as part of the process for disavowing the political manipulation and power underpinning royal patronage and reflects the inflated view of some aspects of the contemporary image portrayed by the Académie. Such an exaggerated view of its importance provoked objections and was contested at the period by a range of detractors. A more negative view of the role of the Académie was expressed at the time, as will be discussed in a later section.[791]

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[785] Chapelain, II, p.667.
[786] Bourdieu, 'Les Rites', p.60.
[787] Goldthorpe, p.4.
[788] Isherwood, pp.156-57.
[789] *Le Mercure Galant* (July 1687), p.34.
[790] Marc Fumaroli, *Trois Institutions Littéraires* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p.xxviii.
[791] See Chapter 7 p.207 and pp. 213-215.

The importance of the monarchy as a patron for writers in the second half of the seventeenth century has been debated among scholars. Some seek to diminish the overall importance of royal patronage for literature and several acknowledge the decline in its importance later in Louis's reign. Burke recognises that 'the financial problems of the state naturally limit its patronage. The period 1689-1715 might well be described as the "Great Retrenchment"[…] the payment of pensions was suspended.'[792] Lough reports on the comparatively small amounts paid as gratifications and considers that Louis's 'munificence seems somewhat exaggerated'.[793] He highlights the impact of the king's avoidance of theatrical performances towards the end of the century and the poor health of the French economy after years of war, and concludes: 'The reign of Louis XIV was a golden age in the history of French literature, but it is difficult to give the credit for this to his patronage'.[794] However, Peter Campbell argues that 'his was […] a patronage that allowed artistic genius to flourish and thus rebound to his credit'.[795] The ambiguity is illustrated by Marcel Gutwirth, who initially states that 'royal policy and patronage will not do as an explanation'[796] for the golden era of French writing, but then, on the following page, he describes the court as 'a crucial institution'.[797] While Louis's role as a patron of the arts may have decreased during the latter stages of his reign, the impact of his patronage of writers during the earlier part of his reign cannot be denied. Contemporary evidence demonstrating the determination of writers to gain the attention of the monarch indicates that they fully recognised the power of royal patronage: this will be analysed through the strategies of the case study authors in the next chapter. Chartier argues that the support of the king was crucial for authors:

> it liberated the writer from the obligations of clientage, protected him from the perversions of the market, and recognized true scholars, [and allowed] men of letters worthy of the name to exercise the independence of their minds freely and without constraint or censorship. [798]

However, in an attempt to show that authors were not afraid to show some elements of disrespect towards the nobility and the royal court, Gutwirth highlights

> Molière's outrageous mockery of titled fops, the set speeches in a Racine play excoriating tyranny, La Fontaine's mocking description of the court as a chameleon

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[792] Burke, p.110.
[793] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.112.
[794] Lough, p.108.
[795] Peter Robert Campbell, *Louis XIV* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), p.53.
[796] Marcel Gutwirth, 'The Beast Fable for the Sun King', in *Sun King,* ed. by David Lee Rubin (Washington: Folger, 1992), pp.103-14 (p.104).
[797] Gutwirth, p.105.
[798] Chartier, p.146.

nation fastened on its master's looks breathe, if not defiance, a wholesome disregard of absolutist propaganda.[799]

Hammond notes the existence of 'a significant underbelly of writings which question the received wisdom of the day, including poems and songs contradicting the overwhelming praise of Louis in the official literature of the age'.[800] David Rubin, while acknowledging that Louis received 'his fair share of […] almost continuous poetic glorification', argues that 'there also existed at the same moment an important poetry of *dis*praise and even censure'.[801] He undertakes a careful analysis of La Fontaine's works to identify unflattering analogies, ambiguous metaphors and 'the systematic belittlement […] juxtaposed against and intermingled with perfunctory praise'.[802] La Fontaine's career may illustrate the pitfalls of not appealing to the monarchy. Although, as Rubin points out, La Fontaine's work was never actually censored, his career was in marked contrast to that of 'the more domesticated ironist Boileau, historiographer royal and much else besides'.[803] Unlike Boileau, La Fontaine never received a royal pension nor an official appointment.[804] Furthermore, La Fontaine's membership of the Académie française was initially blocked by Louis XIV,[805] who wanted to ensure that Boileau was elected before he would permit the election of La Fontaine. Although it could be argued that La Fontaine's relatively successful career proves that the king's support was not a prerequisite, he would have found success easier and achieved it more quickly if he had had royal support.

Mesnard identifies an 'âge d'or du mécénat', referring to the period before Colbert and the ascendancy of state sponsorship of the arts, when patrons ('Princes du sang, grands seigneurs, ministres, magistrats') were 'moins puissants, mais plus proche de ceux dont ils entendaient favoriser l'œuvre créatrice'.[806] He sees a change in the nature of patronage as the institution of the monarchy assumed more power 'par la distribution de pensions, par la création d'académies subventionnées' and extended its policy of centralisation.[807] Yannick Nexon believes that after the death in 1672 of Séguier ('le dernier représentant des grands mécènes du début du siècle')

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[799] Gutwirth, p.104.

[800] Hammond, 'Seventeenth-century margins', in *The Cambridge History of French Literature,* ed. by William Burgwinkle, Nicholas Hammond and Emma Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.343-49 (p.349).

[801] David Lee Rubin, 'Icon and Caricature', in *Sun King*, pp.129-43 (p.129).

[802] Rubin, p.139.

[803] Rubin, p.135.

[804] Gutwirth, p.104.

[805] Gutwirth, p.105.

[806] Mesnard, p.439.

[807] Mesnard, p.440.

'il semble ne plus avoir de place dans le royaume que pour un seul mécène, Louis XIV.'[808] Fumaroli, however, believes that there was a natural continuation of the patronage system, though with a change in certain aspects: 'le mécénat à grande échelle du principal ministre et du roi coexiste avec des mécénats de moindre échelle et de goût différent pratiqués par des Grands à l'écart de l'exercice du pouvoir'.[809] Thus, the patronage system developed with some significant changes over the period of this study, as will be illustrated in an analysis of the authorial strategies used in seeking a patron's support.

Strategies to obtain patronage

A key initial strategy which it was important for writers to master was the astute selection of the most influential and useful patrons. Patrons could be selected for their wealth and evidence of their previous willingness to support the arts financially, for their social standing, position and influential connections, for their interest in literature or, in most cases, for a combination of some or all of these. According to Bourdieu, 'the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known [...] their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive.[810] Having selected a 'target' patron, the author would need to plan his approach. The norms of behaviour would not favour a direct approach from someone who was a social inferior to a noble or important patron, so an indirect route would be expected. This would normally be by introductions through family members and acquaintances: Racine's cousin, Nicholas Vitart, had connections with the Duc de Chevreuse; Quinault was in the service of Tristan and so made the acquaintance of the Duc de Guise, and Boursault was made *secrétaire* to the Duchesse d'Angoulême in 1660 and could thereby increase his social connections. Brown explains this process: 'through their social encounters with others already established in those hierarchies, writers learned behavorial norms — how to ally themselves with better-positioned protectors and brokers who could mediate between them and the court and the crown'.[811] Bourdieu's view of a network of relationships as 'the product of investment strategies [...] aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term'[812] can be applied to the process of patronage. The notion of investment is a valid one in the context of a

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[808] Yannick Nexon, 'Le Mécénat du Chancelier Séguier', in Mousnier and Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.49-57 (p.57).
[809] Fumaroli, 'Introduction', in Mousnier and Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.1-12 (p.7).
[810] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', pp.250-51.
[811] Brown, p.16.
[812] Bourdieu, p.249.

writer carefully cultivating the interest of a patron and will be examined in the review of the strategies adopted by the case study authors.

Shoemaker recognises that 'seventeenth-century patrons hailed from a broad and varied social spectrum'[813] and he categorises patrons as ranging from the royal family, through the nobility, to ministers and royal office holders and finally to lesser ministers, royal councillors and financiers. In the category of the king's ministers or advisors, Mazarin, Colbert and Fouquet were the most influential during the period of this study, following the precedent set by Richelieu. Chatelain underlines the main reason why authors would have sought to appeal to these ministers:

> Depuis que les rois avaient commencé de se reposer du soin de l'Etat sur leurs ministres, ils avaient pour une bonne part abdiqué ce noble privilège de la royauté: venir en aide aux talents malheureux. Richelieu, Mazarin, Foucquet, comme plus tard Colbert, le recueillirent dans d'inégales proportions.[814]

Madeleine Laurain-Portemer describes a guiding principle in Mazarin's actions 'dans le domaine des arts' as 'la nécessité d'un mécénat comme fleuron de la politique'.[815] However, although Mazarin supported the arts, he was less generous than Richelieu, and this was used as grounds for criticising him. Chatelain compares the perceived attitudes of Richelieu and Mazarin: 'de toutes les actions du cardinal [Richelieu] [...] celle qui était le plus universellement louée, c'était la protection constante qu'il avait assurée aux gens de lettres',[816] but by contrast 'les adversaires du nouveau ministre [Mazarin] ne manquaient pas de railler son avarice bien connue'.[817] Richelieu's generosity is praised in the contemporary *Despit des Muses contre Mazarin*: 'bien qu'il n'eut pas beaucoup de foy/[il] nous prit toutes fois pour deesses,/et nous fit beaucoup de largesses'. This is immediately contrasted with the address to Mazarin: 'mais toy, gros lourdaut, grosse beste/tu n'as point de cervelle en teste/sous ton chapeau de Cardinal/tu n'es rien qu'un gros animal/ [...] Ton ame n'est que mercenaire'.[818] Clearly, if a patron was deemed to be insufficiently generous, an author could use his works to satirise him publicly. The contemporary view of Mazarin as a less generous patron than his predecessor is well attested, though in a modern interpretation of the context, Harrison notes that the reported disappointment following Richelieu's death was not universal. Marazin granted pensions to Pierre Corneille and 'other leading intellectual figures' and Corneille 'apparently enjoyed less

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[813] Shoemaker, p.30.
[814] Urbain Victor Chatelain, *Le Surintendant Nicolas Foucquet* (Paris: Perrin, 1905), p.136.
[815] Madeleine Laurain-Portemer, *Etudes Mazarines,* 2 vols (Paris: Boccard, 1981), I, p.177.
[816] Chatelain, p.146.
[817] Chatelain, p.147.
[818] *Le Despit des Muses contre Mazarin. En Vers Burlesques* ([No publisher named], 1649), pp.5-6.

troubled relations' with Mazarin than with Richelieu.[819] She sees the striking and immediate contrast between the two patrons as fundamental to the criticisms: 'Even a minister with a better command of the French language and more of a personal inclination to support the theatre would almost certainly have been a disappointment after Richelieu'. She also recognises some of the practical difficulties Mazarin faced as a patron: 'war placed a heavy financial burden on all of Mazarin's ministry and thus restricted possibilities of patronage'.[820]

A comparison between the main patrons of the case study authors – those whom they acknowledged through published dedications to their works – provides useful evidence:[821] only five of Racine's twelve plays were published with dedications; in contrast, all of Quinault's spoken plays[822] and all of Boursault's plays which were performed were published with dedications. It should, of course, be noted that writers would also dedicate non-dramatic works to actual or potential patrons, and Croft's listing of Boursault's dedications of all his work (including poems, gazettes and novels) provides an illustration of the extent of his dedicatory activity.[823] Only one patron is the subject of the dedication of a play by all three writers: the Duc de Saint-Aignan. He was the organiser of the king's entertainments[824] and Gros says 'sa libéralité était extrême',[825] so he would appear to be an ideal patron. Racine and Quinault both dedicated a play to the king and to the Duc de Chevreuse; both Quinault and Boursault dedicated a play to the Duc de Guise. While other writers obviously sought patrons as well and may have solicited the same individuals, there is relatively little area of overlap among the case study playwrights. Indeed, Henry Lancaster reports that of the 20 tragedies by all authors that have survived from the period 1659-65, 'three were dedicated to Fouquet, two to Mazarin, no more than one to anyone else, though the list includes Louis XIV, his queen, the Duke of Orléans, the duchesse de Savoie, Séguier and the son of Condé.'[826] The scarce resource of suitable patrons may be an illustration of Bourdieu's concept of a literary field as a struggle among writers for their patronage. He refers to the power of 'the holders of the dominant type of capital (economic capital)' in their ability to 'set the holders of cultural capital in competition with one another'.[827] Katia Béguin describes 'les rivalités d'auteurs' which 'incitaient les dramaturges à

[819] Harrison, p.31.
[820] Harrison, p.32.
[821] See Appendices 1, 2 and 3. Appendix 1 is based on Croft, *Boursault*, pp.100-02. Appendices 2 and 3 are modelled on Croft's analysis, limited to the dedications of published plays.
[822] Brooks, p.13.
[823] Croft, pp.100-02.
[824] Brooks, p.85.
[825] Gros, p.40.
[826] Lancaster, III, 2, p.430.
[827] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.247.

ne pas dédaigner les appuis capables de proclamer leur supériorité sur leurs rivaux. Tout conspirait donc à rapprocher les hommes de lettres et les prétendants à la dignité de mécène'.[828] While there may have been an element of competition for patrons, it is not obvious that this was deliberate or widespread. There was, however, competition to be admitted to the 'liste de gratifiés' and Forestier describes the process Chapelain undertook on Colbert's orders to invite compositions celebrating the recovery of the king after his illness. Chapelain subsequently wrote to Colbert stating that 'il serait bon d'accorder une gratification à ceux qui n'en ont pas encore reçu afin de susciter de nouvelles vocations'.[829] This aim is ideologically more in line with the concept of a pure form of *mécénat* dedicated to nurturing new writers and so cultivating the arts. Nevertheless, playwrights would have needed to be sensitive to the dangers of 'patronage overload'.

Dedicating a play to a patron was an important tactic in developing and maintaining a patronage relationship. Croft describes the *épître dédicatoire* as a 'lieu par excellence des témoignages de reconnaissance'[830] and Viala sees the function of dedications as a method of declaring 'que l'écrivain a été inspiré par le grand homme; la gratification, en retour, dit que celui-ci a éprouvé de la jouissance esthétique à lire l'œuvre'.[831] Wolfgang Leiner describes their wider role in 'cette campagne visant à valoriser la réputation et l'autorité des écrivains'. He argues that

> les auteurs déploient tout leur art rhétorique pour prouver à ceux qu'ils sollicitent qu'ils sont dignes d'être aidés et que la littérature remplit un rôle qui mérite l'attention des grands. Les écrivains savent que l'aide que leurs hautains partenaires leur accorderont ne sera pas tant fonction de la perfection esthétique d'un ouvrage dédié que de l'utilité que les dédicataires reconnaissent à la littérature et de l'importance sociale qu'ils accordent à un auteur ou aux auteurs en général.[832]

Thus the role and status of writers is reinforced through their deployment of literature to entertain, to inform and to celebrate 'surtout parce qu'ils rendront immortels les noms et les actions de ceux […] dont ils font l'éloge'.[833]

Dedications are used by authors to fulfil a number of functions. They can:

- praise a patron as a personal expression of gratitude for support already received;

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[828] Katia Béguin, *Les Princes de Condé: rebelles, courtisans et mécènes dans la France du grand siècle* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1999), p.346.

[829] Forestier, p.183.

[830] Croft, *Boursault,* p.96.

[831] Viala, *Naissance,* p.55.

[832] Wolfgang Leiner, 'Mars et Minerve: sur le Statut des Ecrivains', in *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.161-69 (p.163).

[833] Leiner, p.165.

- be a veiled appeal for further support;

- use the subject of the work to highlight and flatter qualities of the patron by referring to points of resemblance;

- justify the work based on praise received from the patron who has seen the work in full or in part and applauded it, thereby ascribing its success to the patron's support;

- legitimise the work because of the patron's cultural capital and discernment as a literary critic;

- provide information about the work, its sources and a commentary on aspects of the work;

- appeal for protection of the work and the author against criticisms and attacks.

These functions can of course overlap within dedications and will be illustrated by reference to the dedications written by the case study authors. The format and wording of dedications followed a standard formula. The style, vocabulary, expression and tone of a dedication were important. The writer had to achieve the difficult balance between praising the patron without appearing sycophantic; he had to present his work as successful without appearing boastful. The conventions in writing a dedication required a writer to present himself to the public audience as much as presenting his work to the dedicatee, since as Genette explains, 'il y a toujours une ambiguïté dans la destination d'une dédicace d'œuvre, qui vise toujours au moins deux destinataires: le dédicataire, bien sûr, mais aussi le lecteur, puisqu'il s'agit d'un acte public dont le lecteur est en quelque sorte pris à témoin'.[834] The dedication was a public sign of the relationship between the writer and the patron. It was important to express the sentiments and use the language expected by both the patron and the audience so that authorial self-promotion was not too overt and was kept within the bounds of *honnêteté*.

Dedications also served another function: making the recipient into a 'model reader', someone who represents the other readers, and therefore whenever he or she is praised, all other readers by extension are also praised. By presenting the patron as an ideal spectator, the author encourages 'spectators and readers of all ranks [to] follow a wish to prove their own worthiness'.[835] Rotrou declares in his dedication 'Au Roi' that the 'excellentes qualités de votre esprit font assez juger que tout ce que vous estimez est estimable, et ma Muse serait une fille trop honteuse si elle craignait la vue du peuple, après avoir été caressée par le plus grand roi de

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[834] Genette, p.137.
[835] Harrison, p.38.

la terre'.[836] As Harrison explains, 'spectators and readers could imitate [the elite] directly by approving and applauding the poet's productions'.[837] She summarises the process:

> The author who praised a protector encouraged the patron in question, and the public, to conform to the image of the generous protector by buying the dramatist's works and attending his plays.[838]

Writers often exchanged letters with their patron, which Shoemaker regards as 'the ideal form for articulating a rhetoric of patronage [...] each letter serves as a gift from the writer to the patron in partial repayment of the latter's generosity [... and] serves to highlight the exchange dynamic that characterizes their relationship'. Many of the aspects identified by Shoemaker apply equally well to dedications, which are frequently written in the form of a letter. He highlights that, in letters, 'the reader-addressee is explicitly invoked throughout, from the initial address to the closing formula'.[839] This same tactic is found in dedications which constantly refer to the patron, either by name or as 'vous'. Writing a dedication in this form makes it more personal for the patron, making him a central figure in each published work, and singling him out from the other readers, who are rarely addressed so directly. The dedication is not only a personal address to the patron from the client, but more specifically the message is on public display, thereby allowing the client to present an image of himself, his patron and their relationship to a wider audience. Shoemaker sums up this dual role by describing letters and dedications as both 'a token of [...] loyalty, a gesture that serves to affirm and strengthen the personal bond' and also 'as a published letter/act of publicity, it addresses a wider audience of readers'.[840] For Shoemaker, the act of publishing a letter is integral to its importance, firstly to immortalise the writer's patron, but also in allowing a writer to create 'a public identity through contacts with others'.[841]

The concept of interaction gives letters an advantage over dedications as a means of self-fashioning, since the client can include letters from his patron in a published edition. This exchange of letters thus establishes 'a principle of reciprocity, in which praise functions in both directions'.[842] Boursault's exchange of letters with the Evêque de Langres illustrates this mutual respect. The Evêque tells Boursault 'il y a longtemps, Monsieur, que je n'ay eu un si grand

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[836] Jean Rotrou, 'La Bague de l'Oubli', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, I, p.731.
[837] Harrison, p.21.
[838] Harrison, p.22.
[839] Shoemaker, p.63.
[840] Shoemaker, p.66.
[841] Shoemaker, p.68 and p.63.
[842] Shoemaker, p.63.

plaisir qu'à la lecture de la Lettre que vous m'avez écrite'.[843] In response Boursault describes the Evêque's request for Boursault to write him weekly newsletters as being made in a 'si honnête maniere', expressing the wish that all great men were like the Evêque.[844] The letters allow for this exchange of flattery and, by publishing them, Boursault demonstrates that this is not simply a one-way relationship. Through the publication of personal correspondence, the writer is able to give a glimpse into his personal life and his familiar interactions with members of a social elite. It should be remembered, however, that Boursault would have carefully selected which letters to include, and therefore they represent a key source of material for his self-presentation. Boursault takes the opportunity to include letters that do not merit inclusion for their content, but which are intended to present him as someone who was well-connected at court.[845] La Bruyère succinctly and cynically sums up such an approach: 'On loue les grands pour marquer qu'on les voit de près, rarement par estime ou par gratitude. On ne connaît pas souvent ceux que l'on loue'.[846] Part of the appeal of publishing letters is that responses from the patron can also be included, implying a dialogue, whereas most other aspects of a patronage relationship are less overt: it is very difficult for an author to show what response, if any, he has received for a dedication. The only way to do so would be an indirect reference in the dedication to past favours, or by expressing the hope of forthcoming favours. Through publication of these letters Boursault would have been able to display his social capital. Croft sees the value for the author in publishing correspondence with a patron but adds a note of caution about the implied closeness of the relationship: 'la publication de lettres, à l'instar de la dédicace, consiste en un acte public dans lequel l'auteur affiche une relation, réelle ou non, avec son destinataire'.[847]

Gift exchange

The Bourdieusian concept of forms of capital is relevant in the context of patronage since it helps to overcome the fact that there was no exact price scale for the services rendered by either side; although, as Bourdieu remarks, 'As everyone knows, priceless things have their price'. Patronage relies on the exchange of a form of capital which cannot be measured (the author's cultural capital) for a type of capital which can easily be measured (the patron's economic capital) and one which is less easy to measure (the patron's and author's social capital). Bourdieu recognises 'the extreme difficulty of converting certain practices and certain objects

[843] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.73.
[844] Boursault, I, p.110.
[845] Boursault, I, p.35.
[846] Jean de La Bruyère, *Œuvres Complètes,* ed. by Julien Benda (Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1934), p.280.
[847] Croft, *Boursault*, p.120.

into money' and argues that this is 'only due to the fact that this conversion is refused in the very intention that produces them, which is nothing other than the denial […] of the economy'.[848] He refers to the 'high degree of concealment of the transmission of cultural capital' and sees the process as 'disguised', tending to produce 'a form of a capital of obligations that are usable in the more or less long term (exchanges of gifts, services)'.[849] The act of exchange is important both symbolically and socially: 'Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, reproduces the group'.[850] Patronage relationships reflect many of the issues identified by Bourdieu and the processes inherent in such relationships illustrate the image of patronage as a system based upon gifts, rather than financial transactions.

As part of a patronage relationship an author would use dedications and letters to express his thanks to a patron, and these, as well as the published text, represented a physical gift, symbolic of the 'exchange dynamic that characterizes their relationship',[851] as well as praising the recipient publicly. Although dedications are not converted into an immediate financial reward, they gain value from their symbolic meaning as a physical representation of the author's cultural capital. Racine's dedication of *La Thébaïde* to the Duc de Saint-Aignan is worded as the presentation of a gift: 'Je vous présente un ouvrage qui n'a peut-être rien de considérable que l'honneur de vous avoir plu' and the dedication makes no reference to any expectation of reward other than the approval of the dedicatee ('que pouvais-je espérer de plus glorieux que l'approbation d'une personne […] qui est lui-même l'admiration de tout le monde?').[852] In reviewing the system of patronage it is important to examine the concept of gift giving or gift exchange. According to Phebe Bowditch, gifts, unlike payments, are intended to appear spontaneous to the outside world,[853] and so they can be made to appear as signs of mutual respect and friendship, rather than business arrangements. Applying Saller's criteria for a patronage relationship (set out at the start of this chapter), it would be difficult to conclude that the gift transferred between a patron and his client is given without the expectation of, or even a desire for, a reward in return. The gift may be given voluntarily between two parties of unequal status and it may represent a long-standing personal relationship but the key criterion of reciprocal exchange is missing. In this sense 'gift-giving' may be less appropriate a term than

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[848] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.242.
[849] Bourdieu, p.254.
[850] Bourdieu, p.250.
[851] Shoemaker, p.63.
[852] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.113
[853] Phebe Lowell Bowditch, *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), p.36.

'gift-exchange'. Kettering refers to examples of 'ritualized gift-giving' and identifies the key characteristics: 'the patron-client exchange was used to create and maintain a personal bond; there was an obligation to reciprocate and the reciprocity was disguised and governed by the rules and language of courtesy'.[854] She argues that this description is of clear relevance to the patronage system in seventeenth-century France and the added element of 'disguise through the language of courtesy' is particularly relevant in the stylised wording of dedications. Bowditch, writing about patronage in Roman society, also highlights that 'the gift economy operates by displacing the economics of debt into the sphere of courtesy, so that obligation is concealed beneath the decorum of disinterested giving'.[855]

Brown sees the position of an author at this time as participating 'in an intensely hierarchical social system, one in which his status and identity were determined primarily by his relationship with one or more protectors; these relationships informed how others read and judged his works, rather than the reverse'. He highlights the importance for an author of presenting an image of himself which matched the requirements of courtly behaviour:

> Though such relationships often involved a transaction — the writer's dedication exchanged for the protector's financial and social sponsorship — literary patron-client encounters were [...] represented and performed through exchanges of reciprocal courtesy. A writer, in his comportment towards a protector, had to show himself to be worthy of and appropriate for inclusion in the retinue, and self-presentation therefore became the key determinant of a writer's status at a court.[856]

Thus the image to be presented to a patron is that of writer who is modest about his work but who wishes to show gratitude for the patron's support and who adheres to ways of behaving expected within the social elite. The concept of *honnêteté* disdains mercenary motives and so authors would wish to present themselves as being not primarily interested in improving their economic capital but rather in offering their work as a sign of respect for the patron. The system of gift-exchange allowed them to conceal the financial transactions that occurred as part of the patronage relationship. Dedications rarely go into detail about any form of financial relationship, with authors preferring vague references to a patron as 'naturellement bienfaisant' (Mairet's dedication to Seguier[857]) or to 'les traits de bonté' that Tristan has received from the Duc de Saint-Aignan.[858] Social norms would have seen explicit reference to money as vulgar and degrading for both parties in the exchange – an author would have resented the idea that

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[854] Kettering, 'Gift-giving', p.131.
[855] Bowditch, p.13.
[856] Brown, p.37.
[857] Jean de Mairet, 'La Sophonisbe', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1975-92), I, p.669.
[858] Tristan l'Hermite, 'La Mort de Sénèque', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, II, p.331.

his work (and by extension himself) could be viewed as 'purchasable' and a noble would wish to avoid the implication that he was paying for undeserved flattery and that his good opinion of a work could be procured through flattery. Reference to the presentation of gifts 'disguised the obligatory reciprocity of the patron-client exchange and made the personal bond appear more emotional and affective than it really was'.[859] Kettering refers to this system of exchange as being patronage's 'definitive characteristic, creating expectations, an assured reliance, gratitude and a bond of trust and loyalty'.[860] Similarly, Shoemaker says that no matter how 'short-term and serial they may have been, patronage relationships were not discrete transactions; instead they depended on a fragile system of credit in which services were eventually rewarded'.[861] The focus on giving a gift allowed the system to be portrayed in a favourable light, making 'a patron's bestowal of benefits seem voluntary and disinterested, but in reality it was obligatory and self-interested: the loyal service of a client had to be rewarded, at least occasionally, for the relationship to continue'.[862] In fact, 'gift-giving' was the key feature of patronage relations, since it allowed both parties to present themselves as *honnêtes hommes*: authors could appear to be writing for pleasure and in order to be able to present their work in tribute to members of the nobility and patrons could appear generous in sponsoring the arts and gain by association with works of culture. Specific examples of such strategies will be explored in reviewing the approaches of the case study authors in the next chapter.

Benefits for the patron

Dustin Griffin refers to the 'traditionally aristocratic practice of publicly displayed generosity'[863] as an important impulse prompting nobles of the period to offer patronage to writers. A patronage relationship offered a means of demonstrating liberality enhanced by the possibility of acquiring the 'kind of "fame" that could be conferred on them by a poet: to be praised in print'.[864] Michael Moriarty suggests that 'liberality may be practised in order to enhance one's reputation in which case money is being exchanged for glory'.[865] Stephen Pumfrey and Frances Dawbarn summarise the patrons' perspective: 'all princes and nobles were preoccupied with reputation and honour. The ability to dispense ostentatious patronage,

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[859] Kettering, 'Gift-giving', p.132.
[860] Kettering, 'Patronage in Early Modern France', *French Historical Studies,* 17 (1992), 839-62 (p.844).
[861] Shoemaker, p.29.
[862] Kettering, 'Gift-giving', p.132.
[863] Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.13.
[864] Griffin, p.34.
[865] Michael Moriarty, *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.286.

the quality of their clients, and the capacity of their clients' work to promote their self-image were primary ways to establish reputation'.[866] Patrons were in effect using writers as their publicity agents. Bowditch reinforces this point, referring to 'the *laus* or public glory of the giver's generosity: indeed, the glory of reputation depends, to a degree, on its celebration in verse'.[867] In a report to Colbert, Chapelain emphasises that 'les vers' outlast other art forms 'lorsqu'une bonne main s'en mesle' and 'si bien que ce que vos soins feront éclore de vrayment bon en ce genre d'escrire, pour célébrer les vertus du Roy, sera infailliblement ce qui leur donnera l'immortalité'.[868] Griffin quotes references from English writers (including Dryden and Pope) to Louis XIV as 'the Patron of all Arts' distributing his 'bounty to Men of Learning and Wit' and declaring that Louis gains 'honour' by granting pensions,[869] demonstrating that Louis was recognised internationally as a generous patron. Voltaire, looking back on the previous century, says 'Louis XIV s'est immortalisé' by his artistic patronage and recommends the English Parliament to imitate Louis XIV 'dans sa magnificence envers les Arts'.[870]

Noble patrons could therefore acquire cultural capital through being associated publicly with the cultural product created by the writer and dedicated to them; by sponsoring a writer and receiving that writer's acknowledgements, they would themselves appear to be cultured and learned. Béguin suggests that 'l'avancement de l'artiste […] valide aussi le bon goût du patron et son aptitude à déceler, à lancer de nouveaux talents. Le mérite du mécène en sortait grandi'.[871] Fumaroli sees the rise of artistic patronage as part of a cultural change among the elite, symbolising the 'passage de la noblesse guerrière à la condition de noblesse de cour, où le privilège du rang et du nom est affirmé moins par la maîtrise des armes que par la maîtrise des signes depuis le beau langage jusqu'aux beaux vêtements'.[872] The language of military skill was often employed by writers in dedications: Quinault tells the Duc de Candale 'vostre propre valeur vous peut donner assez de gloire' and adds that he is descended from 'un nombre infiny de Heros'.[873] Boursault speaks of 'votre courage' in the dedication to the Italian Ambassador[874] and in the dedication to the Comte de Saux refers to him as 'le même Heros qui vient si

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[866] Stephen Pumfrey and Frances Dawbarn, 'Science and Patronage in England,1570–1625: A Preliminary Study', *History of Science,* 42 (2004), 137-88 (p.140).
[867] Bowditch, p.33.
[868] Chapelain, II, pp.273-74.
[869] Griffin, p.37 and p.41.
[870] Voltaire, *Lettres Philosophiques ou Lettres Anglaises* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1964), p.129.
[871] Béguin, p.350.
[872] Fumaroli, 'Introduction', p.7.
[873] Quinault, *L'Amant indiscret*, p.51.
[874] Boursault, *Theatre,* III, p.131.

fraîchement de recevoir le Prix de son Courage'.[875] Furthermore, as Leiner notes, such references to military prowess allow writers to praise their dedicatees who 'savent manier l'épée et apprécier les lettres' as well as to demonstrate 'la prééminence des lettres puisque c'est par la littérature que les faits héroïques […] sont transmis à la postérité'. Leiner highlights that writers were anxious to increase their status by emphasising the 'lien très ancien entre l'épée et la plume'. The message that heroic deeds would soon be forgotten if they were not celebrated in verse or prose was 'une des armes principales des auteurs dans leur lutte pour la valorisation de leur profession'.[876] However, military skill was becoming less celebrated, and a greater value was being placed upon culture, so writers were becoming more valued as the holders, producers and transmitters of that culture. Pumfrey and Dawbarn refer to the concept of 'cultural competition' whereby 'patrons competed to increase their cultural eminence through clients' and suggest that 'cultural competition was, in part, a surrogate for territorial or dynastic competition — like diplomacy, the conduct of war by other means'.[877] The producers of culture rely on those in power for economic and social capital, whilst those in power gain cultural capital by being seen to support the producers of culture.

The strategic deployment of patronage, particularly royal patronage, could also provide an element of control over the content and nature of a writer's works. Writers in receipt of royal pensions were informed by Chapelain of what Burke describes as 'the rules of the game'.[878] Lough quotes the conditions of the pensions, noting that Louis and Colbert 'ne s'obligent à personne et veulent être toujours libres de les départir ou non selon que le procédé des gratifiés les y conviendra'.[879] Some writers resented the conditions for the gratifications. Richard Maber discusses the response of Ménage, who was among the first of those awarded a royal pension (equal in value to that of Corneille) but who chose not to conform in 'an almost provocative display of independence'.[880] Maber describes him as 'very much less inclined […] to pen the appropriate expressions of flattery and gratitude' and he cites Ménage's justification: 'ces remercimens sentent le Poète Croté, les Louanges ainsi achetées, me semblent suspectes'. As a result, Ménage's pension was removed and his entry to the Académie in 1684 was blocked. As

[875] Boursault, Œuvres de Mr. Boursault: contenant les Pieces de Theatre, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Duvillard & Changuion, 1721), II, [Dedication of Le Jaloux Prisonnier], (p.a.3).
[876] Leiner, pp.161-62.
[877] Pumfrey and Dawbarn, p.140.
[878] Burke, pp.51-52.
[879] Lough, Writer and Public, p.109.
[880] Richard Maber, 'Colbert and the Scholars: Ménage, Huet and the Royal Pensions of 1663', Seventeenth-century French Studies, 7 (1985), 106-114 (p.110).

Maber concludes, 'he had borne witness to the fact that one was not easily forgiven for refusing to praise the king to order'.[881]

There was no official formal censorship of plays at this time and Lough states 'there was no question of a playwright having to submit his work for examination before it could be performed'. However, he notes occasional examples of plays (notably *Le Tartuffe*) being taken off after the first performance and explains 'no doubt authors in this period generally exercise considerable caution over what they put into their plays'.[882] Likewise, patrons could have some influence on the writer's work: if they disapproved of a work written by their client they could withdraw their support. Griffin describes 'the control of culture by a class of hereditary aristocrats'.[883] Viala refers to the loss of authorial autonomy in the situation of Racine and Boileau as Royal Historiographers*:* 'le monarque qui les emploie étant "auteur" autant qu'eux – et vérifiant, parfois lui-même, parfois par les soins de son personnel gouvernemental, la teneur de leurs écrits'.[884] Alternatively, patrons might seek to gain an element of ownership by suggesting a subject for the writer. Boscheron says of Quinault that 'Sa Majesté daignoit même quelquefois lui en donner les sujets'[885] and Mme de Maintenon clearly influenced the subject-matter of *Esther* and *Athalie*. Griffin suggests that the patron can be 'the provider of the design, the originator of the idea, the source of the inspiration or even the model for the virtues celebrated in the work'.[886] Genette considers that 'le dédicataire est toujours de quelque manière responsable de l'œuvre qui lui est dédiée et à laquelle il apporte, *volens nolens*, un peu de son soutien, et donc de sa participation'.[887] Bourdieu's concept of the transmission of cultural capital is of relevance in the act of giving the gift of the writer's creation and Griffin develops the point about partial transfer of ownership: 'when a patron receives the poem or play as a gift, it becomes his property. He "owns" it not only by acknowledging his approval but by symbolically taking title. And by taking title, the patron in fact improves the work, adds value'.[888] This addition of value to a work is commonly highlighted in dedications, as one of Quinault's dedications illustrates: 'Si elle [la pièce] etoit excellente d'elle-mesme, je n'aurois pas besoin de la parer d'un Nom aussi glorieux que le vostre'.[889]

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[881] Maber, p.109 and p.112.
[882] Lough, p.75.
[883] Griffin, p.42.
[884] Viala, 'Statut de l'écrivain,' p.85.
[885] Boscheron, p.35.
[886] Griffin, p.30.
[887] Genette, p.139.
[888] Griffin, pp.29-30.
[889] Quinault, *La Mort de Cyrus* (Paris: Wolfgang, 1662), A 2 [dedication to Mme Fouquet].

Benefits and drawbacks of patronage for the writer

The most obvious reason why writers would seek a patron was a financial one. Writers' income from their work alone was insecure and financial support in a patronage relationship would have provided an important, sometimes vital, supplement to revenue from plays and published works. A key financial reward for authors was in the form of a *gratification*, an isolated payment for a dedication, though in some cases authors received annual pensions, and could also be given room and board by their patron, or even given priority for an appointment to an office.[890] In exchange for an annual pension, authors 'served as literary advisors, composing occasional verse and guiding their protectors in matters of taste. Other services included […] tutoring children, acting as a secretary, and orchestrating publicity campaigns on behalf of a patron'.[891]

Kettering sees one aspect of patronage as being 'a system of personal ties and networks'.[892] This was an important as, in addition to offering a source of economic capital, the patron could provide less tangible moral and social support. As Nicolas Schapira says, '[la] plus banale [protection] – mais non la moins importante – réside dans la capacité d'intercession auprès des institutions ou des hommes de pouvoir pour soutenir des affaires dans lesquels [il] se trouvait engagé'.[893] Thus the patron's social capital and connections within a powerful network of important contacts could be extended to include his *protégé* authors. Schapira identifies the impact of patronage on an author's social connections: 'le gain le plus évident est en même temps le plus difficile à mesurer: il s'agit du prestige social tiré de la fréquentation d'aristocrates et de puissants'.[894] Harrison reinforces this point and suggests a further way that the author could benefit from his patron's social capital: the 'image of the noble patron could augment the writer's reputation and, eventually, his income even if the protector gave a prestigious name but negligible financial support'.[895] Thus, if a writer was associated with a sufficiently influential patron this could act as confirmation of the author's ability and enhance his reputation. Frank Donoghue argues that being linked to an influential patron acts as 'a clear index of literary fame'.[896]

Brown makes the point that a patron could support the writer's image as an *honnête homme*: 'in accepting the dedication, protectors informally but quite visibly sanctioned the author to

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[890] Shoemaker, pp.34-35.
[891] Shoemaker, p.31.
[892] Kettering, 'Patronage', p.839.
[893] Nicolas Schapira, *Un Professionnel des Lettres au XVIIe siècle. Valentin Conrart: Une Histoire Sociale* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2003), p.279.
[894] Schapira, p.276.
[895] Harrison, p.22.
[896] Frank Donoghue, *The Fame Machine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.2.

publish his work, preventing him from appearing dangerously self-promotional and thus jeopardizing his honorable standing among elites'.[897] An influential noble patron was therefore believed to be a means of ensuring a favourable reception for a play. As Shoemaker suggests, writers may 'seek the support of prominent and influential figures [... to] deploy social and political pressure [...] to influence perceptions of aesthetic value'.[898] Mairet furnishes an example in his dedication of *La Silvanire* to the Duchesse de Montmorency: '[le] souci de réussir à la Cour n'est pas ce qui lui donne le plus de peine, puisqu'il est assuré que sous vos auspices elle n'y saurait être que parfaitement bien reçue'.[899] The trust placed in the good taste of a patron shows that social capital can influence the perceptions of the author's cultural capital: an author may be believed to be talented simply because he has the support of an important noble. This aspect of the authority of a patron as a judge of the quality of a work is a common theme in dedications. Quinault, in his dedication to the Duc de Candale, says 'toute la France est fortement persuadée de la justesse du discernement que vous faites de toutes choses';[900] Racine declares in his dedication to the Duc de Saint-Aignan: 'si *La Thébaïde* a reçu quelques applaudissements, c'est sans doute qu'on n'a pas osé démentir le jugement que vous avez donné en sa faveur'.[901] Griffin confirms this: 'the patron, equipped in theory by birth, education, taste and leisure is better qualified than his inferiors or even nascent professionals to serve as the judge of literary merit'.[902] The positive reception of a work by such patrons would be seen to validate its quality and help to guarantee its success.

Writers would have wanted to present themselves as successful as a strategy in accumulating further forms of capital and status. Appearing as a successful author who had won the renown of his peers and of the theatre-going public was an important step in winning the support of a noble patron, since the cultural capital acquired through the status of success and its 'scarcity value'[903] would attract the interest of a potential patron. This self-advertisement underlies the dedications and can provide an opportunity for the author to remind readers of the success of the early performances of the play: as Racine unnecessarily reminds Colbert (in the dedication to *Bérénice*), 'vous avez été témoin du bonheur qu'elle a eu de ne pas déplaire à Sa Majesté'.[904]

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[897] Brown, p.46.
[898] Shoemaker, p.158.
[899] Mairet, 'La Silvanire', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, I, p.475.
[900] Quinault, *L'Amant indiscret*, p.51.
[901] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.113.
[902] Griffin, p.23.
[903] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.245.
[904] Racine, I, p.463.

Deborah Blocker and Elie Haddad refer to 'une sorte d'égalité de statut' in patronage relationships; however, they emphasise that this 'ne trompait personne'. There was a tacit agreement on a form of equality between patron and client, since 'les louanges décernées aux premiers par les seconds ne pouvaient être accréditées que si ces derniers apparaissaient d'une condition suffisamment digne pour les prononcer'.[905] Griffin describes the patronage relationship more positively as '"familiarity" whereby persons of talent are permitted to cross a line [...] it implies a rise in status'.[906] For writers of significantly lower social standing the relationship with a noble patron could be a personal, in addition to a public and financial, benefit. The writer could feel genuine gratitude for the condescension shown by an aristocratic patron. Boursault, in his dedication of *Esope,* says of the Duc d'Aumont: 'Je Vous ay veu, MONSEIGNEUR, me tendre genereusement la Main, pour me faciliter les moyens de m'approcher de Vous: & loin de Vous prévaloir de l'intervale qui est entre Vous & moy, avoir la bonté de faire Vous-même des pas de mon côté pour en diminuer l'étenduë'.[907] While the language in seventeenth-century dedications may appear excessive to present-day sensibilities ('avec le zele le plus ardent & le plus respectueux qui ait jamais été', 'tres humble, tres obéisant, & très obligé Serviteur') and while writers were following conventions in the use of courteous expression, the sentiments expressed and the underlying gratitude may be genuine. In the case of dedications paid to the monarch this may be even more true. Quinault, from a humble background, could well have been overwhelmed with gratitude at finding himself with an *entrée* to the court. In his dedication to *Agrippa* he stresses his position at court and proximity to the king, highlighting 'le bon-heur d'approcher la Personne Auguste du plus accomply de tous les Monarques & d'y voir briller de prés les Vertus éclatantes'.[908]

The theatre audience and readers of the published work acted as external spectators to the patronage relationship. A patron was reliant on the audience supporting a play to which he had given his patronage, since 'the prestige attached to patronage faded if the patron supported a work which left the theater audience indifferent'.[909] The patron had signaled his approval of the play and his judgement could be called into question if the play failed to appeal to the theatre audience. Similarly, authors were a much more attractive prospect to potential patrons if they could show that their plays had consistently pleased the public. For the patron, therefore, there

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[905] Deborah Blocker and Elie Haddad, 'Protections et statut d'auteur à l'époque moderne: Formes et enjeux des pratiques de patronage dans la querelle du *Cid* (1637)', *French Historical Studies,* 31 (2008), 381-416 (pp.401-02).
[906] Griffin, p.19.
[907] Boursault, *Fables d'Esope*, [p. a i].
[908] Quinault, *Agrippa Roy d'Albe ou le Faux Tiberinus* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1663), pp. aii *v*-iii.
[909] Harrison, p.21.

was more cultural capital available from being associated with a popular play. The author, meanwhile, would have a greater chance of gaining economic capital from an important patron if his previous plays had been popular, as well as the possibility of increased ticket sales if an important patron was known to be supporting a play. Part of the success of the patronage relationship therefore relied on the relationship between the author and the public. On the other hand, an author was unlikely to choose as a patron someone who was out of favour with the wider public, including those at court. In this way the attitudes of many people who would not benefit directly from the patron-client relationship were in fact integral to its formation.

Shoemaker suggests that patronage offered authors two types of liberty. The first was a metaphorical liberty 'from the necessity of catering to the short attention span of popular audiences',[910] since the financial support offered by a patron could sometimes offset the negative impact of an unsuccessful play. The second form is more literal, since the 'degree of penal appropriation of texts seems to have been highly variable depending on a writer's position within the patronage system'.[911] 'Penal appropriation' is a reference to the confiscation of works that were deemed too controversial or seditious for publication. Therefore, an author with a powerful noble patron was given greater liberty to publish without being punished, or would have had their punishment lessened. Boursault's granddaughter reports that on one occasion Boursault escaped imprisonment thanks to the personal intervention of his patron, the Prince de Condé, who appealed to the king on the latter's behalf.[912] In a similar example, Mairet refers to the Duc de Montmorency's support for Théophile de Viau when the latter was arrested: '[t]oute la France est témoin de ce que vous avez fait pour un de ses plus beaux esprits, à qui votre seule protection a donné lieu de témoigner son innocence'.[913] As will be seen in the next chapter, both Boursault and Racine safeguarded themselves by dedicating potentially controversial plays to their most powerful patrons. Patrons were not obliged to accept a dedication. Boursault suggests in one of his letters that patrons did refuse dedications, saying that 'de cinq ou six [patrons] à qui je me suis addressé je n'en sçai que deux qui me fassent la grace de me souffrir'.[914] This also suggests that authors contacted potential patrons before dedicating a play to them. If a patron chose to accept the dedication to a play that had been controversial, this demonstrated that the patron was fully prepared to support the author. By

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[910] Shoemaker, pp.165-66.
[911] Shoemaker, p.104.
[912] Boursault, *Theatre,* I, [p. a x].
[913] Mairet, 'La Sylvie', in *Théâtre du XVIIe siècle*, I, p.393.
[914] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, p.130.

accepting such a dedication, patrons risked damaging their social capital by being linked to a polemic, unless their position in society was so high that very little would have damaged it.

Once a writer had secured the support of a powerful patron, and provided he worked within the boundaries of what was considered acceptable at the time for performance and publication, he became artistically relatively free. A patron's support was not usually linked to literary output, as would be the case in the advance commissioning of a particular work with direct specifications from the patron. Mesnard sees a positive impact of centralised state sponsorship on creative artists: 'soumis à un mécénat plus lointain et accédant à une meilleure condition matérielle, […ils] gagneront, d'une certaine manière, en indépendance'.[915] However, the need for writers to exercise caution about the content of their works was of key importance. Brown refers to:

> an aesthetic and institutional framework established by the royal court; performances of plays that adhered to this framework (classicism, as evaluated by the Académie) would be those best received by Richelieu, the King and other potential protectors […]. Authors of such plays would therefore be most likely to gain a public identity as 'men of letters' as well as commercial revenues from performances and, more important, pensions and income from offices made available to them by patrons.[916]

A writer who accepted such constraints could make rapid progress, especially by ensuring that his plays would appeal as court entertainments: Quinault responded quickly and successfully to the taste for the new operatic genre. Writers with *habitus* could see the advantages of conforming to the requirements of propaganda in celebrating royal events: Racine was rewarded for his *Ode sur la convalescence du Roi* with a royal pension. Forestier notes that in writing the ode, Racine's goal 'n'était pas d'atteindre à l'immortalité: il s'agissait de satisfaire les attentes de Chapelain et de se faire reconnaître comme auteur'.[917] Viala reviews the situation of writers who struggled to operate within the established system: 'la logique du succès n'est accomplie que lorsque vient la consécration mécénique, et celle-ci se paie par une forme de dépendance.'[918] He cites the example of Tristan, whom he sees as embodying a 'mythe littéraire': 'celui de l'écrivain qui a besoin de liberté pour se consacrer à son œuvre et que les continences emprisonnent. […] L'héroïsme littéraire est encore à ses yeux de gentilhomme, trop entachés de soumissions qu'il estime ignobles'.[919] He considers the tensions faced by 'un écrivain qui se voue à l'art sans être soumis au principe de nécessité sociale' and concludes 'le

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[915] Mesnard, p.440.
[916] Brown, p.40.
[917] Forestier, p.185.
[918] Viala, *Naissance,* p.236.
[919] Viala, p.238.

goût d'écrire et la carrière sociale sont loin d'être incompatibles à l'époque, au contraire. Ce qu'il [Tristan] supporte mal, en fait, c'est la nécessité des manœuvres, compromis et stratégies.'[920] Viala's argument about the employment by successful writers of strategies to work within the existing system will be illustrated later in comparing the approaches of the case study authors.

Another constraint on artistic freedom would have been the necessity for writers to respond in an appropriate way to their patrons' ideas. Writers would have to make the most of suggestions made by patrons: Molière's comments in his dedication to the king, thanking him for 'l'ordre qu'Elle [Sa Majesté] me donna d'y ajouter un caractère de fâcheux, dont elle eut la bonté de m'ouvrir les idées Elle-même, et qui a été trouvée partout le plus beau morceau de l'ouvrage'[921] may represent genuine appreciation for the king's interest but equally may be disguised irritation at the interference by a patron who had to be humoured. Viala poses the question: 'Qui est vraiment l'auteur? L'écrivain ou bien le patron qui l'a commandité, qui lui a donné une ligne générale, parfois un canevas?' and he concludes 'Et par conséquent l'autonomie de l'auteur a été limitée, ou son autonomisation freinée'.[922] The career trajectories of the case study authors will provide examples where the content of a writer's work has been influenced, if not dictated, by the need to please a patron.

A patronage relationship was more than a professional relationship; it entailed conforming to expected behaviour. To present-day sensibilities patronage may appear to require a creative artist to behave in an artificial way, restrained by social norms and obliged to curry favour by obsequious behaviour. It would not have appeared thus in a society where patronage was the norm and polite behaviour an essential for social acceptance. The majority of writers appear to have worked within the system without denouncing it, publicly at least. Kettering acknowledges that the relationship between a writer and a patron could be threatened 'by a one-sided exchange of material favours creating an imbalance persisting over time'.[923] Bourdieu points out that 'the declared refusal of calculation and of guarantees which characterizes exchanges […] necessarily entails the risk of ingratitude'.[924] Lough provides examples of authors who felt that they had not been sufficiently rewarded by their patron: when Mazarin did not show the expected gratitude to Scarron who dedicated *Le Typhon* to him, Scarron was so enraged that he

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[920] Viala, *Naissance,* pp.237-38.
[921] Molière, I, p.481.
[922] Viala, 'Statut de l'écrivain', p.82.
[923] Kettering, 'Patronage', p.858.
[924] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.254.

wrote a sonnet to complain of the perceived injustice.[925] Scarron was willing to present himself as an outraged author and use the publicity that patronage offered to the nobility as a means to attack Mazarin for his frugality. It might be thought that by complaining about not receiving economic rewards, Scarron risked damaging his image as an *honnête homme*. However, since patronage was based on a system of exchange, Scarron's sonnet would have been equally damaging to Mazarin's public image, suggesting that he was not upholding his part of the unofficial agreement.

Lough also provides the example of Maynard, who wrote a poem to Richelieu which finished with the lines: 'Mais s'il demande à quel emploi/ Tu m'as occupé dans le monde/ Et quels biens j'ai reçus de toi,/ Que veux-tu que je lui réponde'.[926] To which the Cardinal apparently responded 'Rien'.[927] Lough interprets this as Richelieu's refusing to reward the poem. However, an alternative explanation, based on the concept of self-presentation, would suggest that the Cardinal did not wish to be seen to be publicly engaging in a direct financial transaction with an author. Maynard's lines make a clear link between his writing and the reward he will potentially receive from the Cardinal. By using the word 'emploi', Maynard risks suggesting that the relationship between himself and the Cardinal is a business relationship, rather than the relationship of mutual respect suggested by 'gift-giving'. Although Richelieu would have risked damaging his image by not rewarding an author for a poem, it would have done greater damage to his image if he had been seen as entering into a business transaction. By contrast, 'gift-giving' allowed both parties to suggest that they were giving a gift to someone out of respect, and did not expect anything in return, though both knew that failure to repay a gift would be impolite. Lough identifies another negative aspect of the patronage system for writers. It was a matter of concern for writers that there were frequent delays in the payment of royal gifts and he notes the gradual decline in volume and the relatively short life of the 'much publicized gifts to men of letters [...] they do not seem, even on this restricted scale, to have lasted beyond 1690'.[928] A supposedly regular pension may not have always offered security of income.

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[925] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.105.
[926] François de Maynard, *Poésies de François Maynard*, ed. by Ferdinand Gohin (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1927), p.112.
[927] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.103.
[928] Lough, p.111.

Conclusion

The patronage system was central to literary life at this period. It was a complex and evolving process which operated on a number of levels. Authors needed to understand the complexities inherent in a patronage relationship to maximise the benefits available to them from patrons. While the authors' approach would have been viewed by contemporaries as seeking social advancement and financial sponsorship – a natural pattern of behaviour at the time – the application of Bourdieu's concept of forms of capital can further illuminate the process. Writers used a range of strategies to benefit from the system. They sought economic capital through gratifications and pensions. They needed to become known in elite circles quickly to develop social capital and make connections with potential patrons. Comparing this to Elias's and Scotson's work on outsiders suggests that for an author at the beginning of his career, the way to become established was through social connections. Writers needed to form relationships with the members of the aristocracy who possessed inherent social standing (by birthright) in order to enter the closed world of the court and gain access to influential patrons.

Delineating the forms of capital is helpful in analysing the rewards authors were seeking but it has been seen that the process was not straightforward or directly linear and there was considerable overlap between authors' motivations and the interdependent forms of capital. A successful career could be viewed, in simple terms, as a spiral: each further gain in a form of capital led to conversion to another form of capital. An increase in social connections could lead to a gain in economic capital. A patron could be the source of all three forms of capital and an author would be seeking to gain all forms of capital, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes prioritising one form of capital, depending on his immediate needs. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is particularly pertinent in reviewing the system of patronage. He recognises some of the problems inherent in its transmission, arguing that 'it cannot be transmitted instantaneously (unlike money […]) by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange'. He goes on to explain 'because the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital'.[929] He concludes that 'cultural goods' such as a work of art 'can be appropriated both materially – which presupposes economic capital – and symbolically – which presupposes cultural capital'.[930] When a seventeenth-century patron receives the dedication of a play, it is not a monetary purchase. It is a symbolic act and part of a complex understanding of reciprocal exchange. Gift-exchange and particularly the concept of 'transfer

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[929] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.245.
[930] Bourdieu, p.247.

of ownership' of the work to the patron can be seen as an example of the transmission of cultural capital.

CHAPTER 6 – THE PURSUIT OF PATRONAGE BY THE CASE STUDY AUTHORS

The involvement of the three case study authors in patronage relationships will now be examined and compared with the general theoretical perspectives discussed in the previous chapter. The three authors shared the aim of securing and maintaining the support of influential patrons but their different strategies in achieving this enable a more detailed analysis of practice. The consideration of their specific approaches to patronage relationships draws on studies by their key biographers but this chapter will explore the specific differences in their approaches to highlight their strategies, in particular their use of dedications, and their responses to changes in the patronage system.

Quinault's approach

Quinault appears to have had a definite strategy in the selection of patrons for whom he composed his dedications. His ultimate patronage goal was the royal court but rather than offering dedications in his early plays directly to members of the royal family and to important courtiers, he began by dedicating plays to people connected to them, thus building up a network of connections around the most powerful figures in the kingdom. The meticulously organised and obviously sequential approach is striking.[931] Brooks describes 'Quinault's plans to raise his sights by steady increment with each succeeding dedication'.[932] The approach is illustrative of Bourdieu's concept of 'investment strategies',[933] recognising the necessary investment of time and effort in creating social relationships which will provide a useful return. Quinault dedicated *Amalasonte* in 1658 to Mazarin, but prepared the way by using other plays to gain the support of key figures close to him, namely his two nephews-in-law, the Prince de Conti and the Duc de La Meilleraye. Conti was an important figure in his own right, as 'Prince du Sang, Pair de France'[934] as well as Condé's younger brother. Conti and La Meilleraye may therefore have been seen by Quinault as powerful allies themselves, but also as people capable of advancing his cause with Mazarin. Conti had been Molière's protector, and therefore had an interest in patronising the arts, but relatively soon after Quinault dedicated *La Généreuse ingratitude* to him 'il s'était converti tout à coup'[935] and as a result, ceased to support the theatre. This may explain why Quinault dedicated *La Comédie sans Comédie* to La Meilleraye. Given Mazarin's reluctance to support the arts (at least compared to Richelieu), Quinault might have found it

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[931] See Appendix 3 for a chronological list of Quinault's plays and their dedicatees.
[932] Brooks, p.182.
[933] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.249.
[934] Gros, p.18.
[935] Auguste de La Force, *Le Grand Conti* (Paris: Emile-Paul Frères, 1922), p.8.

useful to have supporters within Mazarin's family, rather than relying on a dedication in the first instance directly to Mazarin. There is no direct evidence that Quinault benefitted from his appeal to Mazarin, but given the often vague nature of patronage relationships or the unquantifiable nature of the rewards, this does not mean that his strategy failed. Brooks suggests that 'it was certainly successful in one respect, for […] Mazarin later commissioned, and perhaps provided some material for, Quinault's tribute to the royal newly-weds'.[936]

Quinault's initial dedications to Mazarin and his family show that the author recognised the need to accumulate social capital at the beginning of his career. However, he subsequently turned his attention to Nicholas Fouquet, the Minister of Finances, who, although possessing social capital, would have been more attractive for his economic capital. In addition to his own finances, he 'avait la ressource d'ouvrir à ses protégés le trésor royale'.[937] Fouquet also seems to have been more generous with his gifts than Mazarin; Chatelain notes that '[la] complaisance de Foucquet donnait dans l'excès'.[938] Unlike Mazarin, Fouquet was famed for his appreciation of literature, building up an extensive library with the intention of forming his own literary salon.[939] Brooks considers that 'Quinault could not have thought of a more appropriate dedicatee to be next in his ambitious series of protectors'.[940]

Quinault's strategy in dedicating a play to Fouquet represents a change in the tactics he had used with Mazarin and would later use with the royal family: he begins by dedicating a play to Fouquet, and subsequently dedicates other plays to members of Fouquet's family. It appears to be rare to have dedicated two plays to the same person, so Quinault dedicated a later play, *La Mort de Cyrus,* to Fouquet's wife. This enabled him to reinforce indirectly his gratitude to Fouquet, as much of the text of the dedication focuses on her husband's generosity and gratitude for the acceptance of the dedication of *Le Feint Alcibiade*, written the year before. Although it was not unusual for plays to be dedicated to the husband and then to the wife, the dedication to the wife is not normally used as an excuse to praise the husband, as Quinault does here. Quinault apologises for focusing so much on her husband's generosity: 'Excusez moy, s'il vous plaist, MADAME, si je parle avec tant d'ardeur de cet illustre Protecteur des Muses dans un endroit, où je ne devrois parler que de vous'.[941] Nevertheless it is a clever tactic by Quinault, since it allows him to suggest to other potential patrons that their generosity will not go unnoticed. It

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[936] Brooks, p.165.
[937] Chatelain, p.171.
[938] Chatelain, p.157.
[939] Charles Drazin, *The Man Who Outshone the Sun King* (London: Heinemann, 2008), pp.131-32.
[940] Brooks, p.175.
[941] Quinault, *La Mort de Cyrus*, A 3.

also lays down a challenge to future patrons to match Fouquet's generosity. Rather than publicly complaining about a lack of generosity, Quinault preferred to show how generous his patron was, in the hope that other potential patrons would recognise how they would be rewarded with flattering praise.

Quinault dedicated his next play, *Stratonice*, to Nicolas Jeannin de Castille, Mme Fouquet's cousin and Trésorier de l'Epargne, the man who oversaw the royal treasury. All of this attention to Fouquet's family appears to have paid dividends for Quinault, whom Chatelain describes as 'le favori de Foucquet'.[942] When Fouquet's friend M. de Lyonne needed an author to write a play about recent peace negotiations and the king's marriage, a very significant opportunity for someone to make a name for himself, he selected Quinault to write *Lysis et Hespérie*.[943]

In the case of the royal family, Quinault adopted once again the strategy of making a gradual approach to a patron, by dedicating *Le Mariage de Cambise* to the king's brother in 1659, when he had the title of Duc d'Anjou. The Duc may have been more accessible to a young writer and both Molière and Boursault dedicated works to him before any other member of the royal family. This tactic seems to have been successful for Quinault in gaining the king's good will. Louis gave him 1,200 *livres*, probably for his dedication of *Agrippa*,[944] and Boscheron notes 'le Roi, pour l'encourager à redoubler ses soins, lui donna deux-mille livres de pension'.[945] While this underlines the economic capital that the monarchy offered, the monarchy would have been more appealing as the prime source of social capital. Quinault's dedications thus point to an author building his career in gradual, spiralling stages, first prioritising the accumulation of social capital, then, once he was well-connected, improving his economic capital, and then seeking to improve further his social capital through the highest levels in society. These dedications would have allowed Quinault to present himself as someone with close links to the royal family. Already in 1660 he had purchased the title of *valet de chambre ordinaire du roi*, which as Brooks notes 'made him a member of the king's household and brought him into daily contact with Louis XIV himself'.[946] Gros states that the position 'conférait la noblesse, l'écurie et divers avantages' but above all '[il] est probable que le poète y vit surtout un moyen de se rapprocher de Louis XIV [ce qui fut] son unique ambition'.[947]

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[942] Chatelain, p.227.
[943] Chatelain, p.229.
[944] Brooks, p.293.
[945] Boscheron, p.35.
[946] Brooks, p.277.
[947] Gros, p.63.

Having dedicated plays to the king and queen,[948] Quinault seems to have wished to ensure his popularity with the monarchy by courting the Dauphin as well. He did this by dedicating works to the Montausier family, firstly the Duc's wife and then the Duc himself. When Quinault dedicated *La Mère Coquette* to her, Mme de Montausier was the governess of the Dauphin, and was succeeded in that role by her husband, shortly before Quinault dedicated *Pausanias* to him. According to Denis Lopez, the Duc de Montausier 'possède très tôt cette curiosité intellectuelle qui l'amène chez les savants',[949] and may therefore have been very willing to act as a patron. Lopez also suggests that Montausier was closely connected with Conrart and Chapelain,[950] meaning that he was influential not only at court but also in the world of literature. As Quinault became a member of the Académie two years after this dedication, he may have benefitted from the support offered by Chapelain and Conrart. While the Duc and Duchesse would have been most appealing as patrons for their social capital because of their links to the Dauphin, the Duc's cultural capital and connections would also have appealed to Quinault.

Quinault also used his early social connections, mainly those of his mentor Tristan, to further his own career. In 1655 Quinault dedicated *Les Coups de l'Amour et de la Fortune* to the Duc de Guise. This was the year that the Duc became Grand Chambellan,[951] and through this role the Duc would have had greater access to the king. De Guise had been patron to Quinault's mentor, Tristan, until the latter's death in 1655. Quinault goes so far as to claim that he is fulfilling Tristan's dying wish, referring to 'le dernier ordre' that he received from Tristan, by dedicating the play to the Duc.[952] Opportunistically, Quinault uses the death of Tristan as an excuse to dedicate a play to the Duc at the precise moment that the latter has increased his social capital significantly. It is unclear to what extent this flattering dedication is responsible for Quinault's rise within the Duc's household, or whether it was simply a result of Tristan's death leaving a vacancy to be filled, but a year after writing the play, Quinault was able to style himself as a 'Gentilhomme de M. de Guise' and had taken Tristan's place in the Duc's household. Quinault also made use of his connection with Tristan in his dedication of *Le Fantôme amoureux* to the Duc de Saint-Aignan, who had also acted as patron to Tristan. As one of the *premiers gentilhommes de la chambre*, the Duc would have been a powerful ally.

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[948] *Agrippa* (published 1663) was dedicated to the king and *Astrate* (published 1665) was dedicated to the queen. See Appendix 3.

[949] Denis Lopez, *La Plume et l'Epée: Montausier (1610-1690)* (Paris: Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature, 1987), p.117.

[950] Lopez, p.8. (Valentin Conrart was an early member and secretary of the Académie Française. Jean Chapelain was also a founding member of the Académie.)

[951] Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.68.

[952] Quinault, *Les Coups de l'Amour et de la Fortune* (Paris, Guillaume de Luyne, 1655), p.i.

The Duc may have had further capital in the political aspects of the literary world: he helped Colbert to become a member of the Académie française in 1667.[953] Brooks sees Saint-Aignan's role as 'the organiser of Louis XIV's entertainments'[954] as part of his attraction as a patron. Additionally, Gros records that he was reported to have been extremely generous and 'écrivains en mal d'argent s'adressaient à lui de préférence à tout autre, le sachant bienveillant et secourable'.[955]

Overall, Quinault's approach provides an illustration of an author following a carefully planned path, with fixed targets for advancement. Brooks says 'there was nowhere his upward strategy could take him except towards the Dauphin',[956] yet he sees in the dedication of *Bellérophon* to the Duc de Chevreuse a turning towards Colbert. Quinault seems to have been repeating his earlier tactic, given that the Duc de Chevreuse had married Colbert's daughter in 1667: 'considering Quinault's crab-like progress towards Mazarin over a decade earlier, one can see [in this dedication] a move towards Colbert, whose own position had been strengthened in recent years'. However, this was his final spoken play so he did not in fact dedicate any of his plays to Colbert. Brooks concludes: 'once Quinault threw in his lot with Lully, the only dedicatee who mattered was Louis XIV'.[957]

Quinault does not appear to expend much effort on portraying himself as an *homme de lettres* in his dedications, though his knowledge of classical sources is evident from some of the themes of his plays. His dedications only occasionally give fleeting examples of his education, such as comparing the Duc de Guise with Alexander.[958] Quinault's dedication to *Agrippa* includes a reference to the verse of Homer and the comedies of Terence.[959] The majority of his dedications feature modest declarations befitting an *honnête homme*, such as 'un présent si peu digne de vous'.[960] He suggests that his plays will only be remembered because of their patrons, declaring to the Duc de Guise that *Les Coups de l'Amour et de la Fortune* is 'une pièce de théâtre qui ne doit être considerable que pour avoir eu la gloire de paroistre devant votre altesse'.[961] Similarly, he expresses the concern that *La Comédie sans Comédie* has only been successful because of its novelty, and would have subsequently failed 'si je n'avais trouvé le secret de rendre cet

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[953] Ines Murat, *Colbert* (Paris: Fayard, 1980), p.188.
[954] Brooks, p.85.
[955] Gros, p.40.
[956] Brooks, p.318.
[957] Brooks, p.343.
[958] Quinault, *Coups de l'Amour*, p.ii.
[959] Quinault, *Agrippa*, [pp.a.v-vi].
[960] Quinault, *Œuvres Choisies de Quinault* (Paris: Crapelet, 1824), p.128.
[961] Quinault, *Coups de l'Amour*, p.i.

ouvrage plus glorieux qu'il ne fut jamais en la consacrant à la personne du monde le plus illustre'.[962] This tactic allows him to remind his readers that the piece had been very successful when performed, yet still allows Quinault to appear modest, even if it is false modesty. Quinault seems prepared to acknowledge this tactic in one of his dedications: 'Je n'affecteray point de paroistre modeste en diminuant le prix que l'approbation publique a donné, peut-estre trop favorablement, au FEINT ALCIBIADE'.[963] As Brooks says of Quinault's first dedication (to *Les Rivales*): '[H]owever gratefully he acknowledged the support and protection of his dedicatees, Quinault began as he was to continue, rarely being modest in alluding to his own success'.[964]

Quinault makes obvious use of the rhetorical device *praeteritio* to avoid the appearance of obsequious flattery in his dedications. He reassures Mme de Montausier that 'j'en retrancherai les éloges que vous pourriez craindre d'une Epître dédicatoire',[965] and tells the Duc de Guise 'je ne me servirai pas ici de la méthode ordinaire des Ecrivains les plus estimés'.[966] However, in both cases he then proceeds to flatter the dedicatees indirectly, informing Mme de Montausier: 'ce n'est pas, Madame, une légère peine que je m'impose', and then suggesting that he does not have the ability to praise her qualities adequately.[967] Having told the Duc that he would not follow other authors by praising him, Quinault devotes the rest of the dedication to barely disguised praise of the Duc's birth and other qualities.[968] Quinault was trying to avoid obvious sycophancy, which, as Faret notes, was a vice that the *honnête homme* should avoid at all costs,[969] yet still wished to praise his patrons as much as was expected by the conventions of dedications.

This analysis of Quinault's management of patronage illustrates a structured approach, the main thrust of which progresses towards his key targets and also becomes more ambitious (starting with ministers, then nobles, then the king, and finally the future king). He sought opportunities to cultivate a patron through social connections and planned his choice of dedicatees. All his patrons had significant social capital, as well as being a source of financial support. Although he never chose patrons solely for their cultural capital, certain of his patrons did have strong

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[962] Quinault, *La Comédie sans Comédie* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1660), p.a.iii.
[963] Quinault, *Le Feint Alcibiade* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1658), p.a.ii.
[964] Brooks, p.48.
[965] Quinault, *Œuvres Choisies*, p.128.
[966] Quinault, *Coups de l'Amour*, p.ii.
[967] Quinault, *Œuvres Choisies*, p.128.
[968] Quinault, *Coups de l'Amour,* p.ii.
[969] Faret, p.122.

connections to the literary field, meaning that, although their social capital was greater, their value as possessors of cultural capital should not be overlooked. This underlines the essential fluidity between the forms of capital.

Boursault's approach

Croft, writing of Boursault, says 'tout au long de sa carrière, […] il s'entoure d'un réseau social influent et s'attire la protection de puissants mécènes'.[970] She has produced a useful overview of the works of Boursault with their dedicatees and brief biographical details[971] and she uses this analysis as evidence of 'ceux qui […] se méritèrent une épître aux yeux de Boursault.'[972] Unlike Quinault, who appears to use each dedication as a stepping-stone to the next one, Boursault does not seem to be following an overarching strategy with his dedications. He seems to make tactical use of dedications: his three most controversial plays are dedicated to three of his most influential dedicatees. Boursault's *habitus*, his awareness of the dangers inherent in the strategy of literary controversy, would have dictated that he should find a powerful ally to whom he could dedicate these plays. The attraction of all three patrons was their social connections and their influence at court which could have protected Boursault from punishment for any offence caused by his controversial plays, in the same way that the Prince de Condé had helped him to avoid prison early in his career.[973] In the dedications of *La Satire des Satires* and *Le Portrait du Peintre*, Boursault specifically mentions needing protection from his enemies.[974] These plays satirised Boileau and Molière respectively, and Boursault could have feared a hostile reaction from their patrons and influential supporters. *Le Portrait du Peintre* was dedicated to the son of the Prince de Condé; according to Croft, 'comme son père, le duc d'Enghien apprécie le théâtre' and she concludes 'Boursault aurait réellement bénéficié de la protection des Condé, père et fils et ce, pendant plusieurs années'.[975] *La Satire des Satires* was dedicated à François de Rohan, Prince de Soubise, described in the dedication by Boursault as 'un Appuy si considerable à un Ouvrage qui a esté si cruellement persecuté'.[976] Before selecting the Prince as the dedicatee, Boursault is likely to have been in correspondence with him: Boursault's published letters include one where he refers to having known the Prince before

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[970] Croft, '*Esope à la Cour* (1701) d'Edme Boursault: allégories et clefs historiques', in *S'exprimer autrement: poétique et enjeux de l'allégorie à l'Âge classique,* ed. by Marie-Christine Pioffet and Anne-Elisabeth Spica (Tübingen: Narr Francke AttemptoVerlag, 2016), pp.123-33 (p.123).
[971] Croft, *Boursault*, pp.100-02. (See Appendix 1.)
[972] Croft, p.103.
[973] See Chapter 3 p.56 for further detail.
[974] Boursault, *Le Portrait du Peintre* (Paris: Guignard, 1663), p.ii and *Satire des Satires*, p.aii-iii.
[975] Croft, *Boursault,* pp.108-09.
[976] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, [p. a ii].

writing to him ('depuis que j'ai l'honneur de vous connoître').[977] In addition to the Prince's own importance, there are suggestions that his wife became Louis XIV's mistress,[978] so Boursault may have regarded the house of Soubise as having new-found influence at court which would be useful support for a controversial play. Boursault's third controversial play, *La Comédie sans titre*, which mocked the *Mercure Galant,* was dedicated to the Duc de Saint-Aignan, to whom he dedicated a second play, *Marie Stuart,* four years later and for which he was rewarded generously. He too was a powerful ally: Croft describes Saint-Aignan as 'personnage influent et central dans le champ littéraire de l'époque'.[979]

Boursault is an example of an author who was at times dissatisfied with the patronage system and who was willing to criticise it publicly. Seeking patronage must have been, even if only occasionally, dispiriting: Boursault highlights some of difficulties he faced early in his career with his complaint against

> l'un des plus galans Courtisans […] qui me témoigna être charmé de ce que je mettois son nom au-devant d'un Livre, reçut généreusement le présent que je luy en fis, et ne m'a pas voulu voir depuis.[980]

Croft suggests that 'Boursault, conscient du caractère à la fois bassement intéressé et illusoire des épîtres dédicatoires, ne manque pas de le souligner'.[981] Boursault's letter entitled 'Sur l'inutilité des Dédicaces des Livres'[982] makes a public declaration of the faults of the patronage system. He is not, however, simply concerned with shaming his patrons, but also with presenting a favourable image of himself, admitting 'j'ai pratiqué ce que je condamne' but 'j'étois dans une erreur, dont […] j'ai fait abjuration'. Like Scarron in his censure of Mazarin (discussed in Chapter 5), Boursault criticises patrons for their avarice, hoping to encourage greater generosity from future patrons by suggesting that they risked being publicly embarrassed if they were not generous. However, unlike Scarron, he uses the opportunity to show them that he is an *honnête homme* who deserves their support. Boursault writes that he is 'las d'aider à déïfier des gens qui croiraient leur argent mal employé s'ils payaient l'apothéose qu'on leur donne'. He further criticises the patronage system, saying that it is founded more on wealth than merit ('dès qu'un homme […] passe pour libéral, et qu'il a le moyen de le paraître, il est sûr de ne pas manquer d'éloges'). Boursault describes dedications as praise 'qu'on ne

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[977] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.152.
[978] Antonia Fraser, *Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2006), p.167.
[979] Croft, *Boursault*, p.116.
[980] Boursault, *Artémise et Poliante*, pp. a iv-v.
[981] Croft, p.98.
[982] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, pp.129-32.

donnerait peut-être pas si l'on n'espérait en être récompensé'. However, he reserves some criticism for his fellow authors, noting that they are so eager to praise wealthy members of the nobility that if those nobles gave money to all of the authors who sought to praise them, they would soon have no money at all. He also highlights the irony that 'la dernière personne qu'un auteur s'avise de louer est ordinairement celle qui a de plus grandes qualités'. Boursault was the only case study author to voice publicly an opinion against reliance on dedications. Racine abandoned the use of dedications mid-way through his career and Genette makes the interesting point that to do so carries a message implied in this act:

> car l'absence de dédicace dans un système qui en comporte la possibilité, est significative comme un degré zéro. «Ce livre n'est dédié à personne»: un tel message implicite n'est-il pas lourd de sens? – Au choix, d'ailleurs: soit «Je ne vois personne qui mérite ce livre», soit «Je ne vois personne *que* mérite ce livre».[983]

Boursault is highly critical of those aspects of patronage that author and patron sought to conceal beneath the veneer of gift-giving. He criticised other authors for offering undeserved praise for mercenary motives and distanced himself from such practice by declaring that instead of dedicating works to members of the nobility, his intention was to dedicate his next works to 'tous les amis que j'ai, & rendre justice à leur mérite, pour reconnoître l'amitié dont ils m'honorent'.[984] This accords with the ideal of an author unconcerned by financial matters, merely writing to please his friends and using a dedication as a chance to thank them, rather than giving false praise in an attempt to earn financial rewards. It should be remembered that, although this letter would have been written to only one recipient, letters in the seventeenth century were often read publicly, and this letter was also published, ensuring that it would have reached people other than the original recipient. Boursault's criticism is serving a double function: shaming avaricious nobles in an attempt to encourage future generosity, while at the same time presenting himself as someone who will not flatter people simply because they are rich. Boursault's letter is therefore a masterpiece of self-presentation: it is in essence a begging letter asking for his dedications to be better rewarded, yet disguised as a criticism of the system and the mercenary authors who sought to profit from it. It gives an example of how authors managed the challenge of asking for financial support, while at the same time appearing indifferent to financial rewards, and the system of gift-giving allowed both the patron and the client to claim that money was not important in the valuation of culture.

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[983] Genette, p.138.
[984] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, p.131.

Boursault is also an interesting case study when examining the decline of royal and aristocratic patronage. This was a gradual process and was not limited to France. Frank Donoghue, writing about the English literary field, states 'the exact date of the death of aristocratic patronage has been widely disputed'. He argues that, in the early eighteenth century, 'its place was taken by a variety of other more broadly based and indirect forms of patronage, such as publication by subscription and the open market'.[985] He suggests that this 'precipitated a crisis among aspiring authors' as 'they had neither a clear index of literary fame (such as affiliation with a patron had once bestowed) nor a way to specify the relationship of one piece of their writing to the next (since market demands so greatly influenced what they chose to write)'.[986] In France, there was a gradual decrease in royal patronage from the period when it was at its height in the 1660s (the start of Boursault's career), with a sharper decline following Louis XIV's religious conversion, as a result of which the king was reluctant to support the theatre. This change of heart on Louis's part is usually attributed to his relationship with Mme de Maintenon. Mark Bryant suggests that her influence grew during the 1690s,[987] a period which coincides with Boursault's dedicating his plays to people outside the royal circle, preferring to appeal to members of the nobility who had ties to the theatre and who represented a source of cultural capital.

Boursault dedicated both of his *Esope* plays to members of the Duc d'Aumont's family, first to the Duc himself and then to his daughter-in-law, Mme de Villequier. Although they would have possessed considerable social capital as members of the nobility and could have provided financial support, Boursault was adopting a tactical approach by his choice of the Duc, who was one of the *premiers gentilhommes de la chambre,* and in this role had responsibility for the Comédie-Française, a position that would have made him particularly attractive as a dedicatee. In a letter to the Duc, Boursault explains that the actors are reluctant to perform the fable of the stomach and the limbs (which shows the necessity of a subject placing the well-being of the monarch above his own) without royal approval.[988] Boursault does not say precisely why the actors were reluctant to act the scene, merely saying that they found it 'délicate',[989] which may suggest that they were concerned that the king would not be pleased with the comparison.

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[985] Donoghue, p.1.
[986] Donoghue, p.2.
[987] Mark Bryant, 'Partner, Matriarch and Minister: Mme de Maintenon of France, Clandestine Consort 1680-1715', in *Queenship in Europe 1660-1815: the Role of the Consort,* ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.77-106 (p.86).
[988] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, p.228. In this fable the stomach represents the monarch, and the limbs, representing the loyal subjects, are obliged by necessity to overlook their own desires and fulfil the wishes of the stomach, since if the stomach fails, the rest of the body dies too.
[989] Boursault, I, p.229.

D'Aumont therefore represents a useful supporter for Boursault, since not only would he have been close to the king personally, but his position would have given his opinion even greater importance in the theatrical world. The Duc wrote back to say that he has enjoyed the scene that Boursault sent him and '[je] n'y ai rien trouvé qui ne soit dans l'ordre';[990] his approval for the fable appears to have persuaded the actors to drop their objections. It may have been in recognition of this service, or as thanks for the compliments that the Duc pays Boursault in his letter, that Boursault subsequently dedicated the play to him. This dedication represents another example of a patron being chosen on the basis of his ability to protect or defend a potentially controversial play.

In the dedication Boursault appears to be hinting that he would appreciate some further support from the Duc, mentioning that Aesop's patron had built a golden statue in his honour.[991] The intended parallel is clear: as the author of a fable play, Boursault is presenting himself as a modern-day Aesop, and therefore hinting that his modern-day patron should be as generous as Aesop's. Boursault's dedication of *Germanicus* to Cardinal Bonzi follows similar, but more contemporary, lines, comparing the Cardinal to Cardinal Richelieu. Boursault begins by praising Richelieu extensively and then highlights all the ways in which Bonzi is like him: 'ce Ministre infatigable dont Vous avez le Cœur & l'Esprit, la Generosité & les Lumieres' and saying that the arts need 'un semblable Protecteur'.[992] In both cases the intention appears to be to urge the contemporary dedicatee to live up to the example set by his predecessor and to support the writer generously. Boursault clearly felt that his interests would be well-served by remaining on cordial terms with the Duc d'Aumont's family, since there is no other obvious reason for dedicating his next play to the Duc's daughter-in-law. She does not appear to have had any connection to the theatre, except indirectly through her father-in-law. The text of the dedication was written after Boursault's death by his son, but suggests that he had already decided to dedicate the work to her, since it includes the line 'je ne sçaurois rien faire de plus glorieux pour sa mémoire que de remplir ses souhaits en executant le dessein qu'il avoit formé'.[993] Unlike other dedications, there is no veiled reference to previous favours, aside from the fact that Boursault was 'un Auteur que vous avez honoré de votre estime pendant sa vie, et

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[990] Boursault, I, p.236.
[991] Boursault, *Fables d'Esope*, [p.a ii].
[992] Boursault, *Germanicus*, 'Epitre'.
[993] Boursault, *Théâtre*, III, p.368.

de vos regrets à sa mort'.[994] It therefore seems as though this is merely a dedication of thanks and by extension aimed also at her family.

It was relatively rare for an author to dedicate a play to someone who was not a member of the nobility, since an aristocratic patron was a source of both social and economic capital. However, in 1694 Boursault dedicated his *Phaéton* to the actors of the Comédie-Française. Boursault's decision to focus his later dedications on people in the theatrical world would therefore appear to be a pragmatic move designed to appeal to a group who now had greater powers of support than previously. His stated reason for dedicating the play to the actors seems to be gratitude for their support when the play was being heavily criticised (saying 'il ne s'est jamais vû tant de cabales qu'il y en eut contre cette piéce'); however, this could be simply a disguised boast, as he claims that the critics were all authors jealous of his success.[995] His dedication of a play to the actors is therefore both a response to the decline in patronage from the monarchy and an opportunity to involve the actors in a similar way to noble patrons in legitimising the play. By doing so, Boursault is acquiring vocational capital, rather than choosing patrons for their social capital and economic support. The actors defend the play through their judgement in selecting it for performance, but also in their work to promote it and their talent in performing it. Unlike the dedications to members of the nobility, this contains very little direct flattery of the actors, making no mention of their acting ability, merely praising their good taste in applauding the play when it was first read to them.

Boursault frequently uses his dedications as a defence of his play or as an attack on his critics. In the dedication of *Marie Stuart* to the Duc de Saint-Aignan, Boursault refers to critics who are hostile to the play and thanks the Duc for his defence of the work ('les témoinages que Vous avez eu la bonté de rendre en sa faveur lui ont acquis une reputation à l'épreuve de leurs traits les plus empoisonnez'[996]). Boursault validates the Duc's opinion by reminding him that the play has also been well received by other nobles:

> J'aurois assez de modestie pour ne pas Vous faire ressouvenir que Vous fustes témoin des applaudissements que je receus si le respect & la reconnaissance ne m'obligeoient à deffendre les suffrages de tant de Personnes de la plus haute qualité […] qui ayant écouté mon Ouvrage sans prévention en dirent leur sentiment sans injustice.[997]

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[994] Boursault, *Théâtre*, III, pp.367-68.
[995] Boursault, *Phaéton* (Paris: Guignard, 1694), [p.a iv].
[996] Boursault, *Marie Stuard, Reine d'Ecosse* (Paris: Guignard, 1691), p.a iii.
[997] Boursault, p.aiii *v*.

Similarly, in the dedication to *Phaéton,* Boursault claims to have shown his play to 'des gens qui sont sur la Cime du Parnasse & qui ne voyent qu'Apollon audessus d'eux' and who have shared the actors' view of the play. This is intended as confirmation of the actors' judgement (Boursault declares to the actors that this is 'la plus solide loüange que je puisse vous donner') but it is also a disguised way of praising his own play.[998] By phrasing it this way, however, Boursault is able to present himself as an *honnête homme* who is including the widespread praise of his play only in order to praise the judgement of his dedicatees, rather than to boast about his own talent. Interestingly, in this dedication to the actors, Boursault at one point almost appears to blame them for the attacks the play received, as they had advertised *Phaéton* as being even better than Boursault's previously successful play, *Esope à la Ville*: 'de petits Auteurs, chagrins du succés qu'avoit eû Esope & qui vous entendoient publier que Phaëton en auroit encore un plus grand firent ligue offensive & défensive contre moi.'[999] This dedication is unlike most others in that it focuses more on the author than the dedicatee, contains little flattery of the dedicatee and is much more egalitarian in tone, with Boursault referring to the pleasure the actors gave him but at the same time mentioning the pleasure he has given them.[1000] In the earlier discussion of theories of gift exchange[1001] it was noted that the 'gift' is rarely a pure gift, since there is an expectation of receiving some form of reward. However, Boursault's dedication to the actors, with its emphasis on the exchange of mutual enjoyment and pleasure, offers a deeper and more literal example of 'gift-giving'. There is no physical exchange, and no sense in which one party is indebted to the other, but rather a demonstration that both parties have benefitted from their collaboration. This also provides an example in which the exchange of gifts is well balanced, since both parties receive the same gift (the pleasure that is derived from the reading and performance of the play, as well as sharing in the financial reward of a successful play). While such exchanges were rare, this example provides a more sophisticated understanding of the concept of 'gift-giving'.

The dedications to the actors and to the Duc d'Autun were intended to increase Boursault's vocational capital by appealing to people who were influential in the theatrical world. As Gevrey notes, Boursault also used his dedications to improve his economic capital:

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[998] Boursault, *Phaéton* [p.a ix].
[999] Boursault, [p. a iv].
[1000] Boursault, [p. a iii].
[1001] See Chapter 5 p.155.

> Depuis ses débuts Boursault est en quête de protecteurs, puisqu'il lui faut vivre de pensions qui s'ajouteront aux revenus de sa plume: d'où ses nombreuses dédicaces.[1002]

An example of a dedication likely to improve only his economic capital was Boursault's dedication of *Les Nicandres* to Barthélemy Hervart in 1665. Hervart was *contrôleur général des finances* from 1657, and according to Claude Dulong 'fut à la fois un des plus hautes responsables de l'administration des finances, tout en restant un financier privé intéressé aux affaires du roi'.[1003] He had been an ally of Mazarin, but following Mazarin's death, his political importance, and therefore his social capital, had diminished. However, at the time when Boursault dedicated *Les Nicandres* to him, he was still 'un entrepreneur et un investisseur',[1004] and as such would still have been wealthy enough to offer financial support. Given Hervart's loss of political influence and the fact that he was not a member of the nobility, Boursault would have been able to derive only financial benefit from his patronage. There were other examples of appeals to non-aristocratic patrons: Corneille dedicated *Cinna* to the financier Montauron and received 2,000 *livres*.[1005] Racan presented his play *Les Bergeries* to Malherbe, who as a successful author would have had considerable cultural and vocational capital, explaining 'je vous envoie ma pastorale, non pas tant pour l'estime que j'en fais que pour celle que je fais de vous'.[1006] While most dedicatees were selected for their social capital, there is evidence of some authors choosing also to place importance on the accumulation of economic and vocational capital.

Boursault made use of his published correspondence as a tactic to present himself as having close connections to members of high society. In a letter to the Prince de Condé Boursault praises him as the type of hero that future readers will be eager to know about and mentions his conquests, before flattering him by asking for his opinion on an historical essay Boursault is writing.[1007] Although this may be predominantly an attempt to ingratiate himself, it is equally possibly a genuine request for the opinion of a well-respected patron. The Prince's response is very brief, but includes praise of Boursault, saying 'je suis persuadé par avance qu'il [Boursault's text] me fera beaucoup de plaisir'.[1008] This letter therefore contains mutual praise

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[1002] Gevrey, p.8.

[1003] Claude Dulong, *Mazarin et l'Argent*: *Banquiers et prête-noms* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 2002), p.149.

[1004] Dulong, p.149.

[1005] Tallemant des Réaux, I, p.344.

[1006] Racan, I, p.288.

[1007] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, pp.43-46.

[1008] Boursault, I, p.48.

as well as a more personal touch, which suggests friendly relations between the two. Another letter refers to the Prince having requested bulletins from Boursault recounting events at court, and including his response, 'j'en suis extrémement satisfait',[1009] supporting Croft's view that 'Le Prince semble [...] avoir été l'un de ceux avec qui Boursault entretint une correspondance rémunérée'. In a letter to his regular correspondent, the Evêque de Langres, and subsequently published, Boursault is able to share publicly a positive example of patronage practice which can be seen to reflect well on both patron and client. He refers to his dedication of *Marie Stuart* to the Duc de Saint-Aignan, who received the dedication 'de la maniére du monde la plus obligeante', saying it would be henceforth his favourite book, and 'me pria de ne pas trouver mauvais, que pour s'acquitter foiblement de l'obligation [...] il me fît un présent de cent Loüis'. This illustrates the gift economy represented by patronage: gifts are used to express thanks for a service rendered rather than as payment for that service and the decorum of the procedure is highlighted in the patron's gracious acceptance of the dedication and sensitive offer of a gift. Boursault's response is equally gracious: 'l'ouvrage que je prens la liberté de vous offrir, est trop payé par la bonté que vous avez de le recevoir'. Modestly Boursault continues to protest that the dedication is not worthy of such generosity before agreeing to the Duc's suggestion that the sum should be paid in five instalments.[1010] The fact that the Duc's payment was in instalments shows that the signs of gratitude did not necessarily have to follow immediately, but could be given when the donor was in a position to be generous. Bourdieu notes that 'the time lag is one of the factors of the transmutation of a pure and simple debt into that recognition of nonspecific indebtedness which is called gratitude'.[1011]

Boursault occasionally uses his dedications and published letters to present himself as an *homme de lettres*. He includes the note that compares him to Ovid and Lucien in *Phaéton*,[1012] and quotes Ariosto in the original Italian in his dedication to the Genoese Ambassador.[1013] More frequently, he takes care to display his *honnêteté*: the reluctance to accept financial reward from the Duc de Saint-Aignan and the inclusion of a complimentary note only as a mark of gratitude to an anonymous supporter.[1014] He makes frequent self-deprecating comments to demonstrate his modesty about his work. In *La Comédie sans titre*, he says that nature has not given him enough talent to write a play worthy of the Duc de Saint-Aignan and that this is his least bad

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[1009] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.169 and p.183.
[1010] Boursault, I, pp.124-25.
[1011] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.252.
[1012] Boursault, *Phaéton*, [p. x].
[1013] Boursault, *Les Mots à la Mode* (Paris: Guignard, 1694), p.ii.
[1014] Boursault, *Phaéton,* [p.x].

play,[1015] and in *La Satire des Satires*, he declares that he has been praised only to alleviate some of the pain of the criticism: 'pour me faire supporter plus facilement l'injustice que l'on m'a faite, on l'a presque toûjours accompagnée de quelque loüange'.[1016] Boursault also displays his *honnêteté* by seeking to avoid excess flattery in his dedications. He claims that the Duc de Saint-Aignan's modesty has limited what he can say in his dedication of *Marie Stuart* even though 'il n'y ait personne en France à qui l'on puisse donner des louanges plus légitimes qu'à vous'.[1017] Then in his next dedication to the Duc, of *La Comédie sans titre*, Boursault declares that he will not flatter the Duc, before listing all of his qualities that do not need praise as they are already widely well-known: a clear example of *praeteritio*.[1018]

Towards the end of his career Boursault focused on keeping the support of the acting troupes and people connected to the theatre, dedicating three of his last five plays to the actors, the Duc d'Aumont and his family. He does not appear to attempt to win over any of the key ministers or influential figures within the Académie, but it could be argued that in his dedications, he is appealing to key institutions of the nobility and theatre. Although Boursault's choice of patrons does not show a linear strategy, like the one used by Quinault, if they are studied in conjunction with his letters, there is more of a pattern. Boursault used his letters to build up connections at court and to establish his social capital, as Quinault did with his dedications. Although Quinault does not focus directly on the cultural capital of his patrons, as Boursault does, this is predominantly a reaction by Boursault to the changing political climate. Boursault demonstrates his manipulation of the patronage system by using his patrons as defenders of his works and inviting their support to challenge his critics, and he shows his understanding of the gift exchange mechanism in the presentation of his plays to his dedicatees.

Racine's approach

Racine's literary career represents the clearest example of the importance of the monarchy for validation. Before he had written his first play, he was given a royal pension as a result of his poetry celebrating the king: an apparently rare example of an author with little proven success being given a pension. Racine dedicated his first play, *La Thébaïde*, to the Duc de Saint-Aignan, apparently in recognition of the Duc's enjoyment of the play ('un ouvrage qui n'a peut-être rien de considérable que l'honneur de vous avoir plu'). Saint-Aignan's considerable social capital, as well as his willingness to support authors, made him a target for all three of the case study

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[1015] Boursault, *Comédie sans titre*, p.a ii.*v.*
[1016] Boursault, *Satire des Satires*, p.a iii.
[1017] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles,* I, p.224.
[1018] Boursault, *Comédie sans titre*, pp.ii-iv.

authors. Racine refers to the powerful protection offered by the Duc, saying that 'quelques ennemis qu'elle [la pièce] puisse avoir, je n'appréhende rien pour elle'. He attributes the play's success to the fact that people knew that the Duc was supporting it and that it had received 'l'approbation d'une personne qui sait donner aux choses un si juste prix'.[1019] Picard describes Saint-Aignan as 'le type même de grand seigneur qui se mêle de littérature'. The Duc was greatly involved in the world of culture and had recently been elected to the Académie and so would have acquired sufficient cultural capital, in addition to his social capital, for his views to be respected. Picard concludes: 'Racine ne pouvait se choisir plus habilement un protecteur à son entrée dans la carrière dramatique'.[1020] Racine appears to have been well connected before writing *La Thébaïde*. In his early career he benefitted from the connections of his cousin, Nicholas Vitart, described by Picard as 'son principal protecteur', and he goes on to explain: 'il profitera de sa situation chez les Chevreuse pour faire de [Racine] un familier de leur hôtel'. Picard suggests that the Chevreuse connection 'lui procurera l'amitié des Colbert' and he summarises*:* 'de Vitart aux Chevreuse, des Chevreuse aux Colbert, toute l'ascension du futur écrivain'.[1021]

Racine sought to solidify his relations with the monarchy by dedicating his second play to the king. The play was a thinly veiled homage to Louis. Forestier discusses the importance of the choice of subject for Racine: 'il était […] essentiel de trouver un sujet de tragédie qui pût contribuer directement à la célébration royale'.[1022] He chose a classical subject: *Alexandre le Grand*. A recurring theme of dedications was the comparison between the patron and figures from Roman or Greek history or mythology. Importantly for a patronage relationship, comparing a key heroic character in the play to the dedicatee would provide a further means for the author to flatter his patron without damaging his *honnêteté*. In a similar way, Quinault employs the prologues of his operas to flatter the king with contemporary references, such as the prologue of *Isis*, which features Neptune and speaks of 'le même vainqueur si fameux sur la terre/Qui triomphe encore sur les eaux', a reference to Louis's victories against the English and Dutch fleets earlier that year.[1023] Louis was frequently compared to Alexander and Augustus, with Alexander the greater soldier, but Augustus the finer example of a culturally enlightened leader. In Racine's dedication, he compares Louis to Alexander, saying 'j'assemble

[1019] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes,* I, p.113.
[1020] Picard, 'Notes', in Racine, I, p.1059.
[1021] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.27.
[1022] Forestier, p.223.
[1023] Beaussant, p.203.

tout ce que le siècle présent et les siècles passés nous peuvent fournir de plus grand'.[1024] However, he does not limit his comparison to Alexander, but also includes Augustus. Racine declares that Louis's glory 'est répandue aussi loin que celle de ce conquérant [Alexander]', but continues by saying that 'on n'a point vu de roi qui à l'âge d'Alexandre ait fait paraître la conduite d'Auguste' and 'qui […] ait répandu sa lumière jusqu'au bout du monde'.[1025] This enables Racine to praise the king's military success, but also to praise the king's wisdom. Picard suggests that Racine is 'un peu embarrassé pour comparer Louis XIV, roi pacifique, à Alexandre. Mais le futur historiographe des guerres est déjà bon courtisan'.[1026] It is also worth noting that in the play itself, the chief virtue displayed by Alexander is not military skill but rather the clemency he displays when faced with a valiant opponent. Through these comparisons Racine is able to praise the king's military skill, his wisdom and his mercy, in a single dedication.

In addition, Racine may have been seeking protection against Molière. Although the play may not be considered controversial textually, the circumstances surrounding the initial performances were extremely controversial. As was explained in Chapter 4, Racine had initially allowed Molière's troupe to perform the play, but then shortly after the first performance, and to the considerable annoyance of Molière, it was also performed by the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, probably with the connivance of Racine. As the play was published less than a month after this episode, Racine may have felt the need to use his dedication to show that he had the support of an influential patron to protect himself from attack by Molière. Racine hopes that His Majesty 'ne condamnera pas cette seconde hardiesse, comme Elle n'a pas désapprouvé la première',[1027] which might be a veiled allusion to the king's complicity in the change of troupe. Racine's first 'hardiesse' may not even refer to the change of troupe, so it is difficult to be definitive about this. Furthermore, it seems likely that if the king had played an active role in supporting Racine's change of troupe, Racine would have used something more assertive than 'n'a pas désapprouvé'. However, the reference to the fact that Louis had not condemned Racine's controversial move would have been a clear indication that Molière and his supporters had nothing to gain by appealing to the king. Forestier concludes 'on voit bien que la chose n'a pu se faire sans l'aveu royal, c'est-à-dire sans un ordre royal, et c'est cela qui explique l'absence de réaction officielle de Molière'.[1028] As with Boursault's dedication to the Prince de Condé,

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[1024] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes,* I, p.175.
[1025] Racine, I, pp.175-76.
[1026] Picard, 'Notes', in Racine, I, p.1071.
[1027] Racine, I, p.175.
[1028] Forestier, p.242.

Racine's choice of the king as dedicatee provides a further example of a playwright seeking the support of one of Molière's patrons as a form of defence against him.

Racine's third play, *Andromaque*, was dedicated to Henriette d'Angleterre, the king's sister-in-law and the second most important woman at court. Picard highlights the strategic approach of Racine: 'N'en doutons pas, le poète, tout en écrivant sa pièce, a dû continuer à cultiver ses protecteurs, à s'en ménager de nouveaux et à s'insinuer dans les bonnes grâces de la Cour'.[1029] He describes Racine's 'habileté de se faire recevoir' by Henriette d'Angleterre and concludes 'Le succès, surtout mondain, auprès de Madame, a donc en fait précédé le succès proprement littéraire d'*Andromaque*.'[1030] Like both the Duc d'Orléans and the king, Henriette was 'also an ardent lover of theater', accepting the dedication of *L'Ecole des Femmes* from Molière and acting as godmother to his son.[1031] Racine uses his dedication to Henriette as a response to his critics, saying that 'vous l'aviez honorée de quelques larmes […] [ce qui] me console bien glorieusement de la dureté de ceux qui ne voudraient pas s'en laisser toucher'.[1032] Henriette's position at court would have made her a very influential supporter: Picard refers to 'la place exceptionnelle qu'occupait à la Cour la belle-sœur du Roi; lui plaire, c'était plaire au Roi lui-même.'[1033]

Racine's use of the patronage system was more ambitious than Quinault's or Boursault's, and his targeting of those closest to the king suggests a clear strategy to ingratiate himself quickly with the innermost circle of the monarchy. While there is no direct evidence of Racine's immediately benefitting from his dedications to the royal family, Lough points out that Racine's sinecure as *trésorier de France* 'was simply conferred on him […] without his having to lay out a penny for its purchase'. Furthermore, Lough suggests that Racine's post as *gentilhomme de la chambre* cost him 'less than a fifth of its market value'.[1034] While some time elapsed between Racine's writing the dedications and receiving both of these posts, the theory of patronage working as a gift economy suggests that this was not unusual, and that a dedicatee did not have to express gratitude immediately after receiving a dedication; the resultant goodwill could be stored and the reward deferred. This is further evidence of indirect income

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[1029] Picard, *Carrière de Racine*, p.129.
[1030] Picard, p.129.
[1031] Nancy Barker, *Brother to the Sun King* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p.88.
[1032] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes,* I, p.239.
[1033] Picard, p.130.
[1034] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.112.

(or in this case savings) that is often overlooked when studying how much an author earned during his career.

Like Quinault, Racine used the tactic of an initially indirect approach to a dedicatee when he was seeking the support of Colbert. Colbert, with help from Chapelain, was devising a list of authors deserving an annual royal pension, and it was Chapelain to whom Racine sought to appeal first. Since Chapelain would predominantly have been regarded for his cultural capital, this represents a change of priority compared to Boursault and Quinault, who initially targeted patrons with considerable social capital. Racine attempted to appeal to Chapelain before the list of royal pensioners was published as he gave his first work, *La Nymphe de la Seine à la Reine,* to Chapelain for his inspection.[1035] Subsequently Chapelain recommended to Colbert that Racine should be awarded a pension.[1036] Racine later prepared the ground of a dedication to Colbert (of *Bérénice*) by dedicating his previous play, *Britannicus*, to the Duc de Chevreuse, Colbert's son-in-law. Even though the dedication is addressed to the Duc, Racine takes the opportunity to praise Colbert, describing his 'pénétration d'esprit' and his 'modestie'.[1037] Forestier regards Chevreuse's support as effective since it seems to have resulted in Colbert's attending one of the early readings of the play.[1038]

Racine's initial pension appears to have been smaller than Quinault's, as it reached only 800 *livres* in 1666.[1039] Two years later Racine's payment from the king increased to 1,200 *livres* a year and a further increase in 1670 saw the payments rise to 1,500 *livres*.[1040] A guarded reference in the dedication of *Bérénice* to Colbert may indicate a link to the last increase – 'l'attention favorable dont vous m'avez honoré'[1041] – with the dedication expressing Racine's gratitude. After *Bérénice* the rest of his plays appeared without a dedication. One explanation for this absence of dedications, at least for *Bajazet* and *Mithridate*, can be drawn from the history of the time. Both plays appeared in 1672, a year in which France was engaged in a war with Holland. Lough suggests that the money was needed for troops, saying 'from the time of the outbreak of war with Spain in 1667, this source of income began to show signs of drying up' and adding that 'the outbreak of the war with Holland in 1672 had much more serious

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[1035] Forestier, p.132.
[1036] Chapelain, II, pp.312-13.
[1037] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes,* I, p.383.
[1038] Forestier, p.360.
[1039] Forestier, p.282.
[1040] Forestier, p.323 and p.404.
[1041] Racine, I, p.464.

consequences'.[1042] Racine may therefore have reasoned that as he was unlikely to receive any financial reward it was not appropriate to write dedications. Although this is a different response from Boursault's reaction to the decline in royal patronage, it again shows that authors had to be responsive to external factors affecting the patronage system.

However, in Racine's case it is probable that the main reason he ceased to make use of dedications was that he felt that there was no one more influential that he could appeal to than the people to whom he had already dedicated his plays; dedications would not help him to acquire any further social or economic capital. He was already a client of the Duc de Chevreuse and Colbert, as well as having the support of the king's mistress, Mme de Montespan, and her sister, Mme de Thianges, and most importantly of the king himself.[1043] Picard feels that after *Bérénice* 'sa situation littéraire et sociale est solidement établie',[1044] and Forestier provides details of Racine's income in late 1667, stating 'ce n'était pas encore l'aisance, mais c'était déjà la garantie d'une confortable indépendance'.[1045] Furthermore, he was now a member of the Académie française, and therefore had little need to use dedications to increase his cultural capital, since membership of the Académie would have offered him symbolic capital and was the pinnacle for someone seeking cultural capital. Croft states that certain authors 'dont la réputation est solidement établie abandonnent […] la pratique dédicatoire'.[1046] Genette argues that in the period between 1650 for Corneille's last dedication and 1670 for Racine's *Bérénice* 'l'épître dédicatoire soit alors déjà considérée comme un expédient quelque peu dégradant, qu'un auteur parvenu au faîte de sa gloire, ou assuré d'autres ressources, s'empresse d'oublier', citing the example of Corneille whose edition of his '*Théâtre* «complet» en 1660 supprimera presque toutes les épîtres dédicatoires au profit d'«examens» plus techniques'.[1047] Croft points out, however, that in the case of Boursault, 'toutefois [il] n'ira jamais jusqu'à renoncer complètement à cette pratique et lors de la réédition de ses pièces de théâtre (1694), il conserve chacune des épîtres d'origine'.[1048] Some of the functions of an *épître dédicatoire* in defending the play and justifying aspects of the work were covered in prefaces to the works and all of Racine's later plays include a preface.

[1042] Lough, *Writer and Public*, p.110.
[1043] Forestier, p.436.
[1044] Picard, *Racine Polémiste* (Amsterdam: Pauvert, 1967), p.91.
[1045] Forestier, p.283.
[1046] Croft, *Boursault*, p.99.
[1047] Genette, p.123.
[1048] Croft, p.99.

Although Racine stopped dedicating his works to patrons, he did not cease to be involved in patronage relationships. He was still able to display his social capital without dedications. *Iphigénie* premiered at Versailles, meaning that there would be little doubt that Louis XIV was acting as Racine's patron, even though the published play does not contain a dedication to him. His proximity to the king as part of his role as Royal Historiographer enabled him to develop more personal relationships with members of the court. Forestier believes that 'son entrée au service direct du roi l'a affranchi des relations de clientélisme, auxquelles il était moins soumis que ses confrères littérateurs, mais auxquelles il était néanmoins largement redevable de son statut social.'[1049] Although both *Esther* and *Athalie* appear without dedications, it would have been clear from the context of their performances that they had been commissioned by Mme de Maintenon, 'pour le divertissement et l'édification de ses chères Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr'[1050] and this would have displayed Racine's social connections in the same way as dedicating a play to her. In accepting the commission to write *Esther*, 'a work which would be enjoyably pious and edifying',[1051] Racine was recognising the political reality of a royal command in order to stay in favour at court. He was responding to changes in the system of patronage, as did Boursault, although, unlike Boursault, whose response was to move away from royal patronage, Racine's response strengthened his links with the court. In part, this was a result of his earlier decisions, since by this stage in his career he was strongly linked to the court, and therefore would have been the obvious choice of writer for Mme de Maintenon. She had previously suggested the use of plays by Corneille and Racine as improvements on the amateur efforts of Madame de Binon, the Superior of Saint-Cyr, but she became worried about the influence on pupils when acting profane works: Piéjus describes her experiencing 'un sentiment d'inquiétude devant les effets du théâtre'.[1052] Racine would have had little option but to agree to undertake the commission. This could be seen as a curb by the patron on Racine's artistic freedom, though this was not an unusual constraint at this period. Other examples of patrons suggesting subjects for plays have already been mentioned, but it may be that the nature of this commission as a *tragédie sainte* 'sur quelque sujet de piété et de morale, une espèce de poème, où le chant fût mêlé avec le récit'[1053] intended only for private performance (albeit at court) could be considered as a minor, perhaps restricted, work unworthy to follow *Phèdre*. Picard, however, does not trace any indication of resentment at the royal command or reluctance on the part of

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[1049] Forestier, p.601.
[1050] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.393.
[1051] Sayer, p.299.
[1052] Piéjus, p.99.
[1053] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.812.

Racine to undertake the commission: 'En vérité, on a le sentiment qu'il est réjoui de voir les portes de Saint-Cyr s'ouvrir devant lui et qu'il a compris bien vite tout le parti qu'il pouvait tirer pour sa carrière à la Cour'. In effect, Racine rose to the challenge and 'loin de se contenter de bâcler une courte pièce, qui aurait peut-être suffi aux pensionnaires, il a composé pour elles une tragédie sainte aussi longue, avec sa musique, qu'une tragédie profane en cinq actes'.[1054] Far from damaging his literary reputation, according to Picard, he succeeded in pleasing the king, Mme de Maintenon and the court by producing a play which proved 'que la vertu pouvait être aimable, et qu'un opéra sacré pouvait avoir autant de charme qu'un opéra profane'.[1055]

Conclusion

The comparison of the approaches by the three authors provides a richer sense of the practice of patronage by evaluating the strategies they adopted to work within this complex system. All three case study authors were heavily dependent on the patronage system both for financial support and to advance their position within society. Elias's work on outsiders is instructive in interpreting the strategies of the case study authors. All three began as outsiders, men of relatively humble origin, who needed to find a way to penetrate into the elite society on whose patronage writers of the day depended. Success was to be obtained from within a closed world and one perceived to be socially superior: most obviously, the world of the court and more generally, the world of aristocracy and privilege. Writers needed to create contacts which would give them an entrée to the closed world and to do so involved adhering to the established norms of *honnêteté*. This explains Quinault's approach of gradually building a network of influential supporters before appealing to the monarchy. Boursault used his newsletters to build up a similar network, and Racine's poems ensured he was well-connected before either author sought to target patrons associated with the monarchy. Writers needed to become adept at accumulating and converting forms of capital during their careers. The need for sufficient income was perhaps most pressing early in their careers but the accumulation of economic capital was dependent on patronage obtained through social connections. The evidence suggests that authors also sought to appeal to noble patrons with links to the cultural world, though they were less likely to prioritise the accumulation of cultural capital when seeking patronage, viewing it instead as an added attraction when appealing to someone with considerable social capital and recognising the opportunity of conversion between the various forms of capital.

[1054] Picard, *Carrière de Racine,* p.394.
[1055] Picard, p.403.

CHAPTER 7 - INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCES ON WRITERS' CAREERS

This chapter will analyse the influence of contemporary institutions on a writer's success. Key sources of legitimacy and of capital for authors in seventeenth-century France to be explored are the literary salons, the Académie française and the theatre-going and reading public.[1056] These have been selected because interactions with these bodies had demonstrable impact on the careers of the case study authors. This was a period of transition and writers had to manage their interactions with these influential and evolving institutions in order to succeed in their careers. Génetiot recognises the importance of the

> émergence d'un public nouveau qui n'est plus le public exclusivement docte de la Renaissance mais un public élargi voire «indocte», et d'autre part des formes nouvelles d'institution de la vie littéraire et de mécénat autour du salon de conversation: en somme, la naissance conjointe des notions modernes de public et d'écrivain.[1057]

The extent to which authors needed the support of these institutions will be examined, as will the question of whether they could be successful independently of one or all of them. This will enable a comparison to be made with the earlier discussion of the influence of the monarchy and will provide further illustration of the processes by which authors accumulated and converted forms of capital. The focus will be on the specific strategies authors employed in their interactions with the different institutions and the images of themselves they sought to present and the extent to which these strategies and forms of self-presentation changed during their careers. Also relevant to this chapter is the concept of an author's search for fame, since, as Lang and Lang note, '[p]roximity to some elite […] provides the cultural capital [...] and connections that clear the road to renown'.[1058]

The importance of patronage for writers at this period has already been reviewed. However, patronage alone could not provide status as a professional writer. Claudette Delhez-Sarlet explains: 'Appartenir à la maison de [quelqu'un], être gentilhomme, ou secrétaire, ou bibliothécaire de tel seigneur, constituait certes un état social, mais ne conférait pas un *état en tant qu'écrivain*'.[1059] Arnaud Bernadet considers que 'Le statut de l'auteur dépend […] des dispositifs institutionnels, notamment l'essor des académies, organes de sanction ou de

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[1056] It is not within the scope of this thesis to review the impact of the full range of contemporary institutions which had an influence on an author's success. There were obviously other influential institutions, including the Church, theatrical companies and publishers, but the selected institutions will illustrate key authorial strategies, based especially on the careers of the case study authors.

[1057] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', p.63.

[1058] Lang and Lang, p.97.

[1059] Claudette Delhez-Sarlet, 'L'Académie française et le Mécénat', in Mousnier and Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.241-46 (p.246).

consécration symboliques'.[1060] In order to be confirmed as a professional author, cultural legitimacy is required. Bourdieu explains how (in the context of academic qualifications) a formally-recognised qualification or 'a certificate of cultural competence […] confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture'.[1061] His example could readily be extended to include the validation by a recognised authority such as the Académie française. The concept of legitimacy is seen by Brown as encompassing 'authority, credibility, and respect from others who control the institution or institutions in question'.[1062] This thesis contends that authors with legitimacy would be recognised as established insiders, whilst those without it would be seen as outsiders and could be considered as having less talent and vocational capital if they are excluded from a legitimising organisation which has its own 'group cohesion, the collective identification, the commonality of norms', as described by Elias and Scotson.[1063]

The influence of the Salons

Literary salons may be considered as an 'institution' because, although they were individual establishments, they shared similar social values: cultured conversation in a fashionable environment. This thesis will focus on Parisian salons since this was the main location of the case study authors. According to Faith Beasley, 'the salons constitute a kind of small private court, initiated by aristocrats, usually created by women who gather the intellectual elite around them'.[1064] Salons provided a more private, socially intimate space where discussions among an educated elite were not subject to official scrutiny or recording, in contrast with the court and the Académie, both of which were governed to some extent by official norms and sanctions. Génetiot considers that:

> L'espace du salon propose ainsi une utopie politique fragile en retrait de la Cour, et de ses contraintes officielles et de son étiquette hiérarchique. Dans cette perspective, l'honnête homme est en quelque sorte l'homme de Cour dans son loisir.[1065]

Salons were diverse in their nature, the character depending largely on the hostess or host and their choice of guests. Tuomas Tikanoja distinguishes between the more aristocratic nature of

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[1060] Arnaud Bernadet, 'L'Historicité de l'Auteur: une catégorie problématique', in *Une histoire de la «fonction-auteur» est-elle possible?,* ed. by Nicole Jacques-Lefèvre and Frédéric Regard (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2001), pp.13-32 (p.15).
[1061] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.248.
[1062] Brown, p.27.
[1063] Elias and Scotson, p.xviii.
[1064] Faith Evelyn Beasley, *Salons, History, and the Creation of Seventeenth-century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.4.
[1065] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', p.67.

some salons in contrast to the more intellectual salons of the *précieuses*.[1066] Viala refers to the hôtel de Nevers as a 'salon huppé'; Chapelain describes Mme de Rambouillet's salon as 'l'antipathe de l'hostel d'Ochy'[1067] and Tallemant sees it as 'le rendez-vous de ce qu'il y avoit de plus galant à la Cour, et de plus poly parmy les beaux-esprits du siecle'.[1068]

Génetiot considers that 'le salon recrée artificiellement une noble idéale sous la forme d'une petite société choisie, par cooptation, où la naissance est balancée par l'adhésion à un code et à des rites qui définissent un style de vie, fortement inspiré du modèle romanesque'.[1069] Lilti describes salons as 'une institution dans la vie des élites parisiennes […] où la noblesse de cour intègre au sein de la bonne société ceux qui se conforment à ses normes de comportements et reconnaissent sa prééminence'.[1070] He argues that 'les salons étaient structurés par des relations de protection, permettant aux écrivains qui les fréquentaient d'accéder aux ressources matérielles et symboliques des élites'.[1071] Bourdieu sees the reproduction of social capital as requiring 'an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed':[1072] a pertinent description for the interactions in the literary salons. Writers were thus keenly motivated to gain entry to the salons and to become regular attendees in order to develop social and professional connections and make the acquaintance of possible patrons, thus facilitating the conversion of accumulated social capital to economic gain. Shoemaker sees the salon culture as representing an evolution of aspects of literary patronage as the original personal patron/client relationships 'gradually merged into practices of polite sociability and conversation'. 'Once the group is substituted for the protector, once the speaker is solely concerned with pleasing his or her peers, we are no longer dealing with something recognizable as classic patronage.'[1073]

Salons could also offer authors cultural and vocational capital. Suzanne Relyea considers that for writers 'le salon agissait en auditoire automatique, fournissant donc une motivation constante: être approuvé, se singulariser'.[1074] Authors could discuss writing with their *confrères*

[1066] Tuomas Tikanoja, *Transgressing Boundaries: Worldly Conversation, Politeness and Sociability in Ancien Régime France, 1660-1789* (Helsinki: Unigrafia Oy, 2013), p.33.
[1067] Chapelain, I, p.216.
[1068] Tallemant des Réaux, I, p.443.
[1069] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', p.67.
[1070] Lilti, 'Sociabilité et mondanité: Les hommes de lettres dans les salons parisiens au XVIIIe siècle', *French Historical Studies,* 28 (2005), 415-45 (p.418).
[1071] Lilti, p.419.
[1072] Bourdieu, p.250.
[1073] Shoemaker, pp.226-27.
[1074] Suzanne Relyea, 'Les Salonnières et la différence de la protection', in Mousnier and Mesnard, *L'Age d'Or du Mécénat*, pp.295-303 (p.302).

among an educated elite and accumulate vocational capital through peer recognition. Croft notes the growing importance of 'Ces réunions mondaines dans lesquelles la littérature occupe une place privilégiée [qui] ont des répercussions sur l'écriture et la production des auteurs'.[1075] Chapelain gives a contemporary impression of the atmosphere of the salon, saying 'on n'y parle point sçavamment, mais on y parle raisonnablement et il n'y a lieu au monde où il y ait plus de bon sens et moins de pédanterie'.[1076] Beasley also highlights 'bon sens' when referring to the salons' judgement, saying that they are 'trying to establish another venue for literary evaluation and production, one founded upon collaboration and conversation, one where reason and *bon sens* […] could be used to determine literary value'.[1077]

The popularity of salons from the 1650s is particularly important in studying the three case study authors as this was exactly the period when they were seeking to become known in Paris. Croft notes that Boursault's 'premières années à Paris sont marquées par la popularité grandissante des ruelles et l'accroissement de leur pouvoir dans le champ littéraire naissant'.[1078] Brooks cites Eric Walter's view that 'at their apogee around 1660, there were about forty salons attended by eight hundred participants, of whom about one-quarter were authors'.[1079] Viala describes a phase in salon fashion between 1650 and 1665 when 'la vogue devient «fureur»' but he explains that subsequently the attraction of the court for high society led to a slowing down of salon activity. He highlights a further advantage of salon attendance for writers as offering a form of 'échange entre les auteurs et une fraction de leurs lecteurs'.[1080] There were reciprocal benefits:

> d'une part, les écrivains s'y trouvent en contact avec une élite sociale de leurs lecteurs et peuvent observer les tendances du goût mondain dominant. Mais, d'autre part, l'élite sociale cherche là des moyens de distinction: converser avec les auteurs lui permet d'être en prise directe sur l'actualité de la production littéraire.[1081]

Tikanoja notes the opportunity for the exchange of ideas: 'Socialites and writers coming from different social backgrounds, inclinations and professions shared the idea of politeness or exchange that was based on equality'.[1082] However, Lilti disagrees with this idea of social equality, explaining that this 'relation asymétrique entre les hommes de lettres et ceux qui les

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[1075] Croft, *Boursault,* p.27.
[1076] Chapelain, I, p.215.
[1077] Beasley, p.27.
[1078] Croft, p.28.
[1079] Brooks, p.157.
[1080] Viala, *Naissance*, p.133 and p.132.
[1081] Viala, pp.132-33.
[1082] Tikanoja, p.4.

recevaient empruntait le langage de l'amitié et de la bienfaisance': he recognises that it is tempting to see salons as 'une espace égalitaire' but argues that they are in fact 'des lieux de distinction sociale'. He explains:

> Dans le cas des écrivains, dont le statut social reste largement marqué par la dépendance à l'égard des élites et du pouvoir et par l'absence d'identité stable [...] la politesse et l'amabilité de ces aristocrates entretiennent une fiction d'égalité qui ne dissipe pas les différences de statut mais les rend supportables.[1083]

Even if there was not social equality, there would have been respect for a writer's professional talent: that, indeed, would be the basis for their inclusion in the salon. Entry was largely based on introductions by existing members or through social connections. Shoemaker suggests that 'the protection of a noble might help a writer gain entry to a salon [...] where polite manners were learned and literary reputations were made'.[1084] The process can be illustrated by the example of Quinault. Brooks explains that Quinault's mentor, Tristan, used the influence of his own patrons, the Duc de Guise and the Duc de Saint-Aignan, 'both of whom had the entrée to the most fashionable salons', to gain admittance to this world for Quinault. He concludes 'within months [...] the young author, possessing the easy affability and attractiveness to women that everyone agrees he had, became accepted in the salons'.[1085] Similarly, Croft maintains that Boursault was introduced into Parisian society by the Evêque de Langres, who 'avait suffisamment de contacts dans la capitale pour faciliter l'intégration de Boursault' and concludes that 'il ne peut négliger le capital social que lui confère la fréquentation de salons littéraires'.[1086] Boursault appears to have been particularly successful in gaining entry to the salons, as Elizabeth Goldsmith comments: 'Indeed, it is impossible to separate Boursault's literary success from his social one; his career as a writer is closely interwined with his strategy of personal promotion at court and in the Paris salons'.[1087] Croft traces Boursault's strategy in developing social relationships with several of the *précieuses* and discusses the many interrelationships between the salon habitués which facilitated access to other salons and fostered friendships among writers.[1088] Goldsmith likewise suggests that Boursault was a popular visitor to salons in the Marais,[1089] implying that there was no expectation of exclusivity among the salons. Croft concludes, however, that 'Selon toute vraisemblance, il [Boursault] ne

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[1083] Lilti, 'Sociabilité et mondanité', pp.419-20.
[1084] Shoemaker, p.35.
[1085] Brooks, p.158.
[1086] Croft, *Boursault,* p.22 and p.24.
[1087] Goldsmith, p.144.
[1088] Croft, p.31.
[1089] Goldsmith, p.143.

bénéficie pas du soutien régulier des hôtesses les plus en vogues [*sic*]'.[1090] For a relatively unknown author, recently arrived in Paris and without significant social contacts, it would be difficult to penetrate the most aristocratic salons.

Contemporary evidence from Chapelain demonstrates how writers who were established members of a salon might be able to invite guests: in a letter to M. de la Picardière he writes 'C'est un banquet philosophique auquel je ne convie personne que vous'.[1091] In another letter, this time to M. de Saint-Chartres, who had expressed a desire to attend meetings of the salon de Mme de Rambouillet, Chapelain advises him to be patient as 'il est besoin de préparer les voies'.[1092] Similarly, Tallemant suggests that M. de Chaudebonne was crucial in introducing Voiture to Mme de Rambouillet's salon.[1093] Having gained entry to a salon it was necessary for a writer to ensure a continuing welcome and to do so required that he should present and maintain an image of himself which conformed with the expectations of the salon members. This self-presentation is in line with Goffman's concept of 'impression management':

> individuals will be concerned with maintaining the impression that they are living up to the many standards by which they and their products are judged. […] Individuals are concerned not with the moral issue of realizing these standards, but with the amoral issue of engineering a convincing impression that these standards are being realized.[1094]

Salons gave an author the chance to impress potential patrons through his appearance as an *honnête homme mondain* and by his contributions to the cultured conversation in the salon. La Bruyère stresses the need for polite and pleasing conversation in society, recognising that 'la politesse n'inspire pas toujours la bonté, l'équité, la complaisance, la gratitude; elle en donne du moins les apparences, et fait paraître l'homme au dehors comme il devrait être intérieurement'.[1095] Tallemant offers a contemporary view of Mme de Rambouillet's salon, describing it as 'le théatre de tous leurs divertissemens'.[1096] The use of 'divertissement' highlights the relaxed, playful atmosphere of the salons and 'théâtre' suggests a performance element, allowing those who attended a further opportunity to present a pleasing image of themselves. He identifies the skill of quick-wittedness in amusing the salon audience, relating that Voiture 'affectoit de composer sur-le-champ [...] c'estoit un fort bel esprit [...] C'est le pere

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[1090] Croft, *Boursault,* p.48.
[1091] Chapelain, I, p.149.
[1092] Chapelain, I, p.185 n.1.
[1093] Tallemant des Réaux, I, p.485.
[1094] Goffman, p.162.
[1095] La Bruyère, p.180.
[1096] Tallemant des Réaux, I, p.443.

de l'ingenieuse badinerie'.[1097] Voiture's 'impromptu' verses may have been the result of careful preparation: a piece of theatrical self-fashioning.

Part of the 'admission criteria' to the salons for writers was therefore the ability to entertain through witty exchanges and pleasantries. The Abbé d'Aubignac recommends poets to develop 'l'art de bien discourir, & qu'ils étudissent à fond l'Eloquence'.[1098] There would be an element of competition among writers who attended salons, recognised by Relyea: 'on courtisait et rivalisait d'un même geste, c'est-à-dire de sonnets, de madrigaux, d'épîtres, de rondeaux, d'odes, de vers de circonstances. On […] se posait des énigmes'.[1099] Gros describes how 'la mode était […] à la cour et dans les salons aux "Questions d'Amour"'. These were 'un jeu de société' involving the setting of and responding to questions on the topic of love. Mme de Brégny set 'Cinq Questions d'Amour' when in the presence of the king, and Quinault was chosen by the king to reply, which he did in a witty and gallant response in verse form.[1100] Viala refers to 'cette esthétique de la *galanterie* qui signifie "art de plaire"' which 'domina la vie littéraire [et] avait de la vogue'.[1101] Croft describes how:

> Boursault se prête au jeu des salons, à l'instar de plusieurs de ses contemporains. Ses comédies, ses gazettes, son recueil épistolaire et ses nouvelles, teintés de cette esthétique galante, participent à la mise en place de cette figure d'un Boursault galant, une image qu'il peaufine dans les salons littéraires.[1102]

There was also a more intellectual side to conversation in the salons. Joan DeJean discusses the role they played in the development of literary criticism: 'in the early decades of the salon, members in effect initiated the first large-scale practice of literary criticism in France'. It was in the salons that young writers could develop what DeJean describes as 'collective taste: a taste that later proved enormously influential when these fledging writers came of age'.[1103] This collective taste approximates to a cultural legitimisation of what was accepted good practice in their writing. She also suggests that salon culture 'trained all the major literary figures […] to think as literary critics' and she makes the point that the format of salon debates ('interrelated

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[1097] Tallemant des Réaux, I, p.489.
[1098] Aubignac, *Pratique du Theatre*, I, p.263.
[1099] Relyea, p.302.
[1100] Gros, pp.66-69.
[1101] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.55.
[1102] Croft, *Boursault,* p.48.
[1103] DeJean, 'Rooms of their own: Literary salons in seventeenth century France', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism,* ed. by Glyn P. Norton, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), III, pp.378-83 (p.379).

attack and defence'[1104]) influenced the style of published critiques and also had an impact on the proliferation of literary quarrels and polemical exchanges between authors and critics.

Many writers used the salons as testing grounds for their works to receive critical feedback. Shoemaker summarises the process: 'the social connections of the patron […] offered the writer the opportunity to venture into polite society where he could present his work and expand his network of social connections'.[1105] Furetière's definition of *réciter* illustrates the practice: '[l]es Poëtes sont sujets à aller *reciter*, lire leurs pieces dans des compagnies de femmes poûr briguer de l'approbation, & prevenir le jugement du public'.[1106] Croft agrees that it was established practice to read new works in the salons before performance in the theatre and gives the example of Boursault writing to confirm that he will give a reading to Mme Tallemant: 'je vous promis Vendredy de vous aller lire Lundy ma Piece'.[1107] Viala describes the occasion of Racine's reading of *Alexandre* at the hôtel de Nevers before a distinguished audience including 'trois évêques et deux présidents du Parlement, Mme de Sévigné, Mme de La Fayette et La Rochefoucauld'. He considers it to have been a 'bon test: le public mondain mordait. Et bonne publicité: on causait de la pièce avant qu'elle ne soit à l'affiche.'[1108] Sayer confirms: 'this *salon* reading during the course of composition is an example of Racine's habit of taking soundings' and he suggests that some significant changes were made by Racine to the text as a result of feedback from the attendees.[1109] These initial readings would give an author the chance to gauge reactions to the play before its performance and would have created an audience of salon habitués and their acquaintances eager to see the play performed.

As well as 'un auditoire sur qui essayer ses œuvres',[1110] salons could serve as a publicity network for writers. According to Forestier, Racine was aware of the benefits of advance publicity: 'la création d'*Andromaque* semble avoir été soigneusement préparée par des lectures dans les salons'.[1111] Shoemaker notes that 'the reception of a dramatic text can be influenced by publicity campaigns that occur behind the scenes,'[1112] quoting Pierre Corneille's *Excuse à Ariste*:

> J'ai peu de voix pour moi, mais je les ai sans brigue

[1104] DeJean, 'Rooms of their own', p.380.
[1105] Shoemaker, p.35.
[1106] Furetière, III, 'Réciter'.
[1107] Croft, *Boursault,* p.29.
[1108] Viala, *Stratégie*, p.109.
[1109] Sayer, p.79.
[1110] Relyea, p.302.
[1111] Forestier, p.292.
[1112] Shoemaker, p.158.

> Et mon ambition, pour faire plus du bruit
> Ne les va point quêter de Réduit en Réduit.[1113]

Shoemaker describes Corneille's *Excuse* as a 'bold attempt to carve out an authorial position that dispensed with both the intellectual authority of erudite critics and the social authority of prominent patrons'.[1114] In *Les Précieuses Ridicules,* Molière mocks what is clearly established practice when Mascarille explains:

> C'est la coutume ici qu'à nous autres gens de condition les auteurs viennent lire leurs pièces nouvelles, pour nous engager à les trouver belles, et leur donner de la réputation […] Quand j'ai promis à quelque poète, je crie toujours 'Voilà qui est beau', devant que les chandelles soient allumées.[1115]

Boileau, in his *Art Poétique,* advises authors to be wary of salon audiences who are 'prompts à crier: Merveille!'[1116] implying that the salon audience was insufficiently critical or unwilling to give offence. However, their responses were not always as enthusiastic as Boileau implied. One of Corneille's plays, *Polyeucte*, when it was read at the Mme de Rambouillet's salon, 'ne recueillit que des compliments médiocres et pleins de réticences'.[1117] Donneau de Visé mocks the process whereby *salonnières* influence and approve a work:

> un de ces auteurs lisant ses ouvrages au milieu de quatre ou cinq femmes qui, sans écouter ses raisons, condamnent et lui font changer ce qui leur déplaît, qui lui font retrancher ce qu'elles n'aiment pas et lui font ajouter ce qui leur vient en la fantaisie. Tout cela étant fait, […] elles l'envoient de maison en maison, chez toutes leurs amies, […] avec une recommandation et un certificat de la bonté de sa pièce.[1118]

In spite of such experiences, writers continued to frequent salons, recognising the benefits of increased access to the networks of theatre-goers and potential patrons. Such literary discussions also meant that the social capital of patrons could be brought to bear on the success of a play and writers could take the opportunity to reinforce this connection by dedicating their works to distinguished patrons. As Benedetta Craveri notes, salons 'contributed to its [the theatre's] success by bringing to it an aristocratic public that would support [it]'.[1119]

[1113] 'Réduit' was another name for a salon.
[1114] Shoemaker, p.160.
[1115] Molière, I, p.278.
[1116] Boileau, p.181.
[1117] Roger Picard, *Les Salons Littéraires et la Société Française 1610-1789* (New York: Brentano's, 1943), pp.35-36.
[1118] Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles Nouvelles*, III, Section 162.
[1119] Benedetta Craveri, *The Age of Conversation,* trans. by Teresa Waugh (New York: New York Review of Books, 2005), p.34.

The aristocratic members of a salon would not only support the public theatres, but might also request private performances, either in the salons or for a special celebration. Harrison views private performances of plays in the patron's house as crucial to the patron's social standing, as they 'proved that the patron deserved admiration as a generous individual who had not spared expense in entertaining guests'.[1120] Private performances would have increased the author's social standing by granting him access to the patron's intimate circle. Mongrédien says that the Prince de Condé staged Molière's *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* and his *Impromptu de Versailles* as well as Boursault's *Le Portrait du Peintre* and Montfleury's *Impromptu de l'Hôtel de Condé* all in one evening to celebrate his son's wedding.[1121] Brooks mentions a private performance of one of Quinault's plays to celebrate the wedding celebrations of Mlle de Chaumejan de Fourilles to the Marquis de Chambonas.[1122] While less prestigious than the entertainments at Versailles, those hosted by nobles such as Condé would have greatly enhanced an author's renown. A play had been judged suitable to be used as part of a private entertainment, thereby confirming the author's cultural and vocational capital among an important elite. However, according to Caldicott, 'aussi avantageuses pour sa réputation que fussent les visites particulières, et surtout sa participation aux mariages des grands héritiers, Molière n'en fut que chichement rémunéré'.[1123]

Salons can be seen to have conferred a wide range of benefits. Relyea concludes 'on ne s'étonne donc pas que les poètes et les jeunes futures écrivaines [*sic*] s'y soient précipités'. She also identifies the benefits of salon attendance for the aristocracy: 'les grands y trouvaient un raffinement et une stimulation'.[1124] Salon habitués would also have figured among the audience in public theatres and they could have indirectly patronised an author by recommending their friends to attend his plays. The presence of other authors meant that vocational capital, through the respect of one's peers, was also to be acquired at salons. If less well-established authors could gain admittance, they could use this as a means to become known within the literary circles of influence and then move on to the other, more prestigious, institutions. Since members of the nobility and other writers were both in attendance, the salons would have offered authors a chance to meet and gain the support of members of the Académie, such as Voiture and Chapelain. However, despite the obvious benefits, the salons were able to confer only a form of unofficial legitimacy; they could not offer the same level of validation as could the state and

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[1120] Harrison, p.23.
[1121] *La Querelle de l'Ecole des Femmes*, ed. by Mongrédien, II, p.318.
[1122] Brooks, pp.187-89.
[1123] Caldicott, p.69.
[1124] Relyea, p.302.

official institutions of the royal court and the Académie française. The attraction of the salons to authors lay in their diversity and number, which meant that there were more opportunities for an author to gain admittance. Salons were also able to exert real influence on a writer's career through the social networking opportunities they offered. According to Lilti, 'les salons fonctionnent comme des espaces intermédiaires entre le monde littéraire, celui des élites parisiennes, et celui de la cour'.[1125] Having succeeded in gaining social and vocational capital through the salons, an author could aspire to higher society and the possibility of membership of the Académie. As Lilti concludes: 'La proximité entre les salons et la cour permet de convertir un succès mondain en faveur royale. Celle-ci, à terme, peut ouvrir les portes de l'Académie'.[1126]

The influence of the Académie française

The growth and popularity of the salons was only one manifestation of the intense interest in literature and cultured debate at this period in the seventeenth century. Viala describes 'une floraison de cercles lettrés, réunions amicales et privées, souvent liés à des salons mondains'.[1127] He identifies 'des dizaines d'académies'[1128] created at this time and he refers to the Abbé d'Aubignac ('lui-même initiateur d'une académie') whose list of contemporary academies included the circle of Mlle de Scudéry and the 'Mercuriales' of Ménage, showing that salons might also rank as academies: 'dès que de simples particuliers tenaient des réunions consacrées aux questions culturelles, leur cercle méritait le nom d'«académie»'.[1129]

Gérard Michaux describes the beginnings of 'le premier académisme français':

> les contemporains de Louis XIII, en parlant d'académies, désignent des cénacles, des cercles d'érudits ou des assemblées savantes, aux réunions plus ou moins régulières, plus ou moins réglementées ou plus ou moins formalisées, relevant généralement de l'initiative privée, mais qui toutes favorisent le « commerce de l'esprit ».[1130]

Cardinal Richelieu, according to Michaux, saw in these private literary gatherings the opportunity to achieve his 'grand dessein: détourner au service de la monarchie la nouvelle génération d'hommes de lettres, afin qu'ils travaillent à embellir et perfectionner la langue française, instrument de la puissance de l'Etat centralisateur, et qu'ils concourent à la

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[1125] Lilti, 'Sociabilité et mondanité', p.423.
[1126] Lilti, p.426.
[1127] Viala, 'Académie française', in *Dictionnaire Européen des Lumières,* ed. by Michel Delon (Paris: Quadrige/ Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), p.6.
[1128] Viala, *Naissance*, p.15.
[1129] Viala, p.17.
[1130] Gérard Michaux, 'Naissance et développement des académies en France au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz* (2007), 73-86 (p.76).

prééminence et au rayonnement intellectuels de France'.[1131] The official creation of the state-sponsored Académie française occurred in 1635 when Richelieu arranged for a group of writers to be given *lettres patentes* to form a body whose mission was 'de travailler avec tout le soin et toute la diligence possible à donner des règles certaines à notre langue et à la rendre pure, éloquente et capable de traiter les arts et les sciences'.[1132] The Académie's website states somewhat vaingloriously 'pour la première fois, les débats d'une assemblée de lettrés ont été considérés comme pouvant jouer un rôle éminent dans le devenir de la société et de la nation'.[1133] Viala considers that 'l'Académie constitue bien la première structure spécifique de la vie littéraire; sa création officielle vaut comme symbole d'un changement de la situation culturelle en France'.[1134] He summarises the key benefits of the Académie française for 'la sociabilité littéraire':

> D'une part, l'institution la légitimait. D'autre part, la protection par le pouvoir, si elle impliquait une limitation de liberté, offrait le contact avec les détenteurs de puissance et d'argent, sources de financement et de moyens de subsistance. Enfin, la reconnaissance par les pairs, nécessaire à la constitution de la figure d'écrivain y était hautement emblématisée.[1135]

Shoemaker highlights as a key benefit the provision of a support network to its members: '[It] gave a man of letters access to patronage networks and potentially profitable connections'. He also reinforces the importance of status and peer recognition: 'It provided men of letters with a kind of official recognition as *men of letters'*.[1136] As Viala notes, since membership of the Académie was dependent on the approval of the existing members, 'être admis dans une académie, c'était être reconnu par ses pairs'.[1137] Pierre Gaxotte goes so far as to suggest that membership was the 'suprême honneur sans lequel la réussite ne serait point complète'.[1138] Membership represented a symbolic high point for an author who was pursuing cultural capital. Viala considers that 'être académicien devient un moyen d'affirmer son appartenance au monde cultivé et distingué, en même temps que de marquer son appartenance à la clientèle du pouvoir en place'.[1139]

[1131] Michaux, p.79.
[1132] *Annuaire de l'Académie Française Première Partie* (Paris: Les Presses du Palais Royal, 1984), p.42.
[1133] Académie française, *L'Institution >L'Histoire.*
[1134] Viala, *Naissance,* p.15.
[1135] Viala, 'Académie française', p.6.
[1136] Shoemaker, p.208.
[1137] Viala, *Naissance*, p.43.
[1138] Pierre Gaxotte, *L'Académie Française* (Paris: Hachette, 1965), p.7.
[1139] Viala, 'Académie française', p.6.

The membership of the new body was limited by statute:

> PREMIÈREMENT
> Personne ne sera reçu dans l'Académie qui ne soit agréable à Monseigneur le Protecteur et qui ne soit de bonnes mœurs, de bonne réputation, de bon esprit et propre aux fonctions académiques.[1140]

There was no requirement in its founding statutes for members to be published authors or even to be amateur men of letters, merely *honnêtes hommes* who were acceptable to Richelieu. Members who were active in the career of writing would have the skills and fluency to praise the king and his achievements, and thereby meet this major aim of the Académie, or at least that of Richelieu. Appendix 5 to this thesis provides a list of the first three people elected to occupy each of the forty *fauteuils* at the Académie within the period of this study. Of the original forty members, the majority were, in fact, connected with the literary world, some as writers, grammarians and translators; those who followed other occupations showed enthusiasm as amateurs and supported the aims of the Académie.

However, in considering the criteria for membership, it must be noted that one of the stated ways in which members could reach linguistic perfection 'seroit l'examen et la correction de leurs propres ouvrages'.[1141] This clearly implies that, although it was not a prerequisite of entry, members ought to be active writers, able to present their work to their colleagues and to offer and gain critical feedback. The *commissaires* appointed to examine other members' work needed to have the credibility of professional judgement implied by their own vocational capital. By electing candidates who had written little, the members of the Académie risked ignoring a stated function of their institution. Nevertheless, members were sometimes elected for political, family or patronage reasons. Viala says that 'il devient de bon ton dans la haute société de se tourner vers l'Académie même si l'on n'est que peu littérateur'.[1142] Lefèvre Caumartin was elected in 1694, 'sans avoir rien produit, à l'âge de vingt-six ans', because 'Le Roi […] le fit recevoir à l'Académie'.[1143] Examples of members of the Académie being elected for their social position, rather than their writing talents and creative works, represent instances when those who would have been considered outsiders in terms of their writing were able to gain membership ahead of established writers because of their social capital. Colbert's son was admitted to the Académie at the relatively young age of 24 and in preference to La Fontaine,

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[1140] Académie française, *Statuts et Règlements (1635),* p.13.
[1141] Paul Pellison and Pierre-Joseph Thoulier d'Olivet, *Histoire de l'Académie Française,* 2 vols (Paris: Didier, 1858), I, p.23.
[1142] Viala, 'Académie française', p.6.
[1143] Académie française, *Les Immortels,* F35.

'grâce à l'influence de son père'.[1144] Family members supported each other and some sons succeeded their fathers: Pierre de Camboust succeeded to his father's seat 25 and Pierre Cureau de la Chambre to his father's seat 36. Contemporary authors were aware of the abuses of the system and suggested that it damaged the reputation of the Académie. Emile Roy cites a *ballade* written by Benserade after La Fontaine was again 'repoussé par le parti des dévots':

> Vous vous trompés, auteurs de nostre temps,
> Si vous mettés dans vostre fantaisie
> Que c'est assés que vous soiés sçavants
> Pour obtenir place à l'Académie,
> C'est un abus, quittés vostre hérésie:
> Pour estre admis il fault d'autres talents.
> Soiés dévots, fréquentés bien l'église,
> Escrivés mal, mais sur subjets pieux,
> Faites des vers que jamais on ne lise. [1145]

Charles Sorel reports the argument of the Académie's opponents that 'nombre d'entre eux ont apporté pour tout bagage, qui un titre, quelques stances ou quelques élégies, qui des ouvrages très-foibles'.[1146] In one of his letters Boursault refers to the reception of an Abbé (unamed) based on the 'Recommandation d'une Puissance à qui elle [l'Académie] ne peut rien refuser', declaring 'si jamais il n'eût songé à l'Académie, jamais elle n'eût songé à lui'.[1147]

Since membership of the Académie was by vote of the existing members, it was crucial to have support within the institution for admission. Therefore, the strategy of building social connections with fellow writers at the beginning of one's career would have been extremely important. However, there is evidence of the electoral system having been manipulated. If a third of the votes were in favour of excluding the candidate, then he was not elected: 'une minorité, résolue à se défendre, eût pu, en tout état de cause, prohiber l'entrée de l'Académie à des personnages qu'elle eût jugés incompétents, insociables ou peu sûrs'.[1148] Even with the support of influential academicians such as Bossuet, Racine, and Boileau, La Bruyère was not elected on his first application in 1691. Writers recognised the opposition they would face from their enemies in the Académie. Pierre Corneille did not apply as a candidate until after Richelieu's death and Sayer reports that he was admitted only at the third time of asking.[1149] Boileau 'ne songeait pas à se présenter à l'Académie où il avait beaucoup d'adversaires, mais

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[1144] Académie française, F11.
[1145] Emile Roy, 'La Fontaine Candidat à l'Académie Française en 1682', *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France,* 2 (1895), 419-24 (p.421).
[1146] Charles Sorel, *Discours sur l'Académie françoise* (Paris: Guillaume de Luyne, 1654), p.469.
[1147] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles de Monsieur de Boursealt,* II, p.320.
[1148] Frédéric Masson, *L'Académie Française, 1629-1793* (Paris: Paul Ollendorff, 1912), pp.88-89.
[1149] Sayer, p.216.

il céda au désir que lui exprima Louis XIV de le voir entrer dans cette Compagnie'. Even with such illustrious support, Boileau was not elected because Benserade and his friends who had been satirised by Boileau supported La Fontaine in his place: 'Louis XIV manifesta son mécontentement en retardant l'acceptation du nouvel académicien et Boileau fut élu à l'unanimité à la première place vacante'.[1150] Such social and political machinations are an indication of the high value placed on membership and this underlines the cultural capital and legitimacy in the field of literature offered by membership of the Académie. It also demonstrates that the ultimate power over admittance lay with the king. Elections were subject to approval from the Académie's Protector, so when Louis XIV became Protector in 1672, this effectively meant that he could veto an application. Pellison and d'Olivet are unambiguous in their assessment of Louis's influence over the Académie, claiming that 'surtout lorsqu'il y avoit des élections à faire sa qualité de Protecteur se faisoit sentir'.[1151] Therefore, although close relations with the monarchy were not a prerequisite for membership of the Académie, such ties would have facilitated membership, and authors without a link to the monarchy could be at a disadvantage. Viala sees the Académie as 'un lieu de légitimation des pratiques culturelles, mais aussi [un] lieu de soumission au pouvoir'.[1152]

It was extremely rare for an author to lose membership of the Académie (there were only two examples during the first 70 years).[1153] Therefore, once an author had become a member, he would have reached a high point of cultural capital and established vocational recognition within the literary field. As Shoemaker remarks: 'An academician could always point to his status as academician as evidence of his cultural capital'.[1154] Membership of the key institution for conferring artistic legitimacy and high levels of capital 'institutes an essential difference between the officially recognized, guaranteed competence and simple cultural capital, which is constantly required to prove itself'. Bourdieu's conclusion that 'one sees clearly the performative magic of the power of instituting, the power to show forth and secure belief or, in a word, to impose recognition' is particularly apt in reviewing the role of the Académie in conferring institutional recognition as a key element in cultural legitimacy for its members.[1155]

[1150] Académie française, *Les Immortels,* F1.
[1151] Pellison and d'Olivet, II, p.23.
[1152] Viala, 'Académie française', p.5.
[1153] Furetière was expelled in 1685 because he published a rival dictionary to the one being prepared by the Académie which claimed exclusive rights for publishing such a work. Auger de Moléon Granier was the first member of the Académie française ever to be expelled, for theft, only 6 months after his election in September 1635.
[1154] Shoemaker, p.208.
[1155] Bourdieu,'Forms of Capital', p.248.

The image created by the Académie of an officially-sanctioned organisation of illustrious members, its remit to safeguard the French language and the protectorship of the monarch meant that admittance would be highly desirable for a writer at this period. The Académie fostered its fabricated image with a group identity of an exclusive organisation through its complex procedures in applying for membership, its closed sessions (Règlement XX)[1156] and its rules and privileges. Its members' self-perception as 'les Quarante' and 'Les Immortels' with the formal right to style themselves 'de l'Académie française' on the first page of their published work (Règlement XL)[1157] was of a superior society with a unifying mission entrusted by the state to guard the nation's culture. The Académie does not entirely mirror Elias's and Scotson's view of an established versus a newcomer group, at least in the early days of its existence: the descriptor insider/excluded might be more appropriate in this instance. The Académie, as a renowned, elite institution, could be viewed as conferring the status of insider on its elected members. However, the overtly exclusive nature of the Académie with its limited number of positions and its rigorous control over admission relates closely to Elias's and Scotson's view that the ability to exclude others is seen as a 'powerful weapon' for the group to 'maintain their identity [and] to assert their superiority', referring to the importance of 'internal cohesion and communal control'.[1158] The Académie guarded its remit jealously, as when it expelled Furetière for publishing his own dictionary. Shoemaker recognises the group cohesion in that 'an academician's interests were tied to the institution as a whole, which had a permanence that other patronage relationships often lacked.'[1159]

Some of the benefits of membership of the Académie were posthumous. Lang and Lang suggest that 'any link to important artistic and literary circles or to a political and cultural elite fosters the posthumous visibility of an artist'.[1160] Masson describes the posthumous honours: 'le service aux Cordeliers, ensuite l'éloge prononcé par le successeur dans son discours de réception et confirmé par le directeur; enfin l'honneur d'avoir son portrait pendu dans la salle des séances'.[1161] However, posthumous fame was not guaranteed: Masson gives the example of the Duc d'Estrées, at whose funeral his membership of the Académie was overlooked.[1162] It

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[1156] 'Ceux qui ne seront pas de l'Académie ne pourront être admis dans les assemblées ordinaires ni extraordinaires, pour quelque cause ou prétexte que ce soit'. Académie française, *Statuts et Règlements (1635),* p.18.

[1157] Académie française, *Statuts et Règlements*, p.23.

[1158] Elias and Scotson, p.xviii.

[1159] Shoemaker, p.207.

[1160] Lang and Lang, p.95.

[1161] Masson, p.149.

[1162] Masson, pp.131-32.

was not until Racine became a member in 1673, almost forty years after the founding of the Académie, that the ceremony in which a new member was accepted was made public.[1163] Even the public ceremonies were usually attended only by the nobility and the actual business of the Académie was conducted behind closed doors. The declarations pronounced by the Director of the Académie appear to have been the only time that a member of the Académie spoke in public in an official capacity. The obituaries of both Quinault and Racine list them as members of the Académie,[1164] but aside from his obituary, Racine's membership of the Académie is mentioned only twice in the *Mercure Galant*, and both times it is with reference to his role as Director of the Académie, a role that would have conferred greater status on its holder than an ordinary member of the Académie might have expected to receive.[1165] Membership of the Académie therefore conferred renown predominantly among one's peers and the nobility, rather than wider celebrity among the general public.

Quinault was elected in 1670; in his reception speech (published under the name of Mr Quinault, 'Auditeur des Comptes', without reference to his status as a writer) he recognises the benefits of being part of a 'Compagnie si celebre'[1166] and declares 'aussi n'ay-je souhaité d'obtenir la grace que vous m'accordez, que pour acquerir parmy vous la perfection qui me manque, & les lumieres dont j'ay besoin.'[1167] Brooks suggests that as part of Quinault's strategy to gain admittance, he deliberately chose at this stage in his career to take up the more serious form of a tragedy, *Pausanias*. Brooks quotes Couvreur's conclusion: 'Quinault cherchait un siège à l'Académie et l'Académie ne prisait guère les saltimbanques'.[1168] Brooks also notes that Quinault was 'indefatigable at the Académie française […] and he took his official duties seriously'.[1169]

Sayer sees the exercise of power in Racine's election in 1672: 'the new royal patron must have been a powerful influence'. He also considers that 'influence must have been exercised also by members who had already supported Racine so strongly: Colbert, Saint-Aignan, Chapelain'. Otherwise his membership might have been opposed by rival writers; Sayer cites Pierre Corneille, Boyer, Quinault, Segrais and Perrault.[1170] Sayer suggests that, at the crucial period

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[1163] Masson, p.95.
[1164] *Le Mercure Galant* (November 1688), p.332 and (April 1699), pp.258-59.
[1165] *Le Mercure Galant* (May 1688), p.231 and p.235.
[1166] *Recueil des Harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie Françoise dans leurs Réceptions,* 2 vols (Amsterdam: Aux dépens de La Compagnie, 1709), I, p.141.
[1167] *Recueil des Harangues*, I, p.143.
[1168] Brooks, p.324.
[1169] Brooks, p.480.
[1170] Sayer, p.216.

prior to his admittance, Racine tempered what would have been a normally vehement response to criticisms of *Bajazet* in order to ensure his behaviour was as expected of a potential academician and he concludes 'his election confirmed his favoured position as part of the establishment'.[1171] However, in the early years Racine was not a regular attendee at meetings and Forestier considers that 'C'était se comporter non point comme un "auteur" mais comme l'un de ces académiciens de distinction qui honoraient quelquefois l'institution de leur présence'.[1172] Racine subsequently became a more 'assiduous academician':[1173] he was made Director of the Académie and in 1678 he pronounced the reception speeches for the Abbé Colbert, Thomas Corneille and Bergeret.[1174]

Boursault's experience provides an interesting contrast since he was the only one of the case study authors not elected as a member of the Académie. The process for entry to the Académie was not a public one, so it is difficult to know whether he formally sought admittance. However, he would have been well aware of the benefits of membership and membership was seen as a symbolic manifestation of status in the literary world. He appears to fulfil some of the requirements for membership. He had influential connections: he had friendships with a number of academicians and his gazettes were widely circulated among members of the aristocracy. He was a prolific writer and his plays were very popular with theatre audiences: Goldsmith confirms that 'between 1683 and 1694 Boursault made more money from his plays than any other playwright before him'.[1175] There are a number of possible reasons why he did not become a member of the Académie. Unlike Racine and Quinault, he did not have an official position at court, so may not have had the expected social capital. His position as a tax collector meant that he was absent from Paris for a number of years and this would have affected his eligibility during this period. He may have had enemies within the Académie who opposed his membership. The diverse nature of his literary output may have also counted against him. Another possible explanation is that Boursault adopted a different strategy to promote his career and focused less on promoting his cultural capital. Unlike Quinault and Racine, Boursault did not employ direct competition with other authors, but instead used polemical attacks. Boursault's strategy of seeking controversy therefore, while it may have been successful in

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[1171] Sayer, pp.215-16.
[1172] Forestier, p.476.
[1173] Sayer, p.292.
[1174] Académie française, *Les Immortels,* F13. According to Lockwood, Racine judged his own *Discours de réception* as an inductee in 1673 as 'an utter failure' and 'he took pains not only to destroy his manuscript, but to ensure that no transcript was kept in Academy records. […] Nor was any copy printed and circulated, as would be done for his later speeches'. (Lockwood, p.178.)
[1175] Goldsmith, p.144.

gaining publicity for his plays, may have alienated potentially influential supporters within the Académie. It may have given the impression that he was a divisive character, incapable of the *honnête* behaviour towards fellow men of letters that was deemed necessary.

A more likely contributing reason is discussed by Croft. She identifies no less than sixteen academicians who were friends of Boursault and therefore were likely to support his candidature.[1176] She argues that his lack of Latin and a classical education was the most likely cause of his failure to gain admittance to the Académie. Boursault's granddaughter reports a conversation between Thomas Corneille and Boursault in which the former strongly encouraged his application to the Académie. Boursault 'lui alléguoit toujours son ignorance, & lui demandoit de bonne foi ce que feroit l'Académie d'un sujet ignare & non lettré qui ne sçavoit ni *Latin ni Grec*'. Corneille's reply, as reported by Boursault's granddaughter, was warmly positive: '*Il n'est pas question [...] d'une Académie Grecque ou Latine, mais d'une Académie Françoise: & qui sçait mieux le François que vous?*'[1177] Croft refers to 'une tentative avortée de la Présidente S*** d'ouvrir à l'auteur les portes de l'Académie'. In his response to la Présidente, Boursault writes 'On ne peut être plus sensible que je le suis à la grace que vous m'avez voulu faire, pendant mon absence, de me procurer la place qui étoit vaccante à l'Académie par la mort de Monsieur *** et qui a été remplie par un homme qui est incomparablement plus digne que moy. L'honneur que vous me faites de m'en croire capable d'en être, me console de n'en être pas'. He adds an epigram:

> D'aucun chagrin pour moi n'aye*z* le cœur saisi
> De ce qu'on ne m'a point choisi
> Pour être de l'Académie:
> Il m'est plus glorieux qu'un objet plein d'appas
> Me demande, comme vous faites,
> D'où vient que vous n'en êtes pas?
> Qu'à ceux à qui l'on dit, d'où vient que vous en êtes![1178]

Boursault must have been disappointed to lose his chance to be the preceptor for the Dauphin because he had not received a classical education and he may have been particularly sensitive to this in a literary world where it would be an exceptional failing. His granddaughter refers to the fact towards the beginning of her biography and Gevrey suggests that 'Cette ignorance du latin revient comme un refrain sous la plume de Boursault, dans une lettre à son fils à propos

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[1176] Croft, *Boursault,* p.122.
[1177] Boursault, *Theatre*, I, [p.b vii]. The use of italic type follows the original.
[1178] Boursault, *Lettres Nouvelles*, I, p.166.

de la thèse de ce dernier, mais aussi dans des poésies comme dans les *Lettres de Babet*.'[1179] It may therefore be the case that he did not submit a formal application to be admitted to the Académie and left it to his friends to take soundings as to his likely success. Croft concludes: 'Ainsi, malgré le succès inédit que connut [*sic*] les *Fables d'Esope* (1690) et les appuis dont il aurait dû disposer, Boursault ne vit jamais sa carrière d'écrivain consacrée par l'institution littéraire la plus prestigieuse de France'.[1180] Boursault's inability to gain membership may be an illustration of Elias's and Scotson's view that

> the more powerful groups look upon themselves as the "better" people, as endowed with a kind of group charisma, with a specific virtue shared by all its members and lacked by the others. What is more in all these cases the "superior" people may make the less powerful people themselves feel that they lack virtue – that they are inferior in human terms. [1181]

Boursault may have been made to feel inferior to the other, classically-educated, academicians and so he did not pursue his application. Fournel confirms 'il refusa […] de prétendre à un fauteuil académique, à cause de son peu d'instruction'.[1182] The secrecy surrounding applications makes it difficult to confirm this but the underlying disappointment in 'on ne m'a point choisi' and the brave face he puts on in recognising that the successful candidate was incomparably more worthy is perhaps an indication that he recognised that he was an outsider to this exclusive establishment.

This exclusivity and assumption of superiority was a source of irritation to some contemporary writers. The new Académie may have taken some time to establish itself and there was some early opposition to its politically-sanctioned role in regulating the language. Its claim to pre-eminence among the other *cercles savants* and the original selection of members could have caused resentment to those who were excluded. Charles Wright considers that 'the men, many of them young, who formed the nucleus of the Academy, were not all very eminent at the time'.[1183] Charles Giraud refers to 'beaucoup d'adversaires intéressés' of the new Académie who resented the official move towards the reform of the language, particularly because 'un très-grand nombre [of the members] avoient peu de célébrité personnelle'. He identifies 'des personnages de grande réputation' such as Mairet, Naudé and Rotrou who were not

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[1179] Gevrey, p.4.
[1180] Croft, *Boursault,* p.123.
[1181] Elias and Scotson, p.xvi.
[1182] Fournel, I, p.93.
[1183] Charles Henry Conrad Wright, 'Three Hundred Years of the French Academy', *The Modern Language Journal,* 20 (1935), 3-7 (p.4).

members.[1184] Giraud provides details of a widely-circulating criticism of the new body, published in 1650 as *La Comédie des Académiciens*, but appearing earlier in manuscript form. According to Giraud, its author, Saint-Evremond, 'n'avoit pu se résoudre à courber la tête devant ce tribunal prétendu souverain de la langue'.[1185] The satire ridicules the pedantic processes of the new Académie in reforming the language, with attacks on characters in the guise of academicians as they share their somewhat arbitrary decisions to determine which words should be admitted into usage and which should be banned.

> L'Estoille
>> Peut-être voudrez-vous garder encore *jadis*?
> Baudoin
>> Sans lui comment rimer si bien à *paradis*?

He then lists some of the changes and the reasons, including '*Jadis* est conservé par respect pour Malherbe' […] 'Et révérer le *car* pour l'intérêt du Roi' and the Troupe responds:

> Anathème sur ceux qui voudront le blâmer,
> Et soit traité chez nous plus mal qu'un hérétique,
> Qui ne reconnoîtra la troupe académique.

In concluding, one of the characters, Sérisay, triumphantly declares

> Grâce à Dieu, compagnons, la divine assemblée
> A si bien travaillé que la langue est réglée.[1186]

Donneau de Visé's satirical *nouvelle* entitled 'Un Extrait d'une Lettre écrite du Parnasse touchant les trente-et-un nouveaux règlements qui ont été depuis peu faits dans le conseil d'Apollon et des Muses extraordinairement assemblé' mockingly identifies a set of rules including one to extend the powers of the Académie:

> VI les auteurs seront obligés d'avoir une approbation des seigneurs de l'Académie
> française, sans laquelle le roi sera prié de ne plus accorder de privilège, et défenses
> seront faites à tous libraires et imprimeurs d'imprimer aucuns livres sans voir ladite
> approbation.[1187]

He also suggests a view of the potential tensions between the official judgements of the Académie and the theatrical professionals:

> un auteur de théâtre dont les comédiens avaient refusé de jouer la pièce vint présenter
> une requête à Apollon, […] dans laquelle il le priait d'ajouter à ses règlements que

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[1184] Saint-Evremond, *Œuvres Mêlées de Saint-Evremond*, ed. by Charles Giraud, 3 vols (Paris: J. Léon Techener fils, 1865), I, p.xxxi.

[1185] Saint-Evremond, I, p.xxxii.

[1186] Saint-Evremond, 'Les Académiciens', in Saint-Evremond and Comte d'Etelan, *La Comédie des Académistes* and Saint-Evremond, *Les Académiciens*, ed. by Paolo Carile (Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica and Paris: Nizet, 1976), pp.245-47.

[1187] Donneau de Visé, *Nouvelles Nouvelles*, III, Section 139.

les comédiens ne pourraient plus jouer de pièces sans avoir une approbation de l'Académie et qu'ils seraient obligés de jouer toutes celles qu'elle approuverait. L'affaire ayant été mise en délibération, il fut dit que l'on n'aurait point d'égard à sa requête et qu'il n'y avait personne qui pût mieux juger que les comédiens du succès des ouvrages de théâtre et qui connût mieux ce qui devait plaire ou choquer, attendu leur grande expérience.[1188]

This may be compared with the Académie's *Statuts et Règlements* of 1635:

> XLV L'Académie ne jugera que des ouvrages de ceux dont elle est composée; et si elle se trouve obligée par quelque considération importante d'en examiner d'autres, elle donnera seulement ses avis sans en faire aucune censure et sans en donner aussi l'approbation.[1189]

This limit on its powers to pass judgement on work by non-academicians should be noted, particularly in respect of the intervention of the newly-founded Académie in the *querelle* of *Le Cid*. Neither Corneille nor Scudéry were academicians at the time of the quarrel. As Jessica Kamin explains: 'At the behest of Richelieu, Corneille submitted his play to be evaluated by the French Academy, which was only authorized to render opinions at the request of the authors'.[1190] Chapelain, in the Académie's response, describes the role as 'comme Arbitre et non comme Juge'.[1191] Nevertheless, as Wright suggests, the 'prestige of governmental favour enabled it to become […] a tribunal or court of last resort on all matters concerning language, style, criticism and good taste'.[1192] The membership of men of letters would have given its role as a literary arbiter both authority and credibility. The Académie's judgement in 'granting separate but not equal voices to spectators and readers' is summarised by Kamin: 'The illustrious body of literary professionals renders a second opinion as expert readers that undermines the approbation of the theatergoers by attending to imperfections in the play that had not interfered with spectator enjoyment of its performances'.[1193] She considers that the judgement of the Académie 'gives an official valorization to the expert in the *cabinet* over the spectator in the *salle*, creating new expectations for legitimate ways of judging a play'.[1194] The official response of the Académie was condescending towards the theatre audience: 'cette piece ayant fort pleu, nous estimons qu'elle se peut dire bonne si l'on regarde seulement ceux qui n'y

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[1188] Donneau de Visé, III, Section 159.

[1189] Académie française, *Statuts et Règlements,* p.24.

[1190] Jessica N. Kamin, 'Playwrights on the Threshold Between Stage and Study: Paratexts and Polemical Texts in Seventeenth-Century French Theater' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Washington, 2012), p.66.

[1191] *Les Sentimens de l'Academie Françoise touchant les observations faites sur la Tragi-comedie du Cid, d'après le manuscrit de la main de Chapelain*, ed. by Georges Collas (Paris: Picard et Fils, 1912), p.7.

[1192] Wright, p.5.

[1193] Kamin, p.66.

[1194] Kamin, p.68.

cherchent que le plaisir'.[1195] Kamin concludes that 'The Académie rejects the pleasure of the people moved by the representation as the basis for judgment, it opposes this mode of reception not only with an abstraction of public opinion at the Theater, but more specifically, with the trumping of spectators' voices by those of readers'.[1196] Boileau, however, sees the judgement of the Académie as irrelevant since the judgement of the audience is what matters:

> Envain contre le Cid un Ministre se ligue.
> Tout Paris pour Chimene a les yeux de Rodrigue.
> L'Academie en corps à beau le censurer ;
> Le Public revolté s'obstine à l'admirer. [1197]

The influence of theatre audiences and the reading public

After the response to the *querelle* of *Le Cid,* the Académie had less direct involvement as a legitimising body in such quarrels. In the later *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes*, the authors chose to direct their arguments to their audience, not to the Académie, possibly because this quarrel was motivated by desire for publicity rather than genuine literary grievances. It may also perhaps show how influential Richelieu was in directing the Académie in its early years and, following his death, the Académie concentrated more on its principal role in producing the *Dictionnaire.* Nevertheless, the appeal to the judgement of the audience demonstrates a change which recognises the rise of the new public in the Parisian theatre and the increasing impact of the theatre audience in a legitimising role. Brown describes this context: 'the most important Parisian public theaters — the Palais-Cardinal (later the Palais-Royal), the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and the Théâtre du Marais (and ultimately the Comédie-Française) — housed commercial troupes that performed for largely wealthy and aristocratic audiences, people who might become protectors and patrons of writers'.[1198] He recognises the changes to the 'Parisian public, which was […] being transformed by the royal administrative centralization. High nobles and wealthy financiers, like writers, became concentrated in the capital, where they attended command performances at the Louvre and at such aristocratic residences as Richelieu's Palais-Cardinal.'[1199]

In exploring the importance of the notion of *le public* in seventeenth-century France, Hélène Merlin first makes the semantic link between *publier* and the *public*: 'l'auteur qui donne ses

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[1195] *Les Sentimens de l'Academie*, pp.9-10.
[1196] Kamin, pp.19-20.
[1197] Boileau, 'Satire IX', p.54.
[1198] Brown, p.41.
[1199] Brown, p.39.

ouvrages au *public* les *publie*', thus making the work 'disponible pour tous'.[1200] She describes the author's act of rendering a work public as 'un don perpétuel au *public*'[1201] and she considers that 'le mot de *public* ne renvoie pas aux lecteurs ou spectateurs, réels ou virtuels, des tragédies, il renvoie à *l'espace public* […] par ce moyen de l'impression, l'œuvre va *prendre place dans l'espace public*'.[1202] Merlin sees the public as an evolving concept: a 'personne fictive renvoyant à l'ensemble *virtuel* des lecteurs et spectateurs d'une œuvre «littéraire», ou plus exactement à l'ensemble des *particuliers* susceptibles d'être touchés – affectés, engagés, transformés – par la publication d'une œuvre «littéraire»'.[1203] For Génetiot 'le développement d'un public d'honnêtes gens à travers la civilisation du loisir mondain' is a determining factor in 'l'avènement d'un moment classique en France au XVIIe siècle'.[1204]

Viala refers to the emergence of a 'public élargi' which offered 'une voie nouvelle de légitimation aux écrivains'.[1205] The public's role in legitimising an author's work is further explored through Merlin's view of the *public* as a 'personne juridique littéraire' with a 'conscience critique'.[1206] She distinguishes between the public as 'des destinataires auxquels l'œuvre serait soumise sans médiation' and an alternative model likening the public to 'un législateur sous l'autorité duquel l'auteur se trouve placé', affirming 'l'antériorité du *public* sur l'œuvre et son primat sur l'auteur'.[1207]

An important and increasingly powerful spectator group was gradually emerging: a more socially mixed community (though not one representative of the people of Paris as a whole) seeking theatrical entertainment, but entertainment of a suitable nature for a discerning and intellectual audience. The new audiences were attending 'public' theatres – as opposed to performances at court or in private homes — and access to the performance was open to those with the means to pay admission, regardless of social position. Lough refers to evidence that the *parterre* audience contained 'many solid bourgeois' and cites the expression 'le noble et le bourgeois' as 'frequently used in writings of the time as shorthand for the theatre audience'.[1208]

[1200] Hélène Merlin, *Public et Littérature en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), pp.36-37.
[1201] Merlin, p.117.
[1202] Merlin, p.37.
[1203] Merlin, p.385.
[1204] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', pp.70-72.
[1205] Viala, *Naissance*, p.151.
[1206] Merlin, p.387.
[1207] Merlin, p.390.
[1208] Lough, *Seventeenth-Century French Drama: the Background* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), p.85.

Donneau de Visé in *Zélinde* provides, through his character, Argimont, a view of the mixed audience composition and the popularity of theatre-going:

> la plupart des marchands de la rue Saint-Denis, aiment fort la Comédie, et nous sommes quarante ou cinquante, qui allons ordinairement aux premières représentations de toutes les pièces nouvelles; et quand elles ont quelque chose de particulier, et qu'elles font grand bruit, nous nous mettons quatre ou cinq ensemble, et louons une loge, pour nos femmes; […] Il y a quinze ou seize marchands dans cette rue; […] depuis trente ans, ils ont vu toutes les Comédies que l'on a jouées.[1209]

Viala refers to an 'échelle des institutions' comprising 'l'infrastructure de l'espace social du littéraire'.[1210] He identifies a hierarchy ranging from 'le clientélisme' as the lowest step ('utile pour subsister, mais il ne constitue pas une reconnaissance de la qualité d'écrivain') to the next rung of 'les salons' (important for the writer for 'la promotion sociale'), then the 'académies' ('apportent une légitimation à l'écrivain'), to the top rung of 'le mécénat' ('la plus haute consécration et la plus sélective').[1211] He then adds a further element to the infrastructure: 'le public constitue une autre instance de pouvoir littéraire'. He explains: 'le public restreint se confond avec les membres des institutions dominantes, mais le public élargi, s'il gravite autour d'elles, s'en distingue.'[1212] He notes that a key difference was in their judgements and concludes that 'l'écrivain de carrière se trouvait soumis à la nécessité d'une double alliance. Alliance avec les mondains qui font le nombre des lecteurs ou spectateurs, et alliance avec les institutions'.[1213]

With the public emerging as an additional legitimising body, writers needed to find ways to gain the support and interest of another, different and powerful 'institution'. This new 'force' represented a particular challenge for writers, as the theatre audience and literate public was more heterogeneous than the membership of the other institutions with which they interacted. In this context, Lochert recognises that 'la réception féminine joue un rôle de plus en plus important pour la littérature dramatique'. She discusses the contribution made by women to 'la naissance de la critique dramatique' in developing 'une opposition croissante entre critique savante et critique galante'.[1214] Authors had to respond to the diversity of tastes of the new public. Their relationship with this audience did not involve direct interpersonal contact, governed by known social norms and clearly understood practices, and this caused further

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[1209] Donneau de Visé, *Zélinde ou la Véritable Critique de l'Ecole des femmes,* in Molière, I, p.1025.
[1210] Viala, *Naissance,* p.165.
[1211] Viala, pp.165-66.
[1212] Viala, pp.167-68.
[1213] Viala, p.168.
[1214] Lochert, 'Y a-t-il une critique féminine? Représentations du jugement des spectatrices dans le théâtre français du XVIIe siècle', *Littératures Classiques*, 89 (2016), 75-86 (pp.75-76).

tension. Goldsmith notes that 'the demands of a reading public growing both in size and sophistication were making it impossible for literary fashion to revolve exclusively around courtly culture'.[1215] Shoemaker sees the need for playwrights to negotiate a complex landscape of vested interests: 'the theatregoing public […] was viewed variously as an arbiter of literary glory and a mob. A second public consisted of readers, including erudite literary critics, who necessarily applied a different set of criteria to the play'.[1216] According to Gillian Jondorf, 'Racine looks for cultivation, even erudition, in his ideal reader or spectator […] relying on the spectator's or reader's knowledge to enrich the effect of the play'.[1217] Sayer refers to Racine's preface to *Britannicus* as 'making a moving appeal to *le petit nombre de gens sages*. […] These are his spectators, this is his standard; and he makes no allowances for any other public'.[1218]

Writers were becoming more aware of the need to gain the approval of the new public. In the midst of the *querelle* of *Le Cid*, Corneille published *La Suivante,* with a dedication described by Georges Couton as his 'manifeste littéraire'[1219] in which he declares that 'Je traite toujours mon sujet le moins mal qu'il m'est possible, et après […] je l'abandonne au public'.[1220] The Académie's response to *Le Cid* then makes use of Corneille's declaration and states 'Ceux qui abandonnent leurs Ouvrages au Public ne doivent pas trouver estrange que le Public s'en face le Juge'.[1221] Couton concludes that, for Corneille,

> le but de l'art […] est de plaire. Plaire à la Cour, et au Peuple. Si, de surcroît, en "ajouant les règles", l'auteur peut "ne déplaire pas aux Savants", parfait; mais leur approbation ne constitue qu'une sanction supplémentaire, dont on peut se passer.[1222]

This aim of pleasing their audience becomes a common theme among writers. In the preface to *Bérénice*, Racine clearly states, 'la principale règle est de plaire et de toucher'.[1223] Corneille declares in his *Excuse à Ariste:* 'Je satisfais ensemble et peuple et courtisans.'[1224] In his *Art Poétique,* Boileau advises

> En vain vous étalez une scene sçavante:
> […] Le secret est d'abord de plaire et de toucher

[1215] Goldsmith, p.145.
[1216] Shoemaker, p.156.
[1217] Gillian Jondorf, 'Racine: Allusion and Adaptation in *Iphigénie* and *Athalie*', *Renaissance Drama,* 11 (1980), 189-202 (p.191).
[1218] Sayer, p.146.
[1219] Corneille, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, I, p.1313.
[1220] Corneille, I, p.385.
[1221] *Les Sentimens de l'Academie*, p 1.
[1222] Corneille, I, p.1313.
[1223] Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I, p.467.
[1224] Corneille, I, p.780.

<div style="text-align: center;">Inventez des ressorts qui puisse m'attacher.[1225]</div>

Molière, in *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes,* has Dorante claim: 'le grand art est de plaire, et que cette comédie ayant plu à ceux pour qui elle est faite, je trouve que c'est assez pour elle et qu'elle doit peu se soucier du reste'.[1226] This focus is recognised by Joseph Harris: he sees a move by writers at this period to distance themselves 'from what they regard as the rule-based formalism of the previous generation; by explicitly grounding dramatic success in the audience's subjective responses, they implicitly locate the spectator at the heart of "classical" dramaturgy'.[1227] The official view of the Académie, however, dismisses the importance of the judgement of the audience, stating that it is not possible to confirm that successful works are of good quality:

> quoy qu'ils pleussent au vulgaire, si toutes les regles de ces Arts n'y estoient observées, et si les Experts qui en sont les vrays Juges ne confirmoient par leur approbation celle que le commun leur auroit donnée.[1228]

While writers were obviously seeking the validation of their audience to ensure the success of their plays and thereby gain economic capital, they would also wish to maintain the support of the other influential institutions to accumulate social, vocational and cultural capital. In this sense the approval of aristocratic members of the audience provides an even more convincing validation of a play. Corneille refutes Scudéry's accusations about the characterisation of Chimène by invoking the approval of royal members of his audience ('la Reine, les Princesses et le plus vertueuses Dames de la Cour').[1229] Kamin notes that the fact that '"tout le monde" [...] has already deemed the *Cid* a success implies that the collective voice of any other audience would not carry the weight to overturn their opinion, and that the particular voice of a critic is directed not only at the play but also at the judgment of some of the highest members of society'.[1230] Merlin argues that 'les adversaires du *Cid* cherchent à démontrer que ce succès n'est pas *public*, c'est-à-dire qu'il ne concerne pas le *public*, mais qu'il s'agit d'un succès *populaire*, au sens négatif du terme, au sens d'une force informe menaçant toujours le *public* de décomposition'.[1231] According to Merlin, 'à la souveraineté collective de la république des lettres, [...] les défenseurs du *Cid* opposent la souveraineté de l'auteur *telle qu'elle est*

1225 Boileau, p.169.
1226 Molière, I, p.664.
1227 Joseph Harris, *Inventing the Spectator: Subjectivity and the Theatrical Experience in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.3.
1228 *Les Sentimens de l'Academie*, p.9.
1229 Corneille, I, p.801.
1230 Kamin, p.49.
1231 Merlin, p.169.

communiquée par le public'.[1232] She describes 'cette opposition simple, frontale, entre les savants, représentants des autorités, et à ce titre seuls juges légitimes, et le peuple, spectateur de la représentation' and concludes: 'la passion populaire a gagné les honnêtes gens'.[1233] Merlin sees the birth of 'la sphère publique littéraire' which has created a *public,* 'être idéel fait d'individus réels […] dont le plaisir et la raison critique pourront à nouveau se retraduire en termes de volonté populaire'.[1234]

Playwrights could be seen to have an advantage compared to other authors, since their works existed in two forms ('A play […] inherently straddles two realms — that of the written word, and that of spectacle'[1235]) and therefore it was possible to adapt elements of the work to appeal to a particular audience. Kamin describes the 'two step reception' of a play and recognises the inherent tensions: 'A written work is subject to different expectations than its performed version, and its approval is more broadly and easily won when "heard" in the context of spectacle, rather than being "read"'.[1236] Harris compares 'the experience of watching the theatre in performance […] with the more reflective critical process of reading dramatic works in private'. He identifies 'two potentially quite distinct types of audience: the supposedly uncritical mass of theatre spectators, and the measured, self-reflective audience of experts and critics', though he recognises that 'the theoretically distinct roles of spectator and critic can sometimes overlap or even merge in practice'.[1237] Playwrights were able to use the prefaces of their published works to respond to criticisms of the play in performance. Following the *querelle* of *Le Cid*, the preface to Corneille's next play, *Horace*, features references to the rules of tragedy and identifies his compliance with them, which would have been pleasing to the academicians. Racine uses his prefaces to defend himself from attacks raised by critics, presenting himself as an *homme de lettres* by frequently referring to historical sources or the rules of tragedy to justify his approach and demonstrate adherence to the values of the Académie. Although he often mentions that his plays have been a success with the audience, he does not use this as a defence. Molière includes support for the audience's judgement in *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* as part of the dialogue, while Racine's defences appear only in printed prefaces. Both authors are therefore showing that they are responsive to the tastes of the audience: Molière appeals to the theatre audience in the play itself to gain instantaneous

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[1232] Merlin, p.168.
[1233] Merlin, p.170.
[1234] Merlin, p.388.
[1235] Kamin, p.2.
[1236] Kamin, p.65.
[1237] Harris, pp.8-9.

support during the performance, while Racine appeals to the *doctes* in a section that appeared only in print.

Boursault also recognises the importance of catering for the tastes of his audience. Goldsmith refers to his 'becoming one of the first professional writers to successfully sell his work in a new literary marketplace'.[1238] He was sensitive to changes in popular taste and his versatility enabled him to respond to audience demand with his news gazettes, novels and epistolary narratives: 'He was exceptionally good at discerning fashionable trends and exploiting them in his own works'.[1239] Quinault, however, demonstrates a contrasting view of the importance of the theatre audience's judgement. In his Reception speech to the Académie, he refers to the public's positive response to his plays but recognises the superior judgement of the Académie, saying: 'qu'il s'en faut beaucoup que le vulgaire apperçoive ce que vous pénetrez, & que souvent il y a bien loin de l'estime du peuple à vôtre approbation'.[1240] This opinion — politic in an address to the Académie — is further reinforced in his Dedication to *Bellérophon:* 'le bruit le plus favorable de la Multitude n'est pas un seur garent d'une reputation solide. Son opinion est sujette au changement ainsi qu'à l'erreur, & le Vulgaire inégal, condamne souvent par caprice ce qu'il a d'abord admiré sans connoissance'.[1241]

As the impact of the public increased, writers needed to respond more to the commercial marketplace while at the same time paying due deference to noble patrons, cultivating the social milieu of the salons and maintaining the respect of their peers and of academicians. The power of an enlarged public to enable a writer to gain renown and celebrity was recognised by ambitious authors and their names and reputations were becoming more widely known. Furetière defines 'celebre' as 'qui est en reputation, qui est fameux', with 'fameux' in turn defined as 'qui est en vogue'.[1242] Among the examples of usage he gives is 'C'est un fameux auteur', so the concept of authors attaining fame and celebrity was a recognised possibility at the time and popular authors could certainly meet the criterion of being 'en vogue'. As Rojek says, 'the French word *célèbre*, meaning well known in public […] suggests representations of fame that flourish beyond the boundaries of […] Court society. In a word, it ties celebrity to a *public*' and he provides an equation: 'celebrity = impact on public consciousness'.[1243] He recognises that in social groups certain individuals stand out for their personal qualities: 'These

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[1238] Goldsmith, p.144.
[1239] Goldsmith, p.149.
[1240] *Recueil des Harangues*, I, p.142.
[1241] Quinault, *Bellerophon: Tragedie* (Amsterdam: Wolfgang, 1671), p.A 2.
[1242] Furetière, I, 'Celebre' and II, 'Fameux'.
[1243] Rojek, *Celebrity*, pp.9-10.

individuals have a sort of localized fame within the particular social assemblage of which they are a part'. He makes the following distinction between renown and celebrity:

> Whereas renown follows from personal contact with the individual who is differentiated as unusual or unique, celebrity and notoriety assume a relationship in which the individual who is differentiated by honorific status is distanced from the spectator […] Social distance is the pre-condition of both celebrity and notoriety.[1244]

While many writers at this period could lay claim to local renown within elite groups such as the Académie or the salons, writers ambitious for wider celebrity needed to increase the public's awareness of their name and of their works. Performances in public theatres were an obvious way to achieve this. Lough estimates that the annual total number of spectators for the Comédie-Française averaged nearly 140,000, though he recognises that this figure 'fluctuated fairly violently from year to year' and includes large numbers of people who were regular attendees during the year.[1245] More specific figures based on the *Registre d'Hubert* (1672-73) are cited by Edward Forman, breaking down the detail of audience attendance for Molière's company and illustrating audience size for its performances. As examples, the performance of *Psyché* on 27 December 1672 sold 807 seats and that of *Le Malade Imaginaire* on 10 February 1673 sold 682 seats.[1246] C.J. Gossip considers that 'Dramatists would be delighted with twenty or thirty consecutive performances and most made do with ten to twenty', estimating 10,000-12,000 spectators for an average first run.[1247] Popular plays could be a sell-out for long runs. Clarke gives the example of *Circé* which was performed 'without a break from February to September. It was apparently so popular that for the first six weeks the theatre was already full at midday, and would-be spectators paid up to five times the normal ticket prices'.[1248] Another of Thomas Corneille's plays had the longest run recorded during the century (80 performances): 'pendant près de six mois *Timocrate* fit tous les soirs salle comble'.[1249] Thus the size of the audience for a successful run of a play could mean that thousands of people would, relatively quickly, be made aware of the name of the author and if they considered the play was entertaining they would attend future plays and revivals by the same author, so creating a form of celebrity within the theatre-going public.

[1244] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p.12.

[1245] Lough, *Seventeenth-Century French Drama,* p.97.

[1246] *French Theatre in the Neo-classical Era, 1550-1789,* general editor William Howarth. Part 2, 1630-1680 ed. by Edward Forman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.249-51.

[1247] C.J. Gossip, *An Introduction to French Classical Tragedy* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp.41-42.

[1248] Clarke, 'Machine Plays at the Guénégaud: the Twilight of the Gods', *The Seventeenth Century,* 12 (1997), 85-110 (p.101).

[1249] Gustave Reynier, *Thomas Corneille: Sa Vie et son Théâtre* (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p.16.

The mixed social community of a theatre audience offered playwrights the opportunity to widen their fame by appealing to individuals outside patronage support networks with established status hierarchies. Kurzman *et al*'s judgement on present-day celebrity that 'Celebrities compete for their status position by wooing lower-status fans – a far cry from Weber's image of status competition, in which honor was to be gained only by impressing high-status insiders'[1250] parallels the growing importance of the audience of the *parterre* which would comprise the low-status public. As Kurzman *et al* state: 'fame is lucrative. This form of [celebrity] status translates directly into financial benefit'. A comparison of the receipts from performances of the two plays in the *Registre d'Hubert* illustrates the numbers of purchased seats in the *parterre* compared with those in other parts of the theatre. In both instances, the share of *parterre* tickets was approximately 55%. While the monetary value of these tickets would have been less, this percentage demonstrates the numerical importance of support from the 'lower status fans'.[1251]

An indication of the fame among Parisians of certain writers at this period was the frequent reference to them in the popular street songs. Texts collected from the Chansonnier Maurepas[1252] include songs about Racine, one of which (entitled 'Sur le choix Bizarre que Louis XIV Roy de France avoit fait du Sr Boileau Despreaux Poëte Satirique et du Sr Racine poete Tragique, pour ecrire son histoire en prose') demonstrates the public's awareness of his appointment as Royal Historiographer.[1253] Quinault's verses are frequently parodied, as in 'D'une Chanson de la Scene Ve de l'Acte IVe de l'Opera d'Atys':

> La beauté la plus severe,
> N'est pas un couplet fort bon,
> L'auteur [Quinault] commence a deplaire
> Avec son tendre Jargon.[1254]

[1250] Kurzman *et al*, p.359.
[1251] *French Theatre in the Neo-classical Era*, pp.249-51.
[1252] The Chansonnier Maurepas collection 'consists mainly of unpublished street songs. Song sheets would be sold and distributed in Paris, largely on the Pont-Neuf and in bars, usually containing just the words but almost always accompanied by the name of a popular tune of the day to which the words would be sung. The song sheets allowed Parisian inhabitants the chance to hear the latest news or gossip which normally would not be accessible to them'. Cambridge University Research Project, *Seventeenth-Century Parisian Soundscapes* (University of Cambridge, 2015), 'Home> Research Project'.
[1253]   Louis est bien seur de sa gloire,
         D'avoir parmy tant d'Ecrivains
         Ozé confier son histoire
         En si dangereuses mains.
Cambridge University Research Project, 'Chansonnier Maurepas' >Volume 4, (Chanson 1673 [45]).
[1254] Cambridge University Research Project, 'Chansonnier Maurepas'> Volume 4, (Parodie 1676 [295]).

There are many parodies of the operas of (the unpopular) Lully and of passages of Quinault's lyrics. Norman considers that 'les nombreuses parodies des livrets de Quinault' are a clear indication of their success.[1255] As Donald Grout suggests, 'Parodies of operas show how thoroughly familiar the operas were to Parisians of the time. A comic author could imitate a single scene or even a single line with perfect assurance that the reference would at once be perceived by the audience'.[1256] Quinault's line from *Atys*: 'Que devant vous tout s'abaisse et tout tremble' is paraphrased into the easily recognised 'Devant tes vers tout gemit et tout tremble'.[1257]

As part of Colbert's policy of using art to glorify the king, details of the entertainments that Louis was staging were often disseminated in Paris.[1258] This, of course, meant that news of an author's involvement in these entertainments reached a wider audience than simply those who had attended a performance. Furthermore, if it was reported that a play had been successful when performed at Versailles, the audience for the initial performances in Paris would have been larger, as people flocked to see a play that had received royal approval. La Grange's *Registre* shows that the first performance in Paris of Molière's *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, after it had been performed at Versailles, raised 1,090 *livres*.[1259] Royal command performances would have offered the writer considerable status. However, since it was virtually a prerequisite that a writer should already be successful before being asked to write for one of the king's entertainments, only a very small number of writers would have benefitted from this, and they would already have been well-known both at court and in Paris. Being invited to write for such an event would certainly have added another layer to the writer's existing fame. Moreover, Colbert's policy of glorification was not limited to France but sought to create the image of France as the cultural centre of the world by inviting ambassadors and other dignitaries to Louis's entertainments. As Marie-Christine Moine says, '[le] Roi vit en ses fêtes le meilleur ambassade de sa politique de prestige à l'étranger'.[1260] Authors who were famous in France would therefore have been offered the chance of an element of international fame by being asked to write for one of the King's entertainments.

[1255] Norman, *Philippe Quinault*, 'L'Œuvre>Parodies'.

[1256] Donald Jay Grout, 'Seventeenth-Century Parodies of French Opera', *The Musical Quarterly,* 27 (1941), 514-26 (p.525).

[1257] Cambridge University Research Project, 'Chansonnier Maurepas'> Volume 4, (Parodie 1676 [297]) 'Du IId Couplet du Choeur qui est dans la IVe Scene du IId Acte de l'Opera d'Atys, et qui commence par ces mots. Que devant vous tout s'abaisse et tout tremble etc.'

[1258] Marie-Christine Moine, *Les Fêtes à la Cour du Roi Soleil 1653-1715* (Paris: Sorlot, 1984), p.127.

[1259] La Grange, p.1065.

[1260] Moine, p.132.

Conclusion

During the careers of the case study authors, the institutions which offered them a route to success evolved, as did the priorities of the authors themselves in pursuing their careers. The salons were at their most influential for these authors when they were at an early stage in their careers and prior to the rise in importance of the court culture under the young monarch. The social networks of the salons continued to be important for writers and the relationships they had developed with attendees continued to provide support. Steven Kale considers that 'Salon sociability was resilient because it was simultaneously a sociability of leisure, a form of communication, and an area for social encounters, providing opportunities for conviviality [and] intellectual exchange'.[1261] By the time the case study authors had acquired sufficient cultural capital to be considered for candidature, the status of the Académie, particularly with the monarch as its Protector, was established within the French literary world. Wright argues that 'After Richelieu's death […] the Academy was the consecrated body of docile upholders of Louis XIV and his achievements.'[1262] Although some writers sought to resist the constraints of dramatic rules and formulaic literary expression, they also recognised the benefits of the legitimate authority offered by the Académie and welcomed the opportunity offered by membership. As Wright concludes, 'Membership of the Academy may be considered as definitely stamping a writer as having "arrived"'.[1263] The public taste for literature and drama was growing at this time and changing tastes in types of publications such as novels, epistolary narratives and gazettes led to much a wider commercial market. Boursault, for example, took advantage of this diversity of literary forms to appeal to a changing type of audience.

The evidence for the impact on a writer's career of these key institutions is indisputable but the precise nature of that influence is complex, since each institution would have offered writers a different incentive to appeal to it. A young writer who was seeking to establish himself would have found the relative inclusivity of the salons appealing and accessible. By contrast, more established writers might have looked to underline their cultural capital by gaining membership of the Académie. The writers themselves were undoubtedly aware of the need to cultivate their potential and real audiences in order to ensure literary success and they made use of a range of strategies to achieve this and to increase their fame with the public.

In seventeenth-century France the monarchy and nobility represented the most valuable audience in terms of status. Salons provided authors an initial access point into the world of the

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[1261] Steven Kale, *French Salons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p.3.
[1262] Wright, p.3.
[1263] Wright, p.7.

nobility and could offer reserves of social capital. Writers employed a range of strategies to gain entry and to maintain and extend sociable relations. The degree of patronage and support from salon habitués was less than that offered by the monarchy but it was more accessible for an aspiring author. Membership of the Académie could confer symbolic recognition and legitimisation of the writers' status and their cultural and vocational capital. Authors might have used tactics such as direct competition and literary controversy for self-promotion and publicity and they may have argued against the Académie's views; some of them, however, were later prepared to adapt their tactics in order to facilitate gaining membership. Nevertheless, membership was not a requirement for success as a writer and the example of Boursault demonstrates that it was possible, according to Goldsmith, to become by 1675 'one of the most successful playwrights in Paris […] when he died in 1701, his plays were known throughout Europe'.[1264] By appealing to the new public, writers could build up a reputation, acquire a chance of fame and wider celebrity and thus a ready market for their works and greater economic capital. Writers therefore needed to use their professional *habitus* to balance the tensions in appealing to all the institutions with influence on their careers in order to ascend the 'echelle des institutions' described earlier by Viala. As he concludes, 'la consécration supposait une alliance multiple; avec le public élargi et avec plusieurs institutions – et dans l'idéal, avec toutes'.[1265]

[1264] Goldsmith, p.143.
[1265] Viala, *Naissance,* p.168.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed the development of writing as a career in seventeenth-century France with a focus on the second half of the century. The aim was to interrogate the base of scholarship about *l'âge classique* to provide a practice-based perspective exemplified in the careers of three writers. The writers were selected to illustrate and contrast their approaches to managing their careers in the literary, social, economic and political context in which they were situated. This focus on the detail of the practice of Boursault, Quinault and Racine has furnished ample evidence for critical and comparative review so, although the research themes have been illustrated mainly through the careers of only three authors, many of the issues raised are of more general applicability. Using their career histories has provided a comparative base for triangulation and for a concentrated analysis of the strategies they employed to build and maintain careers as professional writers.

Related key concepts have informed the focus of this study and the inter-linking of these concepts has provided a richer perspective. Studies exploring the principal external factors (the impact of patronage, the use of literary controversy, strategic career decisions and the legitimisation by key institutions) influencing the authors' ability to manipulate their career paths have been applied to the case study authors to compare their validity. By interweaving these themes, they have been viewed in a wider context and their interdependency highlighted.

Key findings

A key finding has been the complexity and changing nature of the situation facing writers at this period. It was a time of considerable change in both the literary field and in wider society, as has been shown with all the institutions with which they interacted. Viala's view of the 'naissance de l'écrivain' indicates the evolving status of writers as professionals. The literary field was developing with the influence of the recently formed Académie française, Turnovsky's 'literary market', intense literary debate and the development of new genres. The theatre was enjoying renewed interest and a developing new public was emerging with large theatre audiences and a wide interest in literature and culture, supported and fuelled by the salons. The monarchy was assuming a centralising role in patronage of the arts, recognising and validating the importance of culture for the state. In this highly volatile context authors needed to understand their changing status and manage their relationships with evolving institutions in order to maximise the opportunities for success and reduce the risk of over-dependence on one institution.

The importance of professional *habitus* has been a key finding. To be successful, writers needed to develop *habitus*, described by Bourdieu, in an interview with Loïc Wacquant, as 'a system of dispositions adjusted to the game it proposes, a sense of the game and of its stakes which implies both an inclination and an ability to play the game'.[1266] The case study authors were all able to navigate the complexities of the literary field, the social requirements of the salons and the court, the vocational expectations of the *doctes* and the Académie française and the demands of the new public audience. The evidence demonstrates that the case study authors were adept at meeting such diverse expectations, demonstrating Bourdieu's view that '*habitus* is "at home" in the field it inhabits'.[1267] Bourdieu emphasises that *habitus* is socially constituted and the habits of professional practice illustrated by the examples of the case study authors were inculcated in the early stages of their careers through the social networks they developed with fellow writers and in the salons. Their understanding of the norms of behaviour expected of their social status as a writer was fine-tuned by such interactions. The dominant contemporary notion of *honnêteté* governed key aspects of their approach and they demonstrated their awareness of the importance of self-presentation by the delicate balance between the pursuit of career goals and the retention of the appearance of an *honnête homme*. The framework of Bourdieusian capital has given a new insight into the seventeenth-century concept of *honnêteté*, particularly *l'honnêteté mondaine*, which highlighted the need for sociability and reflected the notion of the effort (or investment) required to develop social connections by being agreeable to other members of the group and to conform to expected norms.

Bourdieu explains *habitus* as 'the agent does "what he or she has to do" without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness'.[1268] In this way professional *habitus* can perhaps be seen to govern practice in what has become, based on experience and skills acquired in the field, an ingrained form of unconscious competence. Brown accepts a definition of a strategic action as 'a wilful and intentional attempt to achieve an end' but stresses that it should not be assumed that

> the individual is acting instrumentally, or is even fully conscious of the context for or consequences of their action. Rather, it is to suggest an instinctive attempt to produce an effect based on an always imperfect understanding of the situation.[1269]

[1266] Loïc J. Wacquant, 'Towards a Reflective Sociology: a workshop with Pierre Bourdieu', *Sociological Theory,* 7 (1989), 26-63 (p.42).
[1267] Wacquant, p.45.
[1268] Wacquant, p.45.
[1269] Brown, p.30.

This qualifying point by Brown implies an intuitive, almost uninformed action, the consequences of which the author may not anticipate. Richard Jenkins summarises Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* as deriving from 'the thoughtlessness of habit and habituation, rather than consciously learned rules and principles'. However, he goes on to describe Bourdieu's 'attitude towards rational decision-making and calculation' as a 'problem', stating 'it is difficult to know where to place conscious deliberation and awareness in Bourdieu's scheme of things'.[1270] The case study authors would have reacted to some aspects of their role in society in an almost unconscious, conditioned response. This would not have been an innate response: they would have had to learn and be inculcated into polite, restrained comportment (conforming to social norms of behaviour) until it became an automatic reaction. Furthermore, this thesis has argued that, in many key instances in their career trajectories, the case study authors have shown both a keen awareness of opportunities for social and vocational progression and a planned, deliberate manipulation of those opportunities for personal benefit. Their professional decision-making skills consistently illustrate an understanding of the literary game, its rules and its stakes and the consequences of their career choices, thus demonstrating the calculated pursuit of goals rather than a form of conditioned response. This research study supports the argument that writers at this time were conscious of the need for a strategic approach to help them build a successful career and provides evidence that they selected and manipulated a range of techniques to achieve renown. In line with Goffman's view of the calculating nature of impression management, this study has identified examples of apparently deliberate, planned strategies and conscious decisions taken by writers to fashion authorial identities in response to the expectations of the institutions with which they interacted. The case study authors' involvement in literary controversy has illustrated examples of self-promotion and their use of published dedications to cultivate patrons demonstrates a strategic approach, rather than an instinctive response without awareness of the consequences or a clear intention. Although there were variations, the basic pattern was common to all three writers and can be applied to other authors of the period who adopted similar approaches. The strategic decisions they made from an early point in their careers and at subsequent stages had a significant impact on their career paths and enabled them to have successful, viable and sustainable careers.

This thesis has argued, using evidence from the career paths of three different authors, that the occupation of a writer provided sufficient economic capital for them to have a viable career. This modifies Lough's conclusions that the seventeenth-century Paris theatre did not provide

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[1270] Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.76-78.

'even a successful playwright with a good living, […] while the theatre might give him a reputation, it could not give him a livelihood'.[1271] While it may be accurate to say that, based purely on the money they earned from public performances and from publishing their works, writers were not particularly well-paid and were not guaranteed a regular, secure income, this overlooks the many other aspects of a writer's potential or actual income which have been examined in this study. The sufficiency of the evidence base of the research undertaken demonstrates that it was possible to achieve a viable career and social success in the seventeenth century as a *consequence* of having been a writer.

Lough's calculations do not take into account the financial gain from patronage, either gifts in exchange for a dedication or less tangible gifts such as board and lodging. It is difficult to calculate a precise, or indeed an average, annual income for a writer based on that derived from his plays, especially those which were less successful and had relatively short performance runs; such income would not be securely sustainable. The more regular financial support from royal appointments and gifts from noble patrons as well as the income from other published works all contributed significantly to the income of a writer but the variability of these sources makes it impossible to quantify the overall amount. Thus the evidence for authors making a livelihood from writing is complicated by both unreliable, intermittent sources of income and by the range of additional sources they could access through the various strategies discussed in this study. However, the case study authors were welcomed in high society for long periods of their careers and it can therefore be inferred that the income they derived from their writing was sufficient to enable them to 'faire figure honorable'[1272] to meet the expectations of such company.

In order to make a living from income derived from their writing the case study authors needed to produce a volume of work, particularly in the early stage of their careers, to build their reputations. Quinault was especially prolific and Boursault, in particular, followed fashionable trends in the genres he adopted. Other sources of income were pursued through patronage and pensioned positions. Racine's acceptance of the position of Royal Historiographer should not be taken as evidence that writers were keen to abandon the theatre for a more lucrative occupation: rather it should be viewed as the successful culmination of Racine's strategy to present himself as an *honnête homme* and an *homme de lettres* with considerable social, economic and cultural capital. This thesis has argued that Racine's position as Royal

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[1271] Lough, 'Earnings', p.334 and p.336.
[1272] Viala, 'Corneille', p.37.

Historiographer was entirely a consequence of his career as a dramatist and not an attempt to escape from it. The income from this career should therefore also be considered as income derived from writing. Boursault was also able to gain a position as a tax collector based on the social capital he had built up during his career as a writer. It seems unlikely that a man of modest origins like Boursault, without a high level of formal education, would have been able to achieve this unless he had first succeeded in winning influential friends at court; something he was able to do because of his career as a writer.

Underpinning much of this research study has been the application of Bourdieu's concept of capital to the social situation of seventeenth-century France and specifically to the literary field. This framework of forms of capital has demonstrated some key areas of validity, though with some refinements and variations to reflect the specific situation under study. Throughout the analysis there has been a continuous review of the forms of capital which authors pursued in order to build and sustain their careers and of the varied mechanisms they employed to accumulate and convert capital. This study has used the distinction between forms of capital as a way of analysing the nature of the rewards authors needed to be successful, while acknowledging that the concept of the pursuit of different types of capital would not have been recognised as such at this time and that the perception of forms of capital as discrete can be constricting. Authors sometimes made decisions that prioritised the accumulation of one form of capital over another, such as Boursault's decision to write polemical plays, which earned him economic capital at the risk of damaging his social capital. Some institutions could offer all three forms of capital and authors would seek to gain all forms of capital, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes prioritising one form of capital, depending on immediate needs. Because the process of accumulating capital was complex and there was considerable overlap between authors' motivations and the interdependent forms of capital, this study has proposed the model of a spiral to reflect fluidity during the writer's career between the accumulation of forms of capital and conversion to another form of capital.

The concept of economic capital has obvious relevance: all three writers can be seen to have pursued the acquisition of material wealth in order to make a living through the 'accumulated labor'[1273] of their writing. However, Bourdieu's notion of 'conversion' of capital does not apply so directly: economic capital did not automatically convert to social capital. Turnovsky has identified some of the problems: 'a writer might command important payments in the book trade, yet still be shut out of any meaningful place in the dominant social and intellectual

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[1273] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.241.

networks'.[1274] The concept of social capital has been clearly applicable in the examination of the authors' attempts to build influential social networks 'at the cost of an investment in sociability'.[1275] The case study authors sought to create social contacts with individual patrons, with fellow writers and with habitués of the salons in order to acquire social capital which could be exchanged for economic capital and support. This required an investment of sociability and adherence to social norms: 'in the terms of the logic of social exchanges, it is a solid investment, the profits of which will appear, in the long run, in monetary or other form'.[1276] Croft traces the detail of Boursault's social networks and concludes 'Boursault ne sous-estime pas le pouvoir que détiennent les hôtesses sur sa carrière en émergence. […] C'est auprès d'elles et des auteurs qui visitent leurs ruelles que Boursault, qui n'a jamais étudié dans les collèges, a parfait sa formation d'écrivain'.[1277] The analysis of the system of patronage has demonstated that it offered the possibility of acquiring different forms of capital, not purely an economic return. The concept of cultural capital has been seen as especially pertinent in patronage relationships with particular focus on its transmission: the gift-exchange of a work dedicated to a patron who then provided support to the writer in a symbolic act of reciprocal exchange. The 'transfer of ownership' of the work (or cultural product) to the patron through a carefully-worded dedication demonstrates the transmission of cultural capital.

Where the applicability of Bourdieu's theories may be less clear is in relation to his emphasis on the inherited accumulation of cultural capital. The transmission of cultural capital through generations does not apply to the examples of the case study authors, all of whom were able, although of relatively humble origins, to advance their social standing as a result of their writing rather than being reliant on transmission of capital through their families. Racine, in particular, was able to advance his social standing, being awarded the title of *gentilhomme ordinaire du Roi* and having it made hereditary — as Sayer notes, 'the nobility of "the man from nowhere" was now unquestionable'[1278] — and Racine was thus able to begin the process of transmission of capital to the next generation. Greenblatt identifies as a common factor among the writers studied in his research, and one which applies to the case study authors, a 'profound mobility'; they were all middle class without a 'hierarchical status that might have rooted personal identity in the identity of a clan or caste' which he argues may explain 'their sensitivity as writers to the

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[1274] Turnovsky, p.27.
[1275] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.252.
[1276] Bourdieu, p.253.
[1277] Croft, *Boursault*, p.48.
[1278] Sayer, p.339.

construction of identity'.[1279] This process of social mobility could be seen as an example of what Goldthorpe describes as 're-socialisation' which 'can […] complement, compensate for or indeed counter family influences in the creation and transmission of "cultural capital"'.[1280] Racine and the other case study authors do, however, provide a valid model of the assiduous and conscious investment of time and effort in creating the network of 'social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term'[1281] which worked to enable them to gain status and positions at court.

This study has also sought to present a new variant on Bourdieu's forms of capital by suggesting the inclusion of vocational capital, to measure the extent to which someone is successful professionally based on the accumulation of their labour in the vocational field. The concept of vocationally-specific capital has provided a focus for the analysis of the emerging professionalism of writing within the period of study. The findings have illustrated ways in which the case study authors have developed vocational expertise and demonstrated acquired skills of professional practice and decision-making, thus extending the Bourdieusian framework with the inter-relationships with other forms of capital. Vocational capital has an added dimension in that it would not simply entail economic success but would be seen through the recognition offered by one's professional peers. An author could be considered successful in his vocation if his work was appreciated by his peers or members of the Académie française, even if he did not receive any great wealth from his writing. Popularity with a writer's readers or spectator audience would represent the accumulation of vocational capital which could then be converted to economic capital. As the reviews taken from the *Mercure Galant* have shown, a writer's vocational capital meant that his name and therefore his reputation could become a guarantee of quality. Reviewers often simply cited the name of the play's author as a means of assuring their readers that the play was worth attending: as Lang and Lang confirm, the 'name attached to a work of art functions much like a brand label. The imprimatur of the creator […] validates the quality'.[1282] An established reputation would have attracted a large audience to the author's subsequent plays, thus confirming the vital importance of a writer's vocational capital in ensuring large audiences. The examples used in this thesis have overlapped to an extent with elements of Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital, but vocational capital could be applied to all careers, not simply those associated with the production of culture, thereby providing a wider

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[1279] Greenblatt, p.9 and p.7.
[1280] Goldthorpe, p.14.
[1281] Bourdieu, 'Forms of Capital', p.249.
[1282] Lang and Lang, p.105.

application. Possession of vocational capital implies a sharing of the values and collective identity of a group of professionals, in this instance writers, and so while there is a clear overlap with the cultural capital and legitimisation offered by membership of the Académie, possession of vocational capital is not limited to members of the Académie but is more widely available to all those who share the same *métier*. Vocational capital has links to Bourdieu's other forms of capital, since the social capital based on networks of powerful connections will overlap with elements of vocational capital accrued through professional contacts and the assets derived from professional success can be converted into economic capital.

An underpinning theme in this study has been the strategy of self-fashioning used by authors, who sought to portray an image of themselves as *honnêtes hommes* capable of courtly behaviour befitting noble gentlemen, and as well-educated *hommes de lettres*. Authors were seeking to present an image likely to find favour with a particular audience, but there were tensions inherent in balancing such an approach with other strategic goals. The analysis of the self-promotional tactic of literary controversy has highlighted some of the potential threats to the image of *honnête* behaviour by involvement in direct competition and polemics. Direct competition with another playwright could be the attempt of an author or a company of actors to capitalise on the success of another play. Alternatively, it could be an act of emulation, or indeed of rivalry. Involvement in polemics was more likely to be used by authors who were seeking to establish themselves by spreading their name as widely as possible. However, attacking a fellow writer and his work involved a risk of damaging one's appearance as an *honnête homme*. Direct competition appealed to writers for a longer portion of their career, and offered greater cultural and vocational capital as it demonstrated an author's confidence and willingness to be compared with a rival. Although writers used different types of literary controversy and to different extents, this thesis has shown that the use of some form of controversy was a means of becoming noticed in the world of seventeenth-century French theatre. The careers of all three case study authors show that controversy was a means of attracting an audience and ensuring that their names were kept in the public's attention; although, as is the case with any authorial strategy, engagement in literary controversy needed to be carefully managed for it to be effective and to avoid risking notoriety.

The use of controversy impacted on relationships with literary contemporaries. Few of these enmities lasted for any great length of time — Boursault and Boileau both provided testimonies of their reconciliation — and strong friendships were also formed, such as those between Racine and Boileau or between Boursault and Thomas Corneille. The rivalries that did exist were often

the result of authors using controversy as a means of self-promotion, with direct competition leading Racine and Quinault into several rivalries, while Boursault's use of polemics saw him attacking, and being attacked by, both Molière and Boileau. Rivalry with other authors was also a means of establishing one's position within the hierarchy of writers. The feud between Racine and Pierre Corneille persisted since both were successful and had numerous supporters; nevertheless, Racine paid warm tribute to Corneille posthumously. It is notable that, although involvement in aggressive literary feuds would not have been seen as fitting conduct for *honnêtes hommes,* this did not dissuade the case study authors from involvement. The benefits of portraying oneself as *honnête* would have been long-term, and such self-fashioning would have taken a long time, whereas competing with another author would have had the significant short-term benefits of immediate publicity which could outweigh any damage done to an author's image. While Racine and Quinault tended to be involved in controversy as a means of increasing their status within the cultural world, Boursault recognised the potential of controversy to publicise his works and increase audiences.

Self-promotional opportunities have been seen to be based on a number of varied approaches. Both in his dedications, which include erudite references to antiquity, and in his use of direct competition to display his cultural capital, Racine attempted to present himself as a well-read, learned and talented *homme de lettres*. By contrast, the apparent modesty of Boursault's dedications and his self-deprecating remarks even in his controversial plays (while doubtless insincere) help to depict him as a modest *honnête homme* attempting to downplay his talent. Quinault uses both methods: modest dedications befitting an *honnête homme* but also the direct competition more suited to an *homme de lettres*. Over the course of an author's career, therefore, it would have been important to present both images in order to appeal to all of the institutions and potential patrons. However, at various points during their career, depending on whether they wished to pursue the social capital of the monarchy or the cultural capital of the Académie, authors could have chosen to prioritise one image or another: the image of the *homme de lettres* has a more obvious symbolic moment of achievement — acceptance into the Académie — while that of the *honnête homme mondain* would be recognisable in the wealth of relationships an author had cultivated in the salons and at court.

This thesis also sought to examine the concept of fame to establish the ways authors pursued renown in the literary field and to what extent the concept of celebrity could be applied to authors in the seventeenth century. One criterion for celebrity status is that a celebrity's rise to fame needs to be rapid. Racine's rise from an author writing his first play to someone who felt

able to dedicate a play to the King just one year later, becoming a member of the Académie française and then an established figure at court just nine years later (while it is not as fast a rise as that of most modern celebrities) is impressively rapid and he could be regarded as a celebrated literary figure. However, Kurzman's and Lilti's view is that because mass media did not exist at this time authors could not attain celebrity status. Lang and Lang highlight the distinction between reputation as the esteem of professional peers (which evidence from this study would apply to Quinault and Boursault) and that of 'renown beyond a specific field'.[1283] They conclude: 'although only a handful ever reach the pinnacle of celebrity status, artists can be considered to have achieved renown when their names have established currency outside the more intimate world of fellow artists'.[1284] Boursault's obituary in the *Mercure Galant* refers to him as 'estimé et connu par tout le monde par les beaux ouvrages qu'il a donné au public et par l'heureux talent qu'il avoit pour toute sorte de Poësie'.[1285] Quinault's obituary says that 'il n'y a personne qui ne demeure d'accord qu'il estoit tres-digne de la reputation qu'il s'est acquise'.[1286] Racine's obituary is the most fulsome in its praise, saying that the playwright 'meritoit de vivre aussi longtemps que son nom, qu'il a rendu immortel par ses beaux Ouvrages'.[1287] Rojek discusses the difference between celebrity, which he describes as ubiquitous fame, and renown, which is a more localised fame based on 'the informal attribution of distinction on an individual within a given social network'.[1288] Not even Racine would qualify as a celebrity in Rojek's terms, for his widespread reputation would have fallen short of 'ubiquitous fame' and renown beyond a restricted literate public. The obituaries of the three case study authors imply widespread fame, but this may be attributed to the exaggeration to be expected within the conventions of obituary writing or may simply mean that they were well-known to the target audience of *Le Mercure Galant*.

Despite the lack of mass media, the frequent references to authors in the few contemporary journals available would have advertised their names and works to a literate audience. An illiterate or semi-literate audience could be accessed through the popular culture of street songs which, according to Hammond, 'acted as ways of communicating news [and] demonstrate delight in the scandals of the day'.[1289] Furthermore, the references to authors in certain plays, such as the jibes offered through the *querelle* of *L'Ecole des Femmes* by authors on both sides,

[1283] Lang and Lang, p.84.
[1284] Lang and Lang, p.85.
[1285] *Le Mercure Galant* (September 1701), p.397.
[1286] *Le Mercure Galant* (November 1688), p.332.
[1287] *Le Mercure Galant* (April 1699), pp.258-59.
[1288] Rojek, *Celebrity*, p.12.
[1289] Hammond, *Gossip, sexuality and scandal in France (1610-1715)* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), p. 6.

would have helped make their rivals more well-known to the audience. This thesis has shown that authors used a range of means of self-promotion, through the media of the day, gazettes, letters and published editions of their works, to disseminate their names and image to their readers. Evidence of the size of theatre audiences has shown that their plays would attract wide renown among the Parisian theatre-going public. This study shows that the contemporary forms of media served to spread an author's reputation, and authors were inventive in using other means to promote themselves as widely as possible, including through the social networking of the day — the salons and the court — thus providing a comparison to some present-day tactics for achieving literary fame.

The analysis of the career trajectories of the case study authors offers an explanation for the career-changing decisions the authors made and a greater insight into their approaches to their work and the key factors which influenced their choice of subject and genre. It also illustrates key aspects of the developing literary field through contemporary practice. All three case study authors saw writing for the theatre as a way of quickly gaining a reputation in the literary field and of acquiring income from their work, and they continued to produce works for performance throughout their careers. They varied in the extent to which they explored the range of dramatic genres, with Racine choosing to specialise in tragedies, Quinault later in his career specialising in *tragédies lyriques* and *libretti* and Boursault writing in a range of genres throughout his career. They thus represent a range of innovative practice and response to fashion in genres. A finding that emerges from the study of their careers is their astute management of risk: they recognised some of the dangers in innovation and took risks of varying degrees at various stages in their careers, but they tried to ensure that they had sufficient economic, vocational and social capital to help them achieve success once they had made their change, and to limit any damage their careers might suffer as a result. Boursault's attempt to write a tragedy based on *La Princesse de Clèves* was not a popular success, but when he reverted to a more traditional genre and adapted it to a Classical tragedy, it became very successful. His vocational *habitus* allowed him to recognise and respond to the taste of his audience by abandoning an innovation which was unpopular. This was a period of change in the literary field and, while there may have been some opportunistic response to fashions, the example of the case study authors suggests that they sought continuing professional re-invention and ways to demonstrate their literary prowess by tackling a range of genres.

Another key influence on a writer's ability to sustain a literary career that has been highlighted by this study was the manipulation of the patronage system. Specific examples were explored

to examine the use that the case study authors made of patronage, their occasional criticism of it, and the rewards it offered them, thus providing an evidence-based and more balanced view of this prevalent system. The powerful role of centralised state sponsorship and the patronage offered by the monarchy has been illustrated through the experiences of the three authors in their relations with the court. The case study authors adopted different approaches in the pursuit of patrons, thereby giving the findings of this study wider application. Racine took an ambitious route, dedicating his early plays to the most powerful people in the country, whereas Quinault, who targeted the same people, took a more cautious route to reach the same end and was careful to build more gradually on connections with each of his previous patrons. All three were also careful to build up their social connections through salon attendance and other means, such as Boursault's newsletters. Unlike Quinault and Racine, Boursault responded to the gradual decline in royal patronage. This led to his dedicating works to people closely associated with the theatre, a group who, in their own way, were also extremely influential in ensuring that plays were successful. This aspect of Boursault's career made him a useful point of comparison to the other two case study authors.

This study has explored the use of gift-exchange between patron and writer to enable the writer to appeal for financial support without damaging his image as an *honnête homme* by appearing mercenary. Dedications to patrons could be expressed as a flattering form of public gratitude for support and an appeal for further assistance. Even the use of *praeteritio* to downplay the patron's praiseworthy qualities in order not to offend the modesty of the patron still enabled the author to list those character traits before emphasising the patron's modesty as their chief virtue. Dedications could also offer the opportunity of publicly demonstrating an author's social connections, thereby displaying his social capital and fame, as evidenced by the acquaintance – usually presented as a strong friendship – with some of the most influential people in society. This study has found that although works were rarely dedicated to members of the Académie, *doctes* or other writers, prefaces were often tailored with them in mind to portray the author as an *homme de lettres*, well-educated, and aware of and in agreement with the dramatic rules. In general, however, dedications appear to have been designed to increase an author's social and economic capital, with less focus placed on their cultural capital. Specific examples from the case study authors' dedications illustrate the range of practice, including Racine's decision later in his career to abandon the use of dedications. The few examples of an author prioritising cultural capital in his dedications, which came towards the end of the seventeenth century, point towards the rise of an institution which was to have increasing importance, the Comédie-Française. With the gradual decline in importance of the monarchy as a patron of literature

following Louis XIV's conversion, Boursault's pragmatism led to the realisation that the increasingly official and centralised theatrical group represented another source of power, this time predominantly cultural and financial, to which authors needed to appeal.

Examination of the evidence has shown that authors sought to appeal to the key influential institutions at different stages of their career as a crucial source of support and capital. The monarchy was the prime source of patronage and political power. Under Louis XIV patronage of the arts became centralised and offered authors the highest level of social capital and royal legitimisation of their work, particularly in the earlier stages of his reign. The strategies adopted by the case study authors illustrate the processes of cultivating royal patronage through carefully staged approaches and delicately phrased works celebrating and praising the king. The three authors were successful to varying extents in gaining access at court and being rewarded for their works and the comparison between their strategies provides insight into the specific tactics and their effectiveness. The salons were relatively more accessible and offered more opportunities for participation, therefore appealing most to authors at the beginning of their career. They represented an introduction for new authors into *le monde*, and it would have been possible for even an inexperienced author to find a way into a salon, though not the most prestigious salons. Involvement in salons would have allowed authors not only to display their cultural capital (notably in a manner befitting an *honnête homme mondain*) but also to persuade members of the salon to attend performances and thus to build up their social connections and become an insider in a fashionable literary milieu. The strategies adopted by writers in approaching both the salons and the monarchy were similar, though on a different scale. In both cases the author relied on the approval of one central figure, either the host or hostess of the salon, or the king. However, there were also less important figures already in the institution, who could act as intermediaries and use their position to help an author to gain entry.

This thesis aimed to review Elias's and Scotson's work on the 'established and the outsiders' in order to demonstrate how applicable these categories might be to the seventeenth-century French literary field. The evidence has demonstrated the vital importance of patronage and institutional support for writers to succeed in their careers and any author (or outsider) who could not access these forms of support would have struggled to make a livelihood through writing. Authors therefore needed to gain access to influential groups and they used a range of strategies to establish themselves socially and to maintain their social connections throughout their careers. Quinault's dedications show an author gradually seeking to build a network of connections before attempting to appeal to the most influential figures and all three authors took

care to establish useful social contacts before beginning their careers as playwrights. Boursault's lack of a classical education has been seen to position him outside the exclusive membership of the Académie française. The uncertain social standing of professional writers sometimes made their position precarious in court and high society, as seen in the response of the other *auditeurs* to Quinault's rise in becoming an *auditeur à la Chambre des Comptes*. The findings show the importance of being an insider to the key institutions and potential members had to be well established both vocationally and socially to gain admittance. Entry to the highest society of the court was closed to all but the most successful writers and even then acceptance could be grudging. Entry to the Académie française was reserved for those considered to meet the expectations of *hommes de lettres*. The variety and divergence of the salons made them more accessible to outsiders, although it could still be a challenge to gain admittance and new entrants would need to conform to the norms expected by other members of the salon. However, salons provided a means of entry for less established writers and through them an author was able to build up the social contacts required to approach potential patrons.

The careers of the case study authors show that authors at the beginning of their career also used different tactics to more established authors, with polemics and direct competition appealing more at the beginning of their career but less so once they felt themselves to be sufficiently well-established, and in the case of Quinault and Racine, once they had become members of the Académie. Their approaches might have varied but evidence from the career decisions from all three authors shows their clear acknowledgement of the need to establish and maintain their status as insiders within influential contemporary institutions. The example of Quinault in displacing the established insider, Perrin, from his position in the world of opera shows a modification of Elias's and Scotson's model, as suggested by Bucholc: Quinault was able to establish himself thanks to his existing network of social connections and cultural resources.

The Académie française was for many authors a clear target. Once they had displayed sufficient social and vocational capital to be admitted, they became one of the *Immortels* and it was extremely rare to lose this status. By contrast, this study has shown that the favour of the monarchy could easily be lost, even by a well-established author like Quinault. While Boursault did not gain membership of the Académie, this thesis has been able to demonstrate that this did not hinder his career path because he was sufficiently versatile in appealing to alternative influential institutions for support. Boursault's career shows that authors with more limited

cultural capital could still have a successful career by prioritising their economic and social capital, by using different tactics and by extending their literary repertoire in fashionable genres.

This study has also demonstrated the impact on an author's career of the new public, described by Génetiot as 'un public d'honnêtes gens, cultivé mais non spécialisé'.[1290] All three case study authors recognised the increasing power of the new theatre-going public and demonstrated their awareness of the need to appeal to this enlarged audience. Racine publicly acknowledged as a prime aim that of pleasing his audience and both Quinault and Boursault diversified in their work with new fashionable genres to appeal to the new market. It is evidence of the professional skills of the case study writers that they were able to accommodate the different, sometimes conflicting demands of the key institutions and balance these so they could be successful with them all.

Future areas of related research

The research for this study has been embedded in the careers of the three case study authors and the focus has been on the factors which directly influenced their experiences as writers. Other potential areas for related research could be pursued and, while this study has focused very largely and in depth on the key institutions of the monarchy, the Académie française, the literary salons and the new literary public, other institutions also had an impact on a writer's career.

Some reference has been made to the influence of the acting troupes on playwrights, including their encouragement of some controversial tactics for promoting plays: their role and relationships with writers could be explored further with a specific focus on the impact on the careers of the case study authors, particularly with their early plays. Competition among the acting troupes and the impact of the newly-created Comédie-Française could also be reviewed.

The emerging 'literary market' was beginning to have an effect on the status of the profession of writer and a detailed study of interactions between authors, publishers and booksellers at this period would add to the findings related to the income of writers as well as exploring the specific impact of these relationships on the careers of the case study authors. The present study has been limited in scope to Paris and its immediate area; a study of the literary field outside the capital would complement this. It could also be constructive to investigate to what extent any

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[1290] Génetiot, 'Perspectives', p.70.

of the authors began to acquire an international reputation, though this is likely to have had an effect on posthumous renown rather than on their career strategies.

A further study could extend the research dedicated to salons. The influence of the salons is indisputable but a more detailed analysis of the role of authors within salons and of how they gained admission and behaved in salons to gain social acceptability would be illuminating. The impact of the salons on the emergence of literary criticism at this period could be further explored, as could the role and particular influence of women as part of the new audience for writers.

Finally, the influence of the Church at this period on writers' careers could form a further associated study. The institution of the Church was not explored along with the other institutions in this research study because its influence, specifically in relation to the case study authors, was predominantly indirect. The case study authors did not suffer unduly from the constrictions imposed by the Church, though all authors would be aware of the dangers of the possibility of offending religious sensibilities, as a result of which some privileges could be at risk. The influence of the Church was briefly considered in connection with the waning influence of the monarchy, as was the impact on attitudes at court towards the theatre and opera. A further research study could examine the impact in greater detail.

Summary

This overall summary of the research evidence demonstrates that writing was a viable career in seventeenth-century France and the analysis of the careers of three authors provides a clear illustration of the strategies writers used to build the capital necessary for success. The evidence demonstrates that authors needed to work within and respond to the contemporary conditions: literary, social, political and economic. Many of the factors influencing their success are specific to the period but some of the key strategies can be seen in a wider context to identify concepts of more general applicability. A successful author at any period needs to understand his audience and the image which will most appeal to that audience. Authors of all periods use a range of strategies to publicise their writing, be they seventeenth-century literary salons or modern-day publicity tours and personal websites. Versatility in writing genres and innovation in writing techniques to 'refresh' the author's image is also a strategy much utilised by current authors. Resilience and adaptability to changing literary trends are important qualities for success but perhaps the most important factor is an author's awareness of the need to be constantly pro-active in managing their career by a planned approach utilising a range of strategies. Obvious distinctions can be drawn with current practice in terms of the influential

institutions of the day and the direct forms of patronage. However, the importance of a writer's reputation among critical peers continues to be a significant factor in building renown as a writer and it can be concluded that strategies used in seventeenth-century France have much in common with those which today's authors must use to build a successful professional career.

APPENDICES

The plays of Boursault and their dedicatees

Adapted from Croft[1291]

Œuvre[1292]	Dédicataire	À propos du dédicataire…
Le Médecin volant (1661?, 1665), comédie	Nicolas de Quanteal (?-?)	Médecin de Mme la princesse. Noble
Le Mort vivant (1662), comédie	Henri de Guise (1614-1664), duc de Guise	Protecteur de Corneille. Il est célèbre pour ses conquêtes féminines et ses exploits guerriers. [Patron de Quinault]
Le Jaloux endormy (1662), comédie	Louis de Saux (16..-?), comte de Saux	Sixième fils de Claude de Saux (†1638), comte de Tavanes et de Beaumont, et de Françoise Brulart (†1662). Sa famille est étroitement liée aux Condé.
Le Portrait du Peintre, ou la Contre-Critique de L'Escole des Femmes (1663), comédie	Henri-Jules III de Bourbon (1643-1709), duc d'Enghien puis, Prince de Condé	Prince de sang et premier pair de France. La famille Condé protège Molière et Boileau. Le Prince, son père, est le neveu de la duchesse d'Angoulême.
Les Nicandres ou les Menteurs qui ne mentent Point (1663, 1665), comédie	Barthélemy Hervart (1607-1676)	Allemand naturalisé français. Financier de Mazarin. Contrôleur général des finances.
La Metamorphose des yeux de Philis changez en Astres (1664, 1665), pastorale	Michel de Castelneau (1645 ou 1646-1672), Marquis de Castelneau.	Gouverneur de Brest, maître de camp d'un régiment de cavalerie.
La Satire des Satires (—, 1669), comédie	François de Rohan (1630-1712), Prince de Soubise	Capitaine lieutenant de la garde des gendarmes du roi. En 1667, le roi érigea en principauté la baronnie de Soubise, que sa femme avait obtenue en dot.
Germanicus (1673-1679, 1694), tragédie	Pierre de Bonzi, cardinal (1631-1703)	Lié aux Condé, avec qui il entretient un rapport de clientélisme. Archevêque de Narbonne et ambassadeur à Venise, en Pologne et en Espagne.
Marie Stuard, Reine d'Écosse (1683, 1691), tragédie	François Honorat de Beauvilliers (1607-1687), duc de Saint-Aignan	Ayant un goût marqué pour les Belles-Lettres, il est membre de l'Académie française en 1663. [Patron de Quinault]
La Comédie sans Titre (1683, 1694)	François Honorat de Beauvilliers (1607-1687), duc de Saint-Aignan	
Les Fables d'Esope (1690), comédie	Louis-Marie-Victor d'Aumont (1632-1704),	Reçu chevalier des ordres du roi le 1er Janvier 1690. Il avait épousé en premières

[1291] Croft, *Boursault,* pp.100-02. The above list is adapted to include only the published plays of Boursault.

[1292] Croft : 'l'année de la première représentation apparaîtra entre parenthèses, suivie de celle de la parution de l'œuvre. Lorsque la pièce est représentée et publiée la même année, une seule date est indiquée'.

	marquis de Villequier et duc d'Aumont	noces Madeleine Fare le Tellier (1646-1668), sœur du marquis de Louvois
Phaëton (1691, 1694), comédie héroïque	Les Comédiens Ordinaires du Roy	Comédiens de la Comédie-Française.
La feste de la Seine (—,1694) divertissement. Non representée	[No dedication]	
Méléagre (—, 1694), Tragédie mise en musique. Non representée	[No dedication] Argument	
Les Mots à la Mode (1694), comédie	Jacques Lomellini (? - ?).	Cette famille est l'une des 18 familles nobles de Gênes. Boursault ne semble pas être en relation étroite avec Lomellini.
Esope à la Cour (1701, 1702), comédie	Olympe de Brouilly, marquise de Villequier (1661-1723)	Héritière du marquisat de Pienne, elle est l'épouse de Louis d'Aumont, marquis de Villequier et héritier du duc d'Aumont.

Highlighted sections indicate the same patron of other case study authors.

The plays of Racine and their dedicatees

Œuvre[1293]	Dédicataire	À propos du dédicataire…
La Thébaïde ou Les Frères Ennemis (1664), tragédie	Le Duc de Saint-Aignan (Cette épître ne se trouve qu'en tête de la première édition.)	François Honorat de Beauvilliers (1607-1687), duc de Saint-Aignan. Pair de France. Important figure in the literary field at this period. Elected to the Académie in 1663. [Patron of Boursault.]
Alexandre le Grand (1665, 1666), tragédie	Au Roi. Louis XIV (Cette épître ne se trouve que dans les éditions de 1666 et 1672.)	[Patron of Quinault]
Andromaque (1667, 1668), tragédie	Henriette d'Angleterre	Wife of Monsieur, le Duc d'Orléans, and the King's sister-in-law. Sister of Charles II. Patron of Molière
Les Plaideurs (1668, 1669), comédie	No dedication Au Lecteur	
Britannicus (1669, 1670), tragédie	Le duc de Chevreuse	The Chevreuse family had long-standing links with Port Royal. The duc de Chevreuse married the daughter of Colbert.
Bérénice (1670, 1671), tragédie	Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619 - 1683).	Contrôleur général des finances,1665-1683. Secrétaire d'État de la maison du roi and secrétaire d'État de la Marine from 1669 to 1683.
Bajazet (1672), tragédie	No dedication Préface	
Mithridate (1673), tragédie	No dedication Préface	
Iphigénie (1674, 1675), tragédie	No dedication Préface	
Phèdre (1677), tragédie	No dedication Préface	
Esther (1689), tragédie	No dedication Préface	
Athalie (1691), tragédie	No dedication Preface	

Highlighted sections indicate the same patron of other case study authors.

[1293] Based on data from Picard, 'Notes', in Racine, *Œuvres Complètes*, I. Under each play the dates in brackets are those of the first performance followed by the date of publication; if these occur in the same year only one year is given.

The plays of Quinault and their dedicatees

Œuvre[1294]	Dédicataire	À propos du dédicataire…
Les Rivalles (1653, 1655), comédie	Marquis de Saucourt [de Soyecourt]	Charles-Maximilien-Antoine de Belleforière, marquis de Soyecourt, réputé pour ses galanteries. Grand Veneur de France. One of six officiers de la Couronne. Model of Dorante in Molière's *Les Fâcheux,* at the suggestion of Louis.
La généreuse ingratitude (1654, 1656), tragi-comédie pastorale	Le Prince de Conti	Cousin of the duc de Guise. Grand-maître de la Maison du roi. Brother of Condé and husband of Mazarin's niece. Patron of Molière.
L'Amant indiscret, ou le Maistre estourdy (1654 or 1655, 1656), comédie	Le Duc de Candale et de la Valette	Général de France, Gouverneur et Lieutenant Général pour le Roi en ses pays de Bourgogne, Bresse, haute et basse Auvergne. Général des armées de sa Majesté en Catalogne, Roussillon et Cerdagne.
La Comédie sans comédie (1655, 1657), comédie	Marquis, puis duc de La Meilleraye (1602 - 1664)	Grand-maître de l'Artillerie de France en 1632, spécialiste des sièges.
Les Coups de l'Amour et de la Fortune (1655), tragi-comédie pastorale	Duc de Guise (apparently dedicated to the Duc at the request of Tristan)	Henri de Lorraine, Duc de Guise (1614-1664). Pair et grand Chambellan de France. Protector of Tristan. Quinault became 'gentilhomme de M. de Guise' in 1656. [Patron of Boursault]
Le Fantôme amoureux (1656, 1657), tragi-comédie pastorale	Duc de Saint-Aignan (1610 - 1687)	François Honorat de Beauvilliers, duc de Saint-Aignan. Conseilleur du roi et premier gentilhomme de la Chambre. Governor of several provinces. Protector of Tristan. [Patron of Boursault]
Amalasonte (1657, 1658), tragi-comédie pastorale	Le Cardinal Mazarin	Chief Minister of Louis XIV from 1642 until his death in 1661.
Le Feint Alcibiade (1658), tragi-comédie pastorale	Monsieur Fouquet	Procureur General, Sur-Intendant des Finances & Ministre d'Etat.
Le Mariage de Cambise (1658, 1659), tragi-comédie pastorale	Le Duc d'Anjou	The King's brother.
La Mort de Cyrus (1658, 1659), tragédie	Madame la Sur-Intendante (Mme Fouquet)	Wife of Nicholas Fouquet
Stratonice (1660), tragi-comédie pastorale	Monsieur Jeannin de Castile	Trésorier de l'Epargne. Cousin of Mme Fouquet

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[1294] Based on data from Norman, *Philippe Quinault* and limited to spoken plays. Under each play the dates in brackets are those of the first performance followed by the date of publication; if these occur in the same year only one year is given.

Agrippa, roy d'Albe, ou le faux Tibérinus (1662, 1663), [tragi-comédie pastorale. No specification of genre on title page]	Louis XIV	The dedication 'au Roy' appears on the title page [Patron of Racine]
Astrate, roy de Tyr (1664, 1665), tragédie	La Reine, Marie Thérèse (1638-1683)	Performed during the convalescence of the Queen
La Mere coquette, ou les Amans brouillez (1665, 1666), comédie	La Duchesse de Montausier	Dame d'honneur de la Reine. Governess of the Dauphin
Pausanias (1668, 1669), tragédie	Duc de Montausier	Became governor to the Dauphin in 1667.
Bellérophon (1671), tragédie	Duc de Chevreuse (1646-1712)	Charles Honoré d'Albert, duc de Chevreuse. Married to Colbert's daughter. Brother-in-law of the bride at whose wedding the play was first performed [Patron of Racine]

Highlighted sections indicate the same patron of other case study authors.

Selective list of *Querelles* [1295]

Titre	Date de début	Date de fin
Alceste (querelle d')	1673	1678
Anciens et Modernes dans la philosophie naturelle (Querelle des)	1671	1696
Andromaque (querelle d')	1667	1668
Anneau de Saturne (Querelle de l')	1658	1659
Ban vs Boësset (controverse)	1640	1641
Battle of the Books	1691	1710
Bérénices (Querelle des)	1670	1683
Book of Sports (controverse autour du)	1595	1643
Cid (querelle du)	1637	1637
Convocation (Controverse autour de la)	1697	1703
Dictionnaires (querelle des)	1684	1688
Dom Juan (querelle de)	1665	1683
Duchesse d'Estramène (débat autour de)	1682	1682
Duel en Angleterre (controverse autour du)	1580	1618
École des femmes (Querelle de l')	1662	1664
Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène de Bouhours (querelle des)	1668	1675
Études monastiques (querelle des)	1683	1693
Femmes dans le monde de l'imprimerie en France (querelle des)	1617	1632
Guillet-Spon (Querelle)	1675	1680
Henry Ferne et Charles Herle (Querelle entre)	1642	1643
Historiae (affaire des)	1604	1621
Jésuite Garasse (Querelle du)	1622	1626
Joconde (querelle de)	1664	1665
Joueur (querelle du)	1696	1697
Julien (Polémique autour de l'empereur)	1562	1616
Moralité du théâtre en Angleterre (querelle de la)	1697	1708
Moralité du théâtre en France (Querelle de la)	1639	1694
Nouvelle allégorique (querelle de la)	1658	1666
Phalaris (controverse autour de)	1690	1701
Phèdre (querelle des deux)	1677	1677
Précieuses ridicules (querelle des)	1659	1661
Princesse de Clèves (querelle de)	1678	1679
Raillerie chrétienne (querelle de la)	1623	1624

[1295] Banque de données AGON, *Liste Intégrale des Querelles.* Edited to limit dates to seventeenth-century quarrels. This is not a comprehensive list but is illustrative of the nature and extent of quarrels at this period.

Titre	Date de début	Date de fin
Rites chinois (querelle des)	1631	1742
Roman (querelle du)	1670	1701
Salut d'Origène (controverse sur le)	1486	1742
Sophonisbe (Querelle de)	1663	1663
Sorbonne versus collège jésuite (querelle de)	1643	1644
Tartuffe (Affaire)	1664	1669
Théophile de Viau (Affaire)	1623	1626
Vertu des païens (querelle de la)	1641	1647
Vide (querelle du)	1645	1663
Virgile et le Clovis de Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin (Querelle sur)	1673	1673

L'Académie française [1296]

Fauteuil	Member	Dates	Brief details, including some contemporary judgements[1297]
Seat 1	Pierre Séguier	1.1635–1643	Chancellor of France. Protector of the Académie after Richelieu died. 'Homme équitable, savant, aimant les gens de lettres.'(Voltaire).
	Claude Bazin de Bezons	2.1643–1684	Lawyer.
	Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux	3.1684–1711	Poet and Royal Historiographer.
Seat 2	Valentin Conrart	1.1634–1675	Poet and grammarian. Secretary of the Académie. 'Le père de l'Académie'. 'Il a laissé deux ou trois pièces de vers, une relation des troubles de la Fronde et une certaine quantité de manuscrits.' 'Il avait un goût et une délicatesse merveilleuse pour la perfection de notre langue.' (Segrais)
	Toussaint Rose	2.1675–1701	Orator.
	Louis de Sacy	3.1701–1727	Lawyer.
Seat 3	Jacques de Serisay	1.1634–1653	First Director of the Académie from1634-1638. Poet. 'Il a laissé quelques poésies.'
	Paul-Philippe de Chaumont	2.1654–1697	Ecclesiastic.
	Louis Cousin	3.1697–1707	Historian and journalist.
Seat 4	Jean Desmarets	1.1634–1676	Poet and novelist. 'Il a écrit des romans et divers ouvrages en prose, des poésies, […] et six pièces de théâtre'. 'Son style de prose est pur, mais sans élévation; en vers il est abaissé et élevé, selon qu'il le désire; et, en l'un et l'autre genre.' (Chapelain)
	Jean-Jacques de Mesmes	2.1676–1688	Magistrate.
	Jean Testu de Mauroy	3.1688–1706	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 5	Jean Ogier de Gombauld	1.1634–1666	Poet and playwright. 'Son fort est dans les vers où il paraît soutenu et élevé. À force de vouloir dire noblement les choses, il est quelquefois obscur.' (Chapelain)
	Paul Tallement le Jeune	2.1666–1712	Ecclesiastic.
	Antoine Danchet	3.1712–1748	Playwright and poet.
Seat 6	François le Métel de Boisrobert	1.1634–1662	Ecclesiastic and poet. 'Il a laissé des lettres en prose, des poésies, des poèmes dramatiques, huit tragédies, dix comédies.'
	Jean Regnault de Segrais	2.1662–1701	Poet and novelist.

[1296] Based on data from the Académie française, *Les Immortels*. This list identifies the first three members for each seat, with the exception of Seat 29 (where the fourth member is shown, to allow the inclusion of Quinault).

[1297] Members with identifiable and occupational links to the literary world have been highlighted with some details of their literary output. The information provided on each individual is taken from the Académie's website.

	Jean Galbert de Campistron	3.1701–1723	Playwright.
Seat 7	Jean Chapelain	1.1634–1674	Royal advisor. 'Colbert lui demanda, en 1662, une liste raisonnée des savants français et étrangers susceptibles de recevoir des gratifications de Louis XIV. Chapelain dressa cette liste avec une grande impartialité et un esprit critique très éclairé; il y eut soixante savants gratifiés par le roi, dont quinze étrangers et quarante-cinq français, sur lesquels vingt-deux ont appartenu à l'Académie française.'
	Isaac de Benserade	2.1674–1691	Poet and playwright.
	Étienne Pavillon	3.1691–1705	Lawyer and poet.
Seat 8	Claude de Malleville	1.1634–1647	Poet. 'Il y a un volume de ses poésies imprimées après sa mort, qui ont toutes de l'esprit, du feu, un beau tour de vers, beaucoup de délicatesse et de douceur, et marquant une grande fécondité, mais dont il y a peu, ce me semble, de bien achevées.' (Pellisson)
	Jean Ballesdens	2.1648–1675	Lawyer.
	Géraud de Cordemoy	3.1675–1684	Philosopher and historian.
Seat 9	Nicolas Faret	1.1634–1646	Poet. 'Son principal ouvrage est *l'Honnête Homme*, qu'il fit environ en 1633.'
	Pierre du Ryer	2.1646–1658	Playwright.
	César d'Estrées	3.1658–1714	Ecclesiastic and politician.
Seat 10	Antoine Godeau	1.1634–1672	Ecclesiastic and poet. 'Peu de gens ont autant écrit et aussi élégamment que lui.' (Chapelain)
	Esprit Fléchier	2.1672–1710	Ecclesiastic.
	Henri de Nesmond	3.1710–1727	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 11	Philippe Habert	1.1634–1638	Poet. 'Il a laissé quelques poésies manuscrites; une seule a été imprimée, *le Temple de la mort*, « qui est, dit Pellisson, une des plus belles de notre poésie française ».'
	Jacques Esprit	2.1639–1678	Politician.
	Jacques-Nicolas Colbert	3.1678–1707	Ecclesiastic. [Son of Colbert, Minister of State]
Seat 12	Germain Habert	1.1634–1654	Ecclesiastic and poet. 'Il a écrit la *Vie du Cardinal de Bérulle*, quelques *Paraphrases des Psaumes* et diverses poésies.'
	Charles Cotin, ecclesiastic	2.1655–1681	Ecclesiastic.
	Louis de Courcillon de Dangeau	3.1682–1723	Ecclesiastic and politician.
Seat 13	Claude Gaspard Bachet de Méziriac	1.1634–1638	Grammarian and mathematician. 'Poète médiocre en français, latin et italien, il fut habile helléniste, excellent grammairien, critique distingué, théologien et mathématicien ; il a laissé des poésies, des traductions et un livre de *Récréations arithmétiques*.'
	François de La Mothe Le Vayer	2.1639–1672	Critic, grammarian and philosopher.
	Jean Racine	3.1672–1699	Playwright and Royal Historiographer. 'Il fut l'un des six premiers académiciens admis aux spectacles de la Cour.'

Seat 14	François Maynard	1.1634–1646	Poet and Magistrate. 'C'est de ses vers qu'il a tiré sa plus grande gloire, comme il le prétendait bien aussi; et véritablement il faut avouer qu'ils ont une facilité, une clarté, une élégance et un certain tour que peu de personnes sont capables d'imiter.' (Pellisson)
	Pierre Corneille	2.1647–1684	Playwright and lawyer.
	Thomas Corneille	3.1684–1709	Playwright.
Seat 15	Guillaume Bautru	1.1634–1665	Politician and diplomat. 'Ceux qui ont part à son secret disent que les Relations de ses ambassades ne peuvent être mieux écrites.' (Chapelain)
	Jacques Testu de Belval	2.1665–1706	Ecclesiastic and poet.
	François-Joseph de Beaupoil de Sainte-Aulaire	3.1706–1742	Soldier and poet.
Seat 16	Jean Sirmond	1.1634–1649	Historiographer.' Sa prose marque beaucoup de génie pour l'éloquence; son style est fort et mâle, et ne manque pas d'ornements.' (Pellisson)
	Jean de Montereul	2.1649–1651	Ecclesiastic.
	François Tallemant l'Aîné	3.1651–1693	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 17	François de Cauvigny de Colomby	1.1634–1649	Poet. Orateur du roi pour les discours d'État. 'Il a laissé des poésies, une traduction de Justin et du premier livre de Tacite.'
	François Tristan l'Hermite	2.1649–1655	Playwright and poet. 'Le prodigieux et long succès qu'eut sa tragédie de Marianne fut le fruit de l'ignorance où l'on était alors.' (Voltaire)
	Hippolyte-Jules Pilet de La Mesnardière	3.1655–1663	Critic, poet and historian. 'Quand il se veut élever, il dégénère en obscurité et ne fait paraître que de beaux mots qui ne font que sonner et qui ne signifient rien.' (Chapelain)
Seat 18	Jean Baudoin	1.1634–1650	Lecteur de la reine Marguerite and translator. 'Son chef-d'œuvre est la traduction de *Davila*, mais il en a fait aussi plusieurs autres qui ne sont pas à mépriser... Dans tous ses ouvrages, son style est facile, naturel et français.' (Pellisson)
	François Charpentier	2.1650–1702	Novelist.
	Jean-François de Chamillart	3.1702–1714	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 19	François de Porchères d'Arbaud	1.1634–1640	Magistrate and poet. 'Une édition de ses œuvres poétiques a paru en 1855 sous ce titre : *Rimes de d'Arbaud Porchères*.'
	Olivier Patru	2.1640–1681	Lawyer.
	Nicolas Potier de Novion	3.1681–1693	Magistrate.
Seat 20	Paul Hay du Chastelet	1.1634–1636	Lawyer. 'Intendant de la justice' in the Armée royale. 'Il parlait et écrivait fort bien, et aimait avec une passion démesurée les exercices de l'Académie.' (Pellisson)
	Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt	2.1637–1664	Translator. 'Son génie est sublime; et quoiqu'il soit sans comparaison le meilleur de nos traducteurs, c'est dommage qu'il se soit réduit à un emploi si fort au-dessous de lui.' (Chapelain)

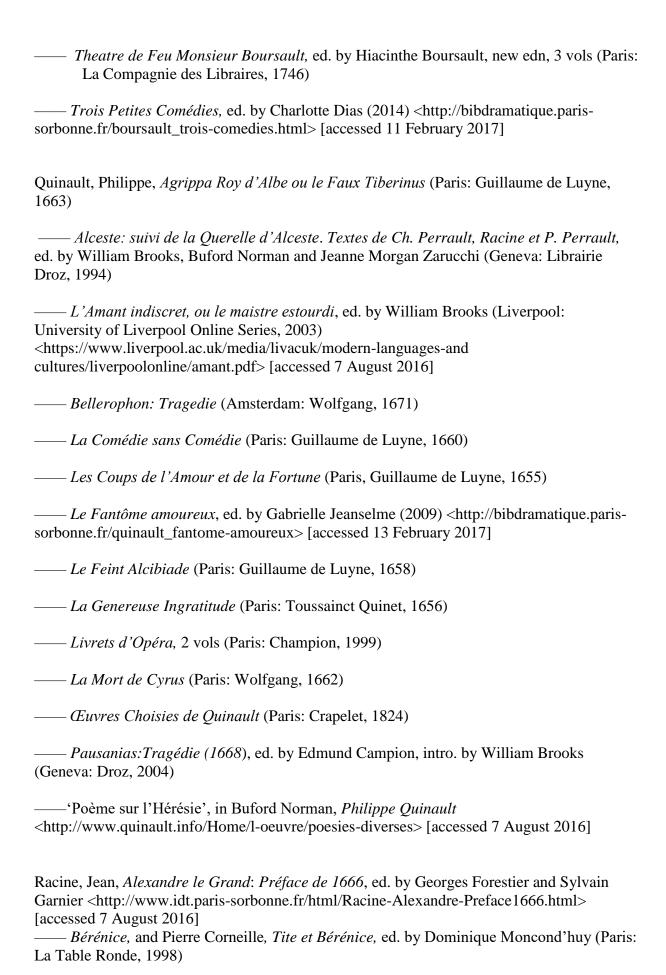|	Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy	3.1665–1693	Novelist.
Seat 21	Marin le Roy de Gomberville	1.1634–1674	Novelist. 'Il parle très purement sa langue, et les romans qu'on a vus de lui en sont une preuve.' (Chapelain)
	Pierre Daniel Huet	2.1674–1721	Ecclesiastic.
	Jean Boivin le Cadet	3.1721–1726	Professor.
Seat 22	Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant	1.1634–1661	Poet. 'Il a laissé trois volumes de poésies et un poème héroïque, Moïse.'
	Jacques Cassagne	2.1662–1679	Ecclesiastic and poet.
	Louis de Verjus	3.1679–1709	Politician.
Seat 23	Guillaume Colletet	1.1634–1659	Lawyer and playwright. 'Il a laissé des traités réunis sous le titre *Art poétique*; auteur dramatique, il fit une tragi-comédie, *Cyminde*, et fut l'un des cinq auteurs des *Thuileries* et de l'*Aveugle de Smyrne*.'
	Gilles Boileau	2.1659–1669	Poet. 'Il ne fut définitivement admis que grâce à l'intervention de Séguier et Pellisson [with whom he quarrelled] cessa de venir à l'Académie jusqu'à la mort de Gilles Boileau.'
	Jean de Montigny	3.1670–1671	Ecclesiastic and poet. 'Sa prose est correcte, élégante, nombreuse: sa versification coulante, noble, pleine d'images.'(Olivet)
Seat 24	Jean de Silhon	1.1634–1667	Politician and author. 'Il a laissé des *Lettres* et divers ouvrages en prose. Bayle dit qu'il était "sans contredit l'un des plus solides et des plus judicieux auteurs de son siècle". Ses ouvrages le font voir un de nos meilleurs écrivains en matières politiques.' (Chapelain)
	Jean-Baptiste Colbert	2.1667–1683	Politician. Minister of State.
	Jean de La Fontaine	3.1684–1695	Poet. 'L'illustre fabuliste a composé deux cent trente neuf fables qui le placent au premier rang dans notre littérature nationale mais qui furent peu goûtées dans son temps.'
Seat 25	Claude de L'Estoile	1.1634–1652	Playwright and poet. 'Il a laissé deux pièces de théâtre, *La Belle Esclave* et *L'Intrigue des Filous*, et des poésies qui n'ont pas été réunies en volume.'
	Armand de Camboust, duc de Coislin	2.1652–1702	Lieutenant general of the army. Grandson of Séguier, elected at 16 years of age. 'Il se pique plus de guerre que d'écriture.'(Chapelain).
	Pierre de Camboust, duc de Coislin	3.1702–1710	Aristocrat. Succeeded his father.
Seat 26	Amable de Bourzeys	1.1634–1672	Ecclesiastic and scholar. 'Lettré, helléniste, considéré à dix-sept ans comme un génie extraordinaire, apprit les langues orientales, écrivit des poésies grecques et latines.'
	Jean Gallois	2.1672–1707	Ecclesiastic. 'Il dut à l'influence de Colbert, autant qu'à ses mérites, d'être nommé à l'Académie'.
	Edme Mongin	3.1707–1746	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 27	Abel Servien	1.1634–1659	Politician. 'Surintendant des Finances, 1653. Il a laissé des harangues, des lettres et des écrits diplomatiques'.
	Jean-Jacques Renouard de Villayer	2.1659–1691	Politician.

	Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle	3.1691–1757	<mark>Playwright</mark> and philosopher.
Seat 28	Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac	1.1634–1654	<mark>Essayist</mark>. 'Il a été en quelque sorte le réformateur de la prose française, et, surnommé " le grand épistolier", il a laissé des *Lettres*, des œuvres diverses en prose, des vers et des lettres en latin.'
	Paul Hardouin de Péréfixe de Beaumont	2.1654–1670	Archbishop of Paris, 1662; confessor of Louis XIV.
	François de Harlay de Champvallon	3.1671–1695	Ecclesiastic.
Seat 29	Pierre Bardin	1.1634–1635	Philosopher and mathematician.
	Nicolas Bourbon	2.1637–1644	Ecclesiastic.
	François-Henri Salomon de Virelade	3.1644–1670	Lawyer.
	Philippe Quinault	*4. 1670-1688*	<mark>*Playwright and poet*</mark>. *'Il fut l'un des six premiers académiciens admis aux spectacles de la cour'.*
Seat 30	Honorat de Bueil, seigneur de Racan	1.1634–1670	<mark>Poet</mark>. 'Auteur des *Bergeries, des Psaumes Pénitentiaux, des Odes sacrées sur les Psaumes*, il a laissé des *Mémoires sur la Vie de Malherbe.'*
	François-Séraphin Régnier-Desmarais	2.1670–1713	Diplomat, ecclesiastic and <mark>grammarian</mark>. Elected before he had published any works.
	Bernard de la Monnoye	3.1713–1728	<mark>Philologist</mark> and critic.
Seat 31	Pierre de Boissat	1.1634–1662	Chevalier and soldier. 'Il embrassa la carrière des armes.'
	Antoine Furetière	2.1662–1685	<mark>Poet, fabulist and novelist</mark>. Excluded for publishing his *Dictionnaire*, but not replaced until after his death in 1688.
	Jean de La Chapelle	3.1688–1723	<mark>Poet</mark>.
Seat 32	Claude Favre de Vaugelas	1.1634–1650	<mark>Grammarian.</mark> 'C'était un véritable statisticien du langage.' (Sainte-Beuve)
	Georges de Scudéry	2.1650–1667	<mark>Novelist, playwright and poet</mark>. 'Il a peu de connaissance des langues anciennes: pour la sienne, il la parle assez purement.' (Chapelain)
	Philippe de Dangeau	3.1667–1720	Soldier, governor and diplomat. Elected without having published any works.
Seat 33	Vincent Voiture	1.1634–1648	<mark>Poet</mark>. 'Il fit des poésies latines, françaises, espagnoles, italiennes, et a laissé des Lettres. C'est lui, au reste, dit Pellisson, qui renouvela en notre siècle les rondeaux.'
	François Eudes de Mézeray	2.1648–1683	Lawyer. 'Il a laissé une bonne Histoire de France en trois volumes et une Histoire des Turcs.'
	Jean Barbier d'Aucour	3.1683–1694	Lawyer. 'Il dut à la protection du minister [Colbert] d'entrer à l'Académie.'
Seat 34	Honorat de Porchères Laugier	1.1634–1653	<mark>Poet.</mark> His election displeased Richelieu and it was agreed thereafter that no one could be elected without the approval of the Protector and that elections would be secret. 'Il a laissé des Poésies et cent Lettres amoureuses, sous le nom d'Erandre.'
	Paul Pellisson	2.1653–1693	Historian. Wrote the first *Histoire de l'Académie française.*
	François de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon	3.1693–1715	Ecclesiastic and <mark>essayist</mark>. Preceptor of the Dauphin.

Seat 35	Henri Louis Habert de Montmor	1.1634–1679	Counsellor of the King. The Académie met several times 'chez lui' as did the early Académie des Sciences.
	Louis Irland de Lavau	2.1679–1694	Ecclesiastic and diplomat. 'Ayant réussi le mariage d'une fille de Colbert avec le duc de Mortemart, il demanda comme récompense au ministre de le faire entrer à l'Académie'.
	François Lefebvre de Caumartin	3.1694–1733	Ecclesiastic. 'Il fut élu, sans avoir rien produit. Le Roi ayant voulu s'amuser de la vanité de l'évêque de Noyon, Clermont-Tonnerre, le fit recevoir à l'Académie.'
Seat 36	Marin Cureau de la Chambre	1.1634–1669	Medical doctor (to the King) and philosopher.
	Pierre Cureau de La Chambre	2.1670–1693	Ecclesiastic. Cureau's son –'contrairement à l'ordre de succession établi par l'abbé d'Olivet'. 'Il était protégé de Séguier et de Colbert.'
	Jean de La Bruyère	3.1693–1696	Essayist and moralist.
Seat 37	Daniel Hay du Chastelet de Chambon	1.1635–1671	Ecclesiastic and mathematician. 'Élu à l'Académie en 1635, il semble l'avoir peu fréquentée.'
	Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet	2.1671–1704	Ecclesiastic and historian 'les principales [œuvres] sont ses *Oraisons funèbres* et ses *Sermons*, le *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle.*'
	Melchior de Polignac	3.1704–1741	Ecclesiastic, politician, philologist and poet.
Seat 38	Auger de Moléon de Granier	1.1635–1636	Ecclesiastic. 'Il recevait beaucoup de personnes d'esprit et de gens de lettres.' Expelled for theft.
	Balthazar Baro	2.1636–1650	Playwright and poet.
	Jean Doujat	3.1650–1688	Lawyer. 'Professeur de droit canon au Collège Royal, docteur régent à la Faculté de droit de Paris, historiographe de France, précepteur du Dauphin.'
Seat 39	Louis Giry	1.1636–1665	Lawyer. 'Personne n'écrit en français plus purement que lui ... Son style est net, mais sans nerfs et sans vivacité, dans le peu qu'on a vu de ses compositions propres.' (Chapelain)
	Claude Boyer	2.1666–1698	Ecclesiastic, playwright and poet. 'Auteur médiocre qui a toujours rencontré l'hostilité du public.'
	Charles-Claude Genest	3.1698–1719	Ecclesiastic. 'Homme sans éducation, sans fortune, sans étude, mais qui, par son bon sens, par ses talents, par sa bonne conduite, parvint à un rang distingué et dans les lettres et dans le monde.' (d'Olivet)
Seat 40	Daniel de Priézac	1.1639–1662	Conseiller d'État. Professor of Jurisprudence at Bordeaux.
	Michel Le Clerc	2.1662–1691	Lawyer. 'Il écrit raisonnablement en prose française et non sans esprit.' (Chapelain)
	Jacques de Tourreil	3.1692–1714	Translator and orator. 'Il remporta le prix d'éloquence à l'Académie en 1681.'

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