PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

6/01 c:/CIRC/DateDue.p65-p.15

PRÉCIOSITÉ AND *LA PROMENADE DE VERSAILLES*: FROM MYTH TO PRAXIS

By

Margaret Anne Trotzke

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Romance and Classical Languages

2001

ABSTRACT

PRÉCIOSITÉ AND *LA PROMENADE DE VERSAILLES*:

FROM MYTH TO PRAXIS

By

Margaret Anne Trotzke

In seventeenth-century France, Madeleine de Scudéry's novels were best-sellers. However, due to the satirical works of Molière and Boileau, she was labeled a prudish *précieuse*. Around that appellation grew a misogynous mythology that clouded the concept of *préciosité* and Scudéry's reputation. The twenty-first century ushers in a renewed appreciation of Scudéry's work and a reassessment of *préciosité*.

La Promenade de Versailles was written in 1669. In Part 1, it describes the extravagant beauty of Louis XIV's pleasure palace and the celebrations he staged for conquering Franche-Comté and Flandres and for a "secret" guest, his mistress Louise de LaVallière. The novel, using exemplarity and subversion of the example, becomes a brilliantly cloaked *écriture politique*. Scudéry's text eulogizes Louis XIV, but also subtly critiques the Sun King's preoccupation with conquering territory for France at the expense of his subjects.

La Promenade de Versailles demonstrates a dramatic shift from the exteriority of the heroic novel, whose main purpose is to relate the exploits of the hero, to the interiority of the modern novel, wherein dialogue replaces the narration of heroic action. Joan DeJean contends that this narrative shift of focus originated in Scudéry's longer works of fiction, *Cyrus* and *Clélie*. Scudéry

perfects her na

line, interspers

from the salon

discourse in th

Scudér

classic love sto

political focus a

century society

ekphrases, the

decorate the n

heroine of the

their relationsh

orders her to r

imposed exile

terms.

Along v

novel allegoriz

Pellisson and

mauvaise *préc*

lecture politiq

praise of Louis

perfects her narratological invention in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The story-line, interspersed with *conversations*, a narrative form that Scudéry appropriates from the salon, creates a positive space for *préciosité* and for an egalitarian discourse in the novel.

Scudéry uses *préciosité* as a seventeenth-century *écriture féminine*. The classic love story in *La Promenade de Versailles* finds both a feminist and a political focus and offers yet a second and indirect critique of seventeenth-century society. From the frontispiece of Cupid to the myriad of textual *ekphraseis*, the secret and powerful signs of Eros literally and figuratively decorate the novel. In Part 2 of *La Promenade*, entitled "Histoire de Celanire," the heroine of the title loves Cleandre, but she is determined to set the parameters of their relationship. She demands that it be kept secret. When Celanire's uncle orders her to marry the wealthy cad Cleonte, she seeks her freedom by a self-imposed exile. Celanire reunites with her lover in the end, but only on her own terms.

Along with unveiling a protofeminist claim for self-assertion, Part 2 of the novel allegorizes the difficult years during which Scudéry's closest friends, Paul Pellisson and Nicolas Fouquet were imprisoned. Once disparaged as a mauvaise *précieuse*, Scudéry, the *précieuse*, in fact stands as an avatar of early écriture politique and écriture féminine. *La Promenade de Versailles* may offer praise of Louis XIV and Versailles but it is through a mirror darkly.

Copyright by
Margaret Anne Trotzke
2001

To my parents:

Milton George Trotzke, Elmer Joseph Boucher, and Constance Nemetz Boucher

Acknowledgments

My first mentor for this project was Professor Domna Stanton at the University of Michigan. I thank her for encouraging me to submit my original paper on *La Promenade de Versailles* to a graduate student conference at Stanford and then to the SE-17 conference at the University of South Carolina. I wish to thank *Cahiers du Dix-septième* for their permission to include a revised version of my article "Framing the Police: Scudéry's Secret Critique of Louis XIV," 1991 Spring, 5 no. 1: 169-82, in this dissertation. I also want to thank Slatkine Reprints for their permission to publish a photocopy of the frontispiece and title page of their 1979 reproduction of Madeleine de Scudéry's 1669 edition of *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Without the continued assistance of the Supervisor of the Circulation Department at the University of Michigan Graduate Library, Joanne Spaide, I would not have been able to complete my research. I thank her.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the professors and staff of the Department of Romance and Classical Languages at Michigan State University. In particular, I want to thank the Chairman of my dissertation, Professor Ehsan Ahmed. Without his encouragement, this project would not have been completed.

I thank all my friends and family for their encouragement. Finally, the continuous and loving support of my husband, George Edward Laws, and of my daughter, Lisa Anne Trotzke-Laws, was my most valuable resource. Thank you both.

INTRODUC

CHAPTER
Poesy and
The Recep

CHAPTER
Feminism a

CHAPTER
Exemplant

CHAPTER
Secrets, W

CONCLUS

APPENDIC

APPENDIX
A Reader's

APPENDIX
Frontspiec
La Promen

APPENDIX
The Myste

WORKS C

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1
Poesy and Politics:
The Reception of Madeleine de Scudéry's Works 15

CHAPTER 2
Feminism and Scudéry: *Préciosité* and *Écriture Féminine* 53

CHAPTER 3
Exemplarity and Subversion in *La Promenade de Versailles* 143

CHAPTER 4
Secrets, Women's Rights, and the *Conversation* 198

CONCLUSION 229

APPENDICES 236

APPENDIX A
A Reader's Guide to *La Promenade de Versailles* 237

APPENDIX B
Frontispiece and Title page,
La Promenade de Versailles, 1669 edition 261

APPENDIX C
The Mysterious Origins of Molière's *Les Précieuses Ridicules* 264

WORKS CITED 267

Introduction

How does an author create a space for her work? Madeleine de Scudéry, known as *Sapho* by her vast seventeenth-century European readership knew how to create such a space. Scudéry created a time and a place to write and she wrote prolifically in various genres of prose fiction. She wrote novels[1], historical biography and essays. She also wrote poetry. And, as many of her century, she corresponded frequently with her myriad of acquaintances, including members of the nobility, important political figures of the day, other literary aficionados and her many, many friends. In her own time, she was one of the most read authors of the century. Her French contemporaries read her. The English read her in translation, as did the Germans. In fact, editions of her works appeared in print in French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Arabic in her lifetime.

Scudéry created a place for herself and her works in the seventeenth-century literary community. She attended salon gatherings, such as Madame de Rambouillet's *chambre bleue*, with other literary and societal figures and eventually drew other writers and literati as well as political figures to her own home for her weekly literary circle, the *samedis*.[2] Scudéry received a royal *pension* and in 1671; she was the first writer to receive *le prix de la Prose* from the Académie Française, founded by Louis XIV and Richelieu, for her essay entitled *Discours de la Gloire*.[3] She was considered for election to the Académie Française, but was not admitted.[4] (Of course, no woman was elected to the Académie Française until Marguerite Yourcenar in 1980). Scudéry was elected to

the Ac

admitt

1699.

seven

severe

Molier

works

centur

the kir

they c

work s

ambig

and fe

renas

Sapho

develo

Prome

critique

novel

the Academy of the Ricovrati of Padua in 1684. Scudéry was the only woman admitted to a seventeenth-century French academy, the Académie d'Arles, in 1689. (DeJean, *Tender* 67)

Despite the phenomenal publishing success of her novels in the seventeenth century, Madeleine de Scudéry's life was ridiculed and her work severely criticized by certain of her contemporaries, such as the dramaturge Molière and the literary critic Boileau. Perhaps the criticism arose, because her works challenged both sociological and political constructions of seventeenth-century French society, and most especially because she praised and criticized the king. Furthermore, Scudéry's works did not continue to retain the high status they obtained in the seventeenth century. The space she had created for her work slowly vanished under the pressure of several centuries of further ambiguous, if not negative criticism.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, seventeenth-century scholars and feminists have shown a resurgence of interest in Scudéry's works. The renascence of interest encourages a reconsideration of the importance of *Sapho*'s literary contributions in her own time and in the larger space of the development of the modern novel.

Scudéry's life and works, especially her novels, and most especially *La Promenade de Versailles*[5] (published in 1669), included a socio-political critiques. *La Promenade de Versailles* did so in several innovative ways. The novel demonstrates a complex rhetoric of exemplarity and the subversion of the

exemplum.

modern Fre

The t

From Myth

Maître's rec

France au X

nébuleuse p

mythology t

dispel the m

narratologic

La Pr

title of work

Louis XIV. T

Similar to M

didatic histo

Versailles, a

John

pivotal role

Versailles ai

pages fulfill

narratrice of

words create

novel are res

exemplum. Scudéry's use of the *conversation* proves to be a precursor the modern French novel.

The title of this dissertation, *Préciosité and La Promenade de Versailles, From Myth to Praxis,* succinctly defines the scope of the present project. Myriam Maître's recent publication, *Les Précieuses, Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVIIe siècle*, contains a chapter entitled "Du mythe noir à la réalité, la nébuleuse précieuse." Because of the persistent and pernicious nature of the mythology that grew around the notion of *préciosité*, one feels compelled to dispel the myth before one can adequately address the substantive issues of narratological, sociological and political significance in Scudéry's corpus.

La Promenade de Versailles is a novel in two parts. Part 1 repeats the title of work on its first page. It is rather long introductory chapter that eulogizes Louis XIV. The second chapter or Part 2 is entitled "Histoire de Celanire."[6] Similar to Madame de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*, which begins with a didatic historical overview before the love story begins, *La Promenade de Versailles*, also begins with a lengthy description of Louis XIV and of Versailles.

John Lyons hypothesizes that the historical introduction actually plays a pivotal role in the exemplarity of Lafayette's novel.[7] Part 1 of La *Promenade de Versailles* also plays an important role in the novel. Narratologically, the first few pages fulfill a narrative function. They provide the *raison d'être* of the novel. The *narratrice* of the novel begins by acquitting herself of her duty. Her opening words create a mystery that cannot be solved until the problems posed in the novel are resolved. Of what duty is she speaking? The first obvious answer is

her

pro

nar

saf

wh

the

Ce

wo

an

em

The

the

Sc

nov

aut

Lou

unc

juxta

Mad

whic

seve

her duty to her king, Louis XIV. The praise of the king in Part 1 of the novel proves her loyalty to her sovereign. However, soon the reader learns that the *narratrice* also has a duty to la belle Etrangére. She is responable for her safekeeping while she is in France. Which leads to the next obvious question, why is la belle Etrangére at Versailles? The reason for her flight to France and the mystery surrounding it will become known in Part 2, the "Histoire de Celanire," namely her escape from a unjust patriarchal hierarchy in which, as a woman, she has no say. This mystery is a kernel or *noyau* of the novel, that is an element that is "logically essential to the narrative action and cannot be eliminated without destroying its causal-chronological coherence (Prince 48)." The resolution of the conflict comes only in the end of the novel. The details of the introductory paragraphs, while seemingly fortuitous, actually demonstrate Scudéry's precocious conception of modern narrativity.

The daring political and feminist critiques written into the story line of the novel require the eulogy of the Part 1 to mitigate the potential danger to the author for having penned them. If Part 2 of the novel is a darker reflection on Louis XIV's monarchy, the importance of Part 1 becomes even greater. Only an understanding of the narrative strategies and underlying critiques can explain the juxtaposition of two such seemingly unrelated examples of Scudérian textuality.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation, entitled "Poesy and Politics, the reception of Madeleine de Scudéry's works," traces the history of the reception of her novels, which proves circular. Her novels were at the height of their success in the seventeenth century. They receive mixed reviews in the eighteenth century and

undergo a general downward trend in acceptance with a dwindling readership in the nineteenth century. Gustave Lanson's pronouncement of her texts as unreadable leads to further deterioration of the status of Scudéry's novels in the twentieth century.

Currently, however, Madeleine de Scudéry's novels are enjoying a revalorization by historians of the novel, seventeenth-century specialists, and feminists, including such scholars as Margaret Anne Doody, Alain Niderst, and Timothy Reiss. Scudéry's novels have undergone a true renaissance.

Joan DeJean's contribution to Scudérian scholarship has been particularly noteworthy. In her groundbreaking *Tender Geographies, Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*, DeJean states unequivocably that seventeenth-century French female novelists begin the "great French tradition of the novel."[8] She also proposes that the progressive changes in Scudéry's narrative strategy create a new mode of novelistic fiction. DeJean contends that Scudéry's innovative narration progressively redirects the action-driven exteriority of *Ibrahim* to the thoughtful-provoking interior discourse of *Cyrus* and *Clélie*[9] and that this innovative narratological shift begins the tradition of the modern French novel. I in turn suggest that in *La Promenade de Versailles* Scudéry penned an exemplary novel of interiority. And I further hypothesize that the shift from the masculine discourse of exteriority to the feminine discourse of interiority, through the dialogism of the *conversation,* creates a space for the feminine voice in the text. Thus *La Promenade de Versailles* employs an innovative narratological technique that leads to the radical feminization of the novelistic form.

prima

femin

sever

under

chapt

reva

critiqu

her re

terms

has co

precio

the ex

précio

chang

schola

to toda

victim

and he

liberal

produc

Chapter 2, "Feminism and Scudéry," defines two literary terms that have primarily been associated with French female writers, *préciosité* and *écriture féminine*. The discussion begins with a justification of the term "feminism" in a seventeenth-century context. DeJean's *Tender Geographies* provides the underpinning for the critical discussions of *préciosité* and *écriture féminine*. The chapter offers a review of pertinent literature on *préciosité*. The work of revaluating an author who has been maligned for so long requires a thorough critique of the term *préciosité* that has stood for so long between her texts and her readers.

The first section, "The Problematics of *Préciosité*," situates Scudéry in terms of the literary movement that began in seventeenth-century France and has come to be known as *préciosité*. Overtime, Scudéry and her works become *préciosité*'s most (in)famous example of the term. The detailed discussion traces the extensive critical literature that over the centuries repeatedly redefines *préciosité*. A stable construction proves elusive as the term and its connotations change over the course of time. Political and social motivations of *précieux* scholars clearly influence their evaluative critiques from the seventeenth century to today.

Madeleine de Scudéry was a woman writer, and as such, has been the victim of the vagaries of a male-dominated critical literature. Aligning Scudéry and her works with the conservative, royalist right or the so-called bourgeois liberal left of French politics has determined whether the author and literary production have been praised or demeaned. Victor Cousin claims that Scudéry's

socio-political sensibility changes from *Cyrus* to *Clélie* and because of the change that he perceives, he praises the first and pans the second. Cousin declares *Cyrus* to be an innovative form of the historical novel. He then denounces *Clélie* as a ridiculous *précieux* and bourgeois text. The first section of Chapter 2 traces the seventeenth-century construction of a purported contrast in style between Catherine Vivonne de Rambouillet, the aristocratic *précieuse,* and Madeleine de Scudéry, the bourgeois *précieuse*. This construction proves the most problematic. It negatively influenced the reception of *préciosité*, Scudéry, and her works for centuries.

In addition, the first section of chapter two describes the fate of Scudéry and her works as a result of the satirical *anti-précieux* discourse found in the works of Somaize, Pure, Tallement des Réaux, and Boileau. The identification of Scudéry as the target of Molière's play *Les Précieuses ridicules* proves to cause the most lasting damage to her literary legacy. The replication in critical literature of the hypostazing and apocryphal good and bad p*récieuses* dichotomy, supposedly represented by Catherine de Rambouillet (Cathos) and Madeleine de Scudéry (Madelon) in Molière's play, perpetuates the myth. As with any reader's relationship to any writer, the political bias of the reader of Scudéry may still influence his or her critical evaluation of her work.

The second half of Chapter 2, entitled "*Précieuse* Identity: *Écriture Féminine,*" first defines the construction of twentieth-century feminist writers. A study of the polysemous vocabulary of Cixous and Clément's poetic definition of women coming to writing as "invisible, foreign, secret, hidden, mysterious, black

and forbid

protagonis

character

Scudéry's

feminist p

Thu

woman co

works of F

novels of

device of

Cha

cloaked in

"Exemplar

begins wit

Lyons's de

followed b

discusses

discourse.

Afte

the novel p

this discurs

title page th

search for t

and forbidden" creates a mosaic of associations (69). *Avant la lettre*, Scudéry's protagonist, la belle Etrangére of *La Promenade de Versailles*, personifies the characteristics of feminist writing that Cixous and Clément artistically describe. Scudéry's self-depiction as Sapho also aligns her work with twentieth-century feminist portraiture.

Thus, *La Promenade de Versailles* pre-figures the metaphors of the woman coming to writing that finds full expression in twentieth-century theoretical works of French and American feminists. The chapter seeks to show that the novels of Scudéry find their fullest expression of *écriture féminine* through the device of her invention, the egalitarian dialogism of the *conversation*.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the bold feminist and political statements cloaked in subtle disguise in *La Promenade de Versailles*. Chapter 3, entitled "Exemplarity and Subversion," outlines the novel's critique of absolutism. It begins with a section entitled "Rhetoric of Exemplarity," and is informed by John Lyons's definition of the term exemplum. The explanation of exemplarity is followed by an analysis of the Scudérian innovation of the *conversation* and discusses the merits of dialogue and description over action in narrative discourse.

After having defined description to be the model discourse, the first half of the novel presents a lengthy portrait of Louis XIV and his palace that exemplifies this discursive model. An image of Cupid appears in the frontispiece facing the title page that beckons the reader to look for a secret message in the novel and search for the hidden message behind the ostensible description of Louis XIV

and Versail

belle Etrang

appellez la

celebrated

predilection

be the "mo

the rhetoric

A pa

wherein the

and deficits

critique of

regarding t

monarchie

ekphrasis

the secret

landed Sc

Cha

informed b

textual clue

of Louis X

the charac

textual clue

absolute re

and Versailles. Moreover, the seemingly innocent exclamation of the heroine, la belle Etrangére, in the very beginning of the novel, "[E]st-ce là ce que vous appellez la petite maison du plus grand Roi de la terre (2)," recalls Colbert's celebrated remonstrance to Louis XIV because of the latter's pronounced predilection for his pleasure palace at Versailles over what Colbert considers to be the "most superb palace in the world," the Louvre in Paris. These signs open the rhetoric of subversion in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

A passage in the second half of the novel, the "Histoire de Celanire,"[10] wherein the participants in a typical Scudérian *conversation* discuss the merits and deficits of various forms of government, presents a cloaked but daring critique of Louis XIV's monarchy. The off-handed remarks of several of the party regarding the sacrosanct role of the king and a negative critique of hereditary monarchies become the sensitive moments of the novel about which the *ekphrasis* of Cupid at the beginning of the work had forewarned the reader. It is the secret critique of absolutism, which were it to be more direct, could have landed Scudéry in prison and could have constituted an act of *lèse-majesté*.

Chapter 4, entitled "Secrets, Women's Rights, and the *Conversation*," informed by Margaret Anne Doody and Louis Marin, traces the intersection of textual clues such as the *ekphraseis* and the discourse of Eros and the excesses of Louis XIV's reign. These clues point the reader's eye not only to the secrets of the characters in the novel, but also to the secrets of Louis XIV. The myriad textual clues conflate the secrets of the novel with the secrets behind Louis XIV's absolute reign.

Ju

desire fo

out in the

strategie

edifying f

Juxtaposed with Louis XIV's absolute desire for power, the heroine's desire for self-determination, especially in matters of the heart and home, plays out in the novel. This thesis will ultimately show how the innovative narrative strategies of Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* enable revealing and edifying feminist and political critiques of Louis XIV and Versailles.

'See Ma't

Madeleine

four shorte

in the form

Note howe

of her nove

Bassa. Art

passages

penned tha

problemat

interest to

result of a

the salon.

since the v

direction o

charmingly

attribution

itéraire du

sont à jama

²See Kraje

of Scudéry

reading of

Notes

[1] See Maître 746-747. Her work provides the most current bibliographic listing of Madeleine de Scudéry's works. Therein, she attributes three voluminous novels, four shorter novels or nouvellas, a discourse, and six books of essays, which are in the form of the *conversation,* and a book of poetry, to Madeleine de Scudéry. Note however, that even the most recent scholarship still disputes the attribution of her novels. Her brother, Georges de Scudéry, signed *Ibrahim ou L'Illustre Bassa, Artamène ou Le Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie*. In addition, the descriptive passages relating to warfare in *Cyrus* suggest to some that her brother may have penned those passages. See Dejean, *Tender*. DeJean discusses the problematics of signature and attribution in the seventeenth century. Of particular interest to our study will be DeJean's definition of salon writing which was the result of a cooperative effort of the participants of any given salon. The leader of the salon, in our case Madeleine de Scudéry, would be considered the author, since the works emanating from a particular salon would be under the editorial direction of the host or hostess of the salon (23). See also Krajewska. In her charmingly speculative and anecdotal style, Krajewska describes the problem of attribution in Scudéry's work. "La clé de la véritable proportion de la coopération littéraire du frère ainsi du sœur ainsi que le secret sur leurs mérites respectifs sont à jamais ensevelis (15)."

[2] See Krajewska. She discusses Scudéry's salon based on the correspondence of Scudéry's contemporaries. Krajewska claims to have renounced a literary reading of the letters "en portant tout l'intérêt à leur transparence factuelle (11)."

[3] See DeJ

[4] See DeJ

of Scudéry

Reiss. His

determina

Richelieu's

Invention

promulgat

inequality

of violenc

seventeen

anxiously

These ma

central. T

of who wo

formation

believed t

women in

précieuse

conscious

[5] The ed

Slatkine R

page inclu

[3] See DeJean *Tender, 67.*

[4] See DeJean, *Tender*, 234-35 note 52 where she refers to Ménage's discussion of Scudéry's consideration for election to the Académie Française. See also Reiss. His analysis suggests that at the core of both literary and political determinations in seventeenth-century France was gender exclusivity. It defines Richelieu's founding of the Académie Française as a dramatic symbol of "The Invention of Literature." With that invention came the choice as to who would promulgate the rules and rights pertaining to it. Received notions of equality and inequality of the sexes influenced the selection. "For it is a fact that the problem of violence and individual rights had been linked throughout the first half of the seventeenth century with an argument about reason and gender that had anxiously sought to respond as well to issues of exclusion and dominance. These matters became more problematic as they were felt to be increasingly central. The debate was a fundamental one: over nothing less than the question of who would have the right to produce and control the literary culture in formation (97)." Scudéry's success undoubtedly deeply troubled those who believed that that right belonged exclusively to men and favored the exclusion of women in the production and control of literature. Molière's satire of the *précieuses* and Boileau's scathing critique of Scudéry suggest that both writers, consciously or unconsciously were troubled by her success.

[5] The edition of *La Promenade de Versailles* referred to in this work is the Slatkine Reprint of 1979, prefaced by René Godenne. In the 1669 text, the title page includes the title, followed by a dedication, *La Promenade de Versailles*,

Dedi
ée au

house and

Chapelle.

frontispiec

preface to

different. m

(III)."

[5] For furthe

summary

[6] See Lyon

[7] See DeJe

Madeleine

and interpr

DeJean ex

[8] In this wo

Artamène

or referred

histoire ro

[9] In this th

in *La Prom*

appear wit

Versailles.

accent and

Dédiée au Roi. It also includes the publishing location, Paris, the publishing house and its location, Chez Claude Barbin, au Palais, sur le Perron de la Sainte Chapelle, the publication date of 1669, and a notice "Avec Privilege du Roi." A frontispiece faces the title page. Godenne mentions a second edition in his preface to the Slatkine reprint edition. "L'œuvre fut rééditéé en 1671 sous un titre différent, mais sans aucun changement: *Celanire*, dédié au Roy, Paris, Barbin (III)."

[6] For further details about the novel, consult Appendix A which provides a summary of the novel and a discussion of the stylistics of the novel.

[7] See Lyons Chapter V, "Marie de Lafayette: From Image to Act," 196-240.

[8]See DeJean, *Tender*, 71-93. Her chapter entitled "The Politics of Tenderness: Madeleine de Scudéry and the Generation of 1640-1660" presents an informative and interpretively innovative reading of Scudéry and *préciosité*. See also 82. DeJean explains Scudéry's "complex political project" in *Clélie*.

[9] In this work *Ibrahim ou l'Illustra Bassa* may be referred to simply as *Ibrahim*. *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* may be called *Le Grand Cyrus*, *Cyrus*, *Artamène*, or referred to by the complete title of Madeleine de Scudéry's novel. *Clélie, histoire romaine* may be referred to as simply *Clélie*.

[10] In this thesis, the spelling of the characters' names appears exactly as they do in *La Promenade de Versailles*. Therefore, for example, Cleandre and Celanire appear without accent marks as they do in the 1669 text of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Also, in *La Promenade de Versailles*, the first "e" of Etrangére has no accent and the second "e" of Etrangére in the name la belle Etrangére takes an

accent

dissert

de Vers

monde

accent aigu. In having the spelling conform to that of the original text, this dissertations follows Alain Niderst's example in his discussion of *La Promenade de Versailles* in his book entitled *Paul Pellisson, Madeleine de Scudéry et leur monde*.

Con

particularly

time to look

predict the

millennium

growing int

and popula

fortunes of

but bankrup

Cau

compiles a

Ages to the

world enter

behind. He

In 1

Précieuses

identifies th

Scudery (3

to task for t

Chapter One

Poesy and Politics:

The Reception of Madeleine de Scudéry's Works

Continuity and change appeal to the Western mind. A millenarian period[1] particularly captures the imagination of Western civilization. It is truly a unique time to look back in order to reassess the past, as well as to look forward to predict the unfolding future. Scudérian scholars have been caught up in the millennium fever. The last twenty years of the twentieth century have witnessed a growing interest in Madeleine de Scudéry's work. From the height of their respect and popularity in mid-seventeenth-century Europe, over the course of time, the fortunes of Scudéry's work dwindle and by the late nineteenth century they are all but bankrupt.[2]

Caught up in his own end of the century fever, in 1894, Gustave Lanson compiles a 1,200-page volume on the status of French literature from the Middle Ages to the present, entitled *Histoire de la littérature française*. As the Western world entered the twentieth century, Lanson believed that it should leave Scudéry behind. He declared Scudéry's work unreadable.[3]

In 1999, Myriam Maître published her lengthy opus entitled *Les Précieuses, Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVIIe siècle.* She identifies the use of the term "illisibles" in no less than six critical works on Scudéry (30). She also takes three critics of the first half of the twentieth century to task for their mistreatment of the *précieuses*.

> Sur un ton gaillard ou haineux, la "Troisième République des Lettres" est franchement misogyne et ce ton dure jusqu'au milieu du XXe siècle, en particulier chez Emile Magne, Georges Mongrédien, Antoine Adam. Les considérations moralisatrices qui guident les biographes ou les métaphores sexistes qui dévalorisent la poésie "femelle" rendent ces travaux difficilement utilisables en dépit de leur richesse documentaire.(31)

Today, a hundred years after Lanson's fatal blow, a revitalized Scudérian scholarship had produced a fervent discourse mandating the return of the repressed. A growing readership of *nouveaux* Scudérian scholars have begun a serious re-evaluation of Scudéry's works. The revalorization of her work rekindles the passion and interest of her vast and approving seventeenth-century European readership.

Madeleine de Scudéry was a phenomenal success as a writer in the seventeenth century. How did a writer, and especially a female writer, attract so many readers? For she was read. Henri-Jean Martin, the venerable historian of the book culture of the seventeenth century, first qualifies and then quantifies the success of Madeleine de Scudéry's novels.

According to Martin, in 1630, the moment of the grand *roman-fleuve* had arrived and with it Madeleine de Scudéry's success. "En cette période de troubles et de guerres, [...] à partir de 1630, au roman d'aventure et d'amour succède le roman épique [...] Le temps de Mademoiselle de Scudéry est arrivé (*Livre* 295)." *Le Grand Cyrus* was published by one of the most "powerful editors" of the seventeenth century, Augustin Courbé (353). In contrast to a weakening market for books of the novelistic genre in the mid-seventeenth century, Martin confirms Scudéry's unquestionable publishing success.

pref
de
inte
ces
par
que
de
imp
nou

Mar

but he qua

not necess

did not disc

Sub

bookseller

successful

people of C

French lett

from Paris.

been thoug

particular, t

of Scudéry

astronomic

livres.(10)

The

measured i

> Et bientôt intervient Mademoiselle de Scudéry, qui a fait paraître à partir dès 1641 sous le nom de son frère, un roman historique, inspiré par un premier séjour provençal: *Ibrahim ou L'illustre Bassa*. Puis arrive, à partir de 1649, le tour du *Grand Cyrus* dont les dix volumes se succèdent sans interruption jusqu'en 1653... et enfin de 1654 à 1660, celui de *Clélie*. Or ces longs ouvrages connaissent à coup sûr un immense succès. On sait par exemple que les premiers tomes du *Grand Cyrus* sont épuisés avant que les derniers aient été mis au jour: il faut augmenter le chiffre du tirage de ceux-ci et remettre ceux-là sous presse mais ainsi le fait que des impressions datant de 1654 portent une mention de quatrième édition ne nous renseigne que bien peu sur la diffusion réelle de ce texte.(635-636)

Martin assures us that Scudéry's long novels were an "immense success," but he qualifies the success he has just elucidated. He suggests that printings do not necessarily reflect the actual diffusion of the text in the market, information he did not discover.

Subsequently, however, Martin reviews the account books of the bookseller Jean II Nicolas of Grenoble, which give a further indication of the successful distribution of Scudéry's works in the seventeenth century. The people of Grenoble "followed the efforts of...the de Scudéry's [sic]...to endow French letters with Christian and national epics (Reading Public 9)." He adds,"Far from Paris, Parisian manners were adopted much more quickly than might have been thought (10)." In the salons of Dauphiné one sought many novels,"in particular, those of Mlle. de Scudéry (10)." Martin acknowledges the profitability of Scudéry's publications. In Grenoble, Nicolas sold her works for the astronomical price of twelve *livres* per volume or he would rent them for six *livres*.(10)

The success of Scudéry's novelistic career in her own lifetime can be measured in another way. The monies from her publications and *pensions*

awarded

Geograp

to depe

goes on

Sapho h

S

distribut

her wor

T

Daniel

man of

her sa

Lafaye

define

begins

nod to

awarded by Louis XIV's *mécénat* allowed her to support herself. In *Tender Geographies* Joan DeJean claims Scudéry to be the "first French woman writer to depend on her literary productions for her livelihood (*Tender* 232)."[4] DeJean goes on to say that according to René Godenne, a noted Scudérian scholar, *Sapho* had made the publisher Courbé a very wealthy man (232).

Statistical evidence indicates that Scudéry's works were published and distributed throughout Europe. What did her contemporaries have to say about her work? Several of Scudéry's literary colleagues recognized her talent.

The *New Oxford Companion to French Literature* declares that "Pierre-Daniel (1630-1721) Huet has frequently been referred to as the most learned man of his age (391)." He knew Madeleine de Scudéry well, since he attended her salon. In Huet's *De l'origine des romans*, published in 1670 as a preface to Lafayette's *Zayde*, he clearly recognizes Scudéry's talent as a novelist. DeJean defines it as a landmark moment.

> With this tribute, Huet enacts the initial public inscription of Scudéry's name in the ranks of the modern authors to be included in French literature's first canon, different versions of which were being proposed by his contemporaries. (Prior to his treatise, Madeleine de Scudéry's authorship was common knowledge in seventeenth-century literary circles, but had not yet been acknowledged in a professional critical context).(170)

However, the form of the praise comes in a rather unusual context. Huet begins by complimenting Honoré D'Urfé.

> Monsieur d'Urfé fut le premier qui tira nos Romans de la barbarie, & les assujettit aux regles dans son incomparable *Astrée*, l'ouvrage le plus ingenieux & le plus poli qui eust jamais paru en ce genre [...](228)

What seems like a solid endorsement is then undercut by what will be a nod to Scudéry.

> Mais quelque merveilleux que fust son Roman, il n'osta pourtant pas le courage à ceux qui vinrent aprés luy, d'entreprendre ce qu'il avoit entrepris, & n'occupa pas si fort l'admiration publique, qu'il n'en restast encore pour tant de beaux Romans, qui parurent en France aprés le sien.(228)

The praise left in reserve goes to Mlle de Scudéry.

> L'on n'y vit pas sans étonnement ceux qu'une fille, autant recommandable par sa modestie, que par son merite, avoit mis au jour sous un nom emprunté [her brother's, Georges de Scudéry], se privant si généreusement de la gloire qui luy estoit deuë, & ne cherchant sa récompense que dans sa vertu: com-si lors qu'elle travailloit ainsi à la gloire de nostre nation, elle eust voulu épargner cette honte à notre sexe. Mais enfin le temps luy a rendu la justice qu'elle s'estoit refuséé, & nous a appris que *l'Illustre Bassa, le Grand Cyrus, & Clelie*, sont les ouvrages de Mademoiselle de Scudery; afin que desmormais l'art de faire des Romans, qui pouvoit se défendre contre les censeurs scrupuleux, non seulement par les loüanges que luy donne le Patriarche Photius, mais encore par les grands exemples de ceux qui s'y sont appliquez, pust aussi se justier par le sien; & qu'aprés avoir esté cultivé par des Philosophes...il eust encore l'avantage d'avoir esté exercé par une sage & vertueuse fille. (228-229)

Huet mitigates his chauvinist surprise that these novels could have been written by a woman when he praises the humble novelist and her works. He suggests that by keeping the female authorship of the novels a secret, Scudéry appeared to be working for the glory of the French nation. We will learn that being able to keep secrets and the pursuit of glory were both fundamental to Louis XIV's personal and political projects.

Huet read and respected Scudéry's works. His unusual reference to the revelation of the gender of the author of her novels and her purported effort to allow France to save face by her secret, may actually be a gendered joke. In a discussion concerning the rivalry between Huet and Boileau, DeJean refers to Boileau's writing as a "man to man discourse."(170) Perhaps Huet's unusual

referen

dig at

belong

sugges

Boileau

Lafaye

us that

pronou

Despré

Severa

précios

ridicule

certain

persona

phantas

by the w

universa

T

wane. In

in their s

reference to the cloaked gender of the author of Scudéry's novels was a subtle dig at Boileau, whereby Huet pokes fun at Boileau's boys-only club, since Huet belongs to a more refined discursive school that eschews gender bias. DeJean suggests that "Huet praises Scudéry in terms that seem calculated to provoke Boileau's wrath (170-171)."

Scudéry's colleague, Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne, Comtesse de Lafayette (hereafter known simply as Lafayette) also respected her. DeJean tells us that "in her last letter to Scudéry, not long before they both died, she pronounced to Scudéry: 'You are still...inimitable (*Tender* 125) .'"[5]

Other of Scudéry's fellow writers proved less generous. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux was her contemptuous contemporary. He condemned her work. Several other contemporary authors satirized Madeleine de Scudéry and *préciosité* in their works, most notably Molière, in his play *Les Précieuses ridicules*. Why would Scudéry, such a popular novelist, be so ill received by certain of her male literary colleagues? Several reasons come to mind, differing personal tastes, professional jealousy, and/or misogyny triggered by a phantasmagorical fear of women in power and especially of women empowered by the word. Obviously, publishing success and critical acclaim do not guarantee universal appreciation of one's poetic worth.

Turning to the eighteenth century, Scudéry's literary fortunes began to wane, in no small part perhaps because of Molière and Boileau's attacks on her in their satirical writings.

A

universe

Doig indi

versions

panned.

1779 *Bib*

Clélie as

commen

ses imita

Bibliothè

'ridiculo

canard li

critical o

Précieus

history o

B

into Arab

Europea

language

storywrit

in one of

Scudéry

A review of Scudéry's inclusion in the eighteenth-century *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* and the *Encyclopédie méthodique* by Kathleen Hardesty Doig indicates that Scudéry continues to be read in excerpts and shortened versions.(153-168)

In eighteenth-century France, Scudéry's works are praised, but also panned. Doig cites a review of the medieval Roman de la Rose in the March 1779 *Bibliothèque* wherein the editor "makes mention of Clélie. He dismisses *Clélie* as a novel "qui fit un tort momentané à l'esprit de la Nation, dont le goût commençoit à s'épurer. Molière, heureusement, en attaquant ce ridicule prévint ses imitateurs (8)." The editor of this eighteenth-century French chronicle, the *Bibliothèque* universelle des romans, warned of the dangers of imitating this "ridiculous" woman writer, Madeleine de Scudéry. And Doig reminds us that "this canard linking Scudéry to the excesses of *préciosité* would remain the theme of critical opinion of her work for almost two centuries (8)." The impact of Molière's *Précieuses ridicules* will be considered at length in Chapter 2, which outlines the history of the term *préciosité*.

Because Scudéry's works had been translated in the seventeenth-century into Arabic, German, Italian, and Spanish, in the nineteenth-century many Europeans and arabic speakers could read Scudéry's novels in their own language. It is not surprising that in the nineteenth-century the German storywriter E. T. A. Hoffmann paid homage to Scudéry by referring to her directly in one of his stories. Hoffmann invents a fantastic story about Madeleine de Scudéry that is included in his *Tales of Hoffmann*. Although biographically totally

apocry

recept

Scude

plays.

transl

femal

conve

nothir

and w

d spla

where

the sa

Soph

spea

Soph

Mo e

in vo

seve

been

sugg

apocryphal, Hoffmann's tale does tell us something of Scudéry's positive reception in early nineteenth-century Germany.[6]

A French writer of the nineteenth century, Germaine de Staël, like Scudéry, had a literary salon. Staël alludes to Scudéry obliquely in two of her plays, "*Le Mannequin, Proverbe Dramatique*" and "*Sapho*." Vivian Folkenflik, a translator and commentator of Staël's works, explores the feminist theme of female silencing in "Le Mannequin." For a woman, interprets Folkenflik, "a conventional upbringing without the exhilaration of intellectual experience creates nothing but 'a doll who has learned her lesson well (12).' " By implication then, and without any formal education, what a woman learns is to keep silent and not display any wit or intelligence.

"Le Mannequin" brings to mind Molière's "*Les Précieuses ridicules*," wherein the so-called *précieuse* Scudéry is the target of his satire. The roles of the satirized and the valorized are reversed in Staël's play. The female character Sophie refuses to marry a man who defines the ideal woman as one that never speaks. She dupes her unwanted suitor into falling in love with a mannequin. Sophie's father's name is Monsieur de la Morlière, an obvious reference to Molière. With her play, Staël sets Mo(r)lière straight.

Significantly, Staël also wrote a play entitled "Sapho." In her self-portrait in volume ten of *Cyrus*, Madeleine de Scudéry called herself Sapho and her seventeenth-century admirers also called her by that name. She seems to have been universally recognized by her self-selected pseudonymn. Joan DeJean suggests that "Scudéry's portrait is most remarkable because of her painstaking

effort t

sugge

(Fictio

Scude

de Sc

to the

singu

roma

femi

Unco

dem

that

Sapf

hero

Pro

to S

Sta

effort to tell her own story only as it can be told through Sappho's, and thereby to suggest that her Sapho could serve as an exemple for future literary women (*Fictions*, 104)."

The two Staël plays juxtaposed in her complete works, while not naming Scudéry by name, give a strong, if silent, feminist nod of approval to Madeleine de Scudéry. In addition the play may have intended to give an appreciative nod to the important last chapter of *Cyrus*, "The Story of Sapho." DeJean points to the singular importance of this chapter. For DeJean, it "signals the death of the *roman* (romance) and the inauguration of a new model for French prose fiction, feminocentric and oblique in narrative stance (*Tender*, 48)."[7]

Helen O. Borowitz's convincing and well-documented article entitled "The Unconfessed *Précieuse*: Madame de Staël's Debt to Mademoiselle de Scudéry," demonstrates DeJean's contention. Borowitz meticulously documents her thesis that "[it] was Mlle de Scudéry's literary self-portrait under the pseudonym of Sapho that was to become the model a century later for Mme de Staël's fictional heroine Corinne (33)."[8] Further, Borowitz also describes Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* and its impact on Corrine.

> Like Mlle de Scudéry's 'belle étrangère," Corinne's tourist is a melancholy foreigner, but in contrast to the visitor of Versailles who marvels at Louis XIV's good conception, Oswald fails to respond to the monuments of the ancient Rome.(56)

Borowitz's description of *La Promenade de Versailles* and her references to Staël and Molière will be referred to again in Chapter 2.

By implication both of these nineteenth-century writers, Hoffmann and Staël, pay tribute to Madeleine de Scudéry. To be as successful as she most

assuredly was in her own century, Scudéry would have had to unlearn the lesson of Staël's silent doll. One can better appreciate the requisite ingenuity of Scudéry's rhetorical strategies and her use of exemplarity and subversion of the exemplum if one understands how difficult it has been for female writers of all ages to bring their voice to literature.

In *Rhetoric Retold, Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance*, Cheryl Glenn summarizing Stallybrass writes: "For the past twenty-five hundred years in Western culture, the ideal woman has been disciplined by cultural codes that require a closed mouth (silence), a closed body (chastity), and an enclosed life (domestic confinement) (1)."

Scudéry radically broke two of the three cultural codes of the ideal woman, the need for silence and domestic confinement. She rejected a purely domestic life for that of a writer and opened her home to the literati of her time for her weekly *samedi* salon gathering. Through her writing, her voice was heard by all of seventeenth-century Europe.

Perhaps the dismissive or negative criticism that Scudéry received from Molière and Boileau in her own era and male literary historians after them were a reaction to her choice to break the cultural codes of silence and domesticity. Scudéry appears to have adherred to one cultural code. Legend has it she remained chaste. Her critics turn even what should have been a positive, her presumed chastity into a negative, prudery. The *précieuses* supposed "refus d'amour" becomes a rallying cry for those who decry Scudéry and her works.

In *La Promenade de Versailles,* on the other hand, the heroine speaks out against excessive military and royal spending, and portrays a heroine who chooses to be chaste rather than to accept a domestic companion not of her own choice. Celanire, the heroine of *La Promenade de Versailles*, also chooses exile over a domestic confinement with an unsuitable partner.

To continue the chronological review of Scudéry's reception, in nineteenth- century France, while Staël appreciated Scudéry's voice, other French readers give her works mixed reviews. In mid-nineteenth-century France, Victor Cousin, writes *La Société française aux XVIIe siècle d'après Le Grand Cyrus de Mlle de Scudéry.* In it, unfortunately, Cousin perpetuates a myth about Madeleine de Scudéry, the so-called *précieuse* writer. Cousin attributes Scudéry's supposed *précieuse* pruderie, her "refus d'amour" (one of the several deadly sins of the *précieuses*), to her looks.

> Il est vrai que contre l'amour elle avait un puissant préservatif, qui pourtant ne lui eût pas suffi, à elle comme à bien d'autres, si elle n'avait eu la ferme résolution d'être sage. Disons-le: Mlle de Scudéry était laide, et sa laideur n'était surpassée que par celle de l'homme [Pellisson] qui, plus tard, arriva le plus près de son cœur.(1886 Volume 2 122)[9]

In brief, Cousin perpetuates the legend that Scudéry was an ugly spinster. However, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

In *La Société Française au XVIIe*, Cousin proudly announced his discovery of a key to the identities of the characters in Scudéry's *Cyrus*.(20) In the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal attached to a copy of *Cyrus*, he found an actual listing of the characters matched to renowned seventeenth-century figures. Cousin triumphantly uses the key to expound on the identity of the characters in

Scudéry's *Cyrus*. But then Cousin condemns the novel *Clélie* for which he does not believe a key exists. He finds it a ridiculously *précieux* and bourgeois novel.

> En un mot, *La Clélie* appartient déjà à l'école des précieuses que Molière n'a cessé de poursuivre depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin de sa carrière, et *Le Cyrus*, tout en inclinant un peu trop vers cette école, relève de ces précieuses illustres que Molière a toujours respectées.(13)

Cousin alludes to Molière's attempt to mitigate the negative image of the *précieuses* that one can glean from *Les Précieuses ridicules*, that is, a differentiation between the illustrious *précieuses* and the ridiculous ones. Cousin incorporates Molière's good *précieuse*/ bad *précieuse* paradigm into his critique, as he applies the term *précieux* to *La Clélie* and *Le Cyrus*. Boileau intentionally and Molière perhaps unintentionally begin the tradition of baiting the *précieuses*. Cousin merely reinforces a negative stereotype and a false paradigm that began long before his time.

For Cousin, the novel that reflects the aristocratic *précieuse* society, *Cyrus*, has merit. He describes *Clélie*, for which he did not find a key, as bourgeois claptrap.

> Deux fois Mlle de Scudéry a entrepris de peindre la société de son temps sous des noms étrangers: la première fois dans *Le Grand Cyrus*, la seconde dans *Clélie*. Ces deux romans sont évidemment de la même famille, mais ils diffèrent plus qu'ils ne se ressemblent. *Le Cyrus*, malgré des défauts que nous ne dissimulerons pas, est encore le modèle du genre: *La Clélie* en est l'excès et l'abus. *Le Cyrus* avait répandu le goût du roman historique au delà de la juste mesure, comme il arrive toujours; *La Clélie* l'a décrié et l'a fait périr dans le ridicule.(9)

Cyrus provides a model of the historical novel on one line of Cousin's critique and *Clélie* is described as an abusive, excessive book destined to perish in ridicule on the next. Cousin finds that Scudéry has invented an innovative

form

bring

char

disa

note

her

man

subv

critic

rece

ill.sit

the

cons

Sign

Scud

Vers

Scud

in ge

marg

assoc

form, a historical, metaphorical novel but then he claims that she managed to bring the form to shame, in the space of two works!

Certainly, Cousin took great pride in having discovered the key to the characters identified in Scudéry's *Cyrus*. Critics such as Niderst and Godenne disagree as to the merit of Cousin's key. Close consideration must be given the notion of the key since Scudéry's production of *roman à clefs* may have allowed her to critique seventeenth-century political events and person in an indirect manner. In fact, indirection proves to be a model for the possibilities of subversive writing through a novelistic form. For it is the depth of the Scudérian critique of absolutist France that ultimately proves of utmost interest.

By 1894, Gustave Lanson sounds the death knell to Scudéry's positive reception. "La longeur de tous ces romans, s'ajoutant à leur fausseté, les rend illisibles," posits Lanson (388). French readers and literary critics at the turn of the century took great stock in Lanson's *Histoire de la littérature française,* considering its pronouncements to be revelations of literary and historical truths. Significantly, Lanson does recognize the merit of Scudéry's *conversations* (388). Scudéry demonstrates the art of the *conversation* in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The *conversation* is the literary device that allows for the interiority of Scudéry's novels and that puts her works in the forefront of a dramatic innovation in genre of the novel.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Scudéry's works become marginalized. Only the famous *Carte de Tendre* of *Clélie* and Scudéry's association with *préciosité* bring her any recognition. The critical literature of

Scud

discu

ago e

might

cited S

her life

and hi

histori

gain cr

metony

factor i

devalua

E

author i

associa

authoria

F

speaking

indiffere

consulting

Scudéry and her connection to the problematic concept of *préciosité* will be discussed in Chapter 2.

In the rebirth of Scudérian criticism that began about twenty-five years ago, even critics who began writing about Scudéry fairly recently and therefore might be expected to attempt literary rather than historical interpretations, have cited Scudéry's novel's, particularly, *Cyrus* and *Clélie,* as historical evidence of her life and times. Critics endowed Scudéry's texts with the weight of authority and historical accuracy. They empowered Scudéry by associating her works, her historical descriptions, and her voice. But therein lies a problem.

The association of the "*incomparable Sapho*" with her texts helped them to gain critical acclaim by her seventeenth-century readers. Just as certainly, the metonymic association of Scudéry's *précioisité* with her works has been a major factor in subsequent negative critical reception. The association led to the critical devaluation of her works for many years.

Before Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault problematized the role of the author in the critical analysis of a work, it was commonplace for critics to associate a writer and her production.[10] And, further, the problematics of authorial intention have been further complicated by the rise of feminist criticism.

Foucault asks the question "What difference does it make who is speaking?" In *Subject to Change*, Nancy K. Miller contends that "[the] sovereign indifference" of Foucault's question "authorizes the "end of woman" without consulting her."(75)

Scudéry's novels were historic in two senses. The Scudérian characters donned the names of characters from novels of the Ancients, such a s Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Heliodorus' Aithiopika.[11] But, the novels were also believed to be allegorical. The historic names stood for contemporary French figures. *Sapho* in *Clélie* is purported to be Scudéry herself.

The intent of this dissertation is to release Scudéry and her works from the 350 years of negative criticism directed at them and at her person. Scudéry's text, that is, the words of *La Promenade de Versailles,* will speak to us rather than the apocryphal construction of Scudéry perpetuated in much Scudérian criticism.

What has bio-driven criticism produced? Until the late twentieth century, notions of authorial intentionality had driven much of the criticism of Scudéry's works. Critics writing in eras prior to Foucault, Barthes, and twentieth-century feminists, were guided by Scudéry's presumed intentions that they believed governed the meaning of her novels. Critical works on Scudéry in the later years of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century love to trace the biography of the Scudéry family to Italy and then to Apt and then to Le Havre, where her brother Georges and Madeleine were born.

The criticism of Scudéry is then strung out as her life story, supplemented and amplified by quotations from her own works! In her book *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, Nicole Aronson's summarizes works on Scudéry from the turn of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Her survey of the critical literature of this perioid underlines their reliance on biographical as opposed to

textual criticism. For example, according to Aronson, *Mademoiselle de Scudéry, Reine de Tendre*, written by Claude Aragonnès, is "[v]aluable mostly for the description of Mlle de Scudéry's friends (173)." Dorothy McDougall's title *Madeleine de Scudéry, Her Romantic Life and Death* points to the biographical nature of her inquiry as does Rathery and Boutron's *Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Sa Vie et sa correspondance.*[12]

In such works, Scudéry, sister of Georges, sister-in-law of Marie-Madeleine, soul mate of Paul Pellisson, host of her weekly literary salon, *Samedi*, correspondent of Huet, target of Boileau, and finally author, is described. This type of critical work makes claims for Scudéry based on quotations of her seventeenth-century admirers. Using snippets of letters from her voluminous correspondence, quotations from her novels, and descriptions by her peers, the authors piece together a historical mosaic that attempts to valorize her life and one supposes her works. Critics analyzing and affirming the literary content of Scudéry's works begin to be published in the late 1970's. Nicole Aronson's work is groundbreaking in this sense.

Twentieth-century readers of Scudéry's works might compare them to a literary gazette. The volumes of her long novels were published in serial. In the seventeenth century, the avid readers of Scudéry's novels awaited the publication of the latest volume with great anticipation, perhaps eager to discover if they themselves were one of the characters of *Cyrus* or *Clélie* disguised as characters from Antiquity. Current Scudérian scholars disagree as to the

exister

discov

based

is seer

others

Madel

corres

meticu

existe

to acc

Scude

jamais

Scude

l'exis

Clef d

counu

que le

Scarr

ou le

existence and importance of the keys to her novels that Cousin claimed to have discovered in the nineteenth century.

Following Cousin, certain critics frame their critiques of Scudéry's novels based on their conclusion that her works are *romans à clef*. Interpreting the key is seen by some as adding an important historical dimension to her work, while others believe it detracts from the inherent aesthetic worth of her novels. Madeleine de Scudéry herself makes reference to characters in *Clélie* in her correspondence with Paul Pellisson.[13] In René Godenne's lengthy and meticulous compendium of the Scudérian novel, he minimizes the importance or existence of keys to Scudéry's novels.

However, Godenne admits that seventeenth-century readers were quick to accept the notion of keys in Scudéry's novels, especially *Clélie*.[14] "Que Mlle de Scudéry ait songé à dépeindre dans son roman plusieurs de ses familiers n'a jamais été mis en doute au XVIIe siècle" (200). Godenne cites Boileau, perhaps Scudéry's most harsh critic, as the first of her contemporaries "à avoir mentionné l'existence d'une clé de *Clélie* [...] (201)." Jean Mesnard in his article "Pour une Clef de *Clélie*" cites Boileau to that effect: "On en donnait autrefois une clef qui a couru , mais je ne me suis jamais soucié de la voir. Tout ce que je sais, c'est que le généreux Herminius, c'était M. Pellisson; l'agréable Scaurus, c'était Scarron; le galant Amilcar Sarasin, [etc.] (377)."

Godenne acknowledges Cousin's claim to have found a key to *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* in the nineteenth century, however, all of the hypotheses

about keys prove to him that they have little value. "Ces formules sont, pour moi, la preuve que rien n'est sûr [...] (203)."

On the other hand, the twentieth-century Scudérian scholar, Alain Niderst, fervently believes Scudéry's novels to be *romans à clef.* He claims to recognize fifty-nine certain keys in *Clélie,* for example.(202) As we shall see, Niderst identifies several characters in *La Promenade de Versailles* as important figures of Parisian courtly society.

To some critics, labeling a novel as a *roman à clef* takes away the status of the work, debasing or trivializing it. However, the material existence of a key or keys is not the issue. Historically and sociologically important personages from the seventeenth-century Parisian society could identify themselves and their surroundings in the works of Scudéry. This added to the works' popularity, but not necessarily or directly to their worth. However, the social commentary of *Cyrus* and *Clélie* produces a significant discourse on seventeenth-century Parisian society. The biographical allusions of the characters to heroes of the Fronde, lead DeJean, for example, to identify those works as politically subversive.

Interestingly, though DeJean relies on the identification of the characters in Scudéry's novel to bolster her contention that the novels are political, she also takes exception with the form of Cousin's argument with regard to the keys he supposedly discovered. Because of the importance that the notion of keys holds for our interpretation of *La Promenade de Versailles* and because of the

and

alle

the

con

the

onl

fen

So

Ce

potentially problematic existence of such keys, DeJean's rationale is cited in its entirety.

> On January 7, 1649, just four days before the heroic drama at the Hôtel de Ville that was for Retz [the famous cardinal who was imprisoned for his participation in the Fronde] *Astrée* come to life, the first two volumes of a new *roman* were printed. *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* would fire the collective imagination of the contemporary reading public as no prose fiction since d'Urfé's magnum opus had done. The heroines and heroes of the Fronde were self-conscious, novelistic actors on the stage of history; *Artamène* is in a sense a literary recreation of the living-out of a novel. Yet this is not to say that *Artamène* is merely a novelistic mirror of the Fronde years. Such was the position of Victor Cousin, who devoted his *La Société au XVIIe siècle d'après "Le Grand Cyrus"* to establishing the 'key' to the novel's characters, out of a conviction that the works popularity could only be explained by the aristocratic public's desire to recognize familiar faces [especially their own] in a ten-volume, 14,000–page novelistic mirror. The reading Cousin inaugurated has successfully obscured the more intricate bond between history and fiction in Scudéry's work, in particular the parallelism between its literary evolution and the contemporary evolution of feminist activity.(44-45)

Assuming that the characters allegorized in Scudéry's novel were worthy and exemplary figures, what readers would not appreciate finding themselves allegorized in the latest print sensation? More importantly, what DeJean adds to the equation makes the difference between a gazette and critical socio-political commentary on seventeenth-century society. The juxtaposition of feminism and the evolution of literary rhetorical devices in the novel makes Scudéry's works not only forerunners of the modern novel, but also of what blooms into full-fledged feminist fervor at the end of our twentieth century. DeJean's analysis of Scudéry's *romans à clef* certainly points to their historical importance.

Niderst speculates about characters in the far-off land of the "Histoire de Celanire" as representatives of Scudéry and her friends and acquaintances,

particularly Fouquet, Pellisson and even Louis XIV himself.[15] His speculation will prove useful in the analysis of the political and the feminist critiques described in Chapters 3 and 4. Niderst carefully distinguished a mere representation of Louis XIV's court society at Versailles from the novelistic interpretation of that society. Scudéry's interpretation proves the most significant aspect of her novel. Let us remember that political allegory, a tradition in French literature which begins in the Middle Ages, allows a powerful narration to critique a culture while providing a certain cover for the author.[16]

Of course, this thesis intends to encourage a twenty-first-century audience to read Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles*. It is only fairly recently that such a goal could be taken seriously. As late as 1985, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature*, while acknowledging that *Le Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie* "were immensely popular in their day," concludes that "this type of romance--tediously long, insipid and unreal--was condemned by Boileau and is as a whole quite unreadable today (582)."

Ten years later, in *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French,* the recommendation had changed. It states:

> Commentators have often presented Scudéry's work as an unambiguous eulogy of political absolutism and aristocratic privilege. They therefore eliminate the nuances in her political thinking--e.g. her eyewitness accounts of the Fronde--that subtly predict the dangers of absolutism. The cautiously subversive Scudéry could find new readers today.(753)

How does one explain the change in the evaluation of Scudéry's work from 1985 to 1995? The first clue is the fact that the revised entry for Madeleine de Scudéry was written by Joan DeJean. Recent narratological and feminist re-

readings of Scudéry's works have re-valorized them in a dramatic return of the repressed. Because of late twentieth-century narratology and the success of feminist theory, a space for Scudéry's work is being re-created. Most importantly, in *La Promenade de Versailles, Scudéry's* rhetorical strategies demonstrate political and feminist ideologies and therefore this work could but should be re-read by scholars.

Many critics already acknowledge Scudéry's important place in the history of the modern novel. Among them, Timothy Reiss in *The Meaning of Literature* speaks directly of Scudéry's considerable influence on the development of the genre. Reiss summarizes the learned seventeenth-, early eighteenth-century Pierre-Daniel Huet's respect for the novelistic form. Reiss cites Huet as stating that the "knowledge which attracts and charms most is that which it acquires easily [...] That is what novels do (216)." In the context of his discussion of Huet's positive evaluation of the genre of the novel, Reiss adds, "it is not surprising, therefore, that women were in fact the principal readers 'de cette lecture si délicieuse' and had produced their greatest author, Madeleine de Scudéry (216)." One male reader of seventeenth-century France also read and praised Scudéry's works, Pierre-Daniel Huet himself. And he was both a privileged and important reader of the novel at that, since he was a seventeenth-century literary critic.

Margaret Doody is one twentieth-century expert of the novel who also finds Scudéry's works worth reading. In *The True Story of the Novel*, she dramatically situates Scudéry in the same novelistic tradition that began with

Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* in c.428 B.C.[17] Doody tells us that her own book "is an attempt to trace connections rather than to assert division (xvii). " Important to a re-valorization of Scudéry's work is Doody's assertion that "the concept of 'Romance' as distinct from 'Novel' has outworn its usefulness, and that at its most useful it created limitations and encouraged blind spots (xvii)."[18] Doody adds, "If I emphasize continuities, it is because discontinuity, absolute division, has been harshly and hastily asserted before now. The fences have been too sturdy or too barbed--it is good sometimes to leap over fences, or even to break them down (xviii)."

There has been much discussion in critical literature about the definitions of Romance versus Novel versus History, etc. English Showalter, Jr., devotes an entire chapter to the difference between romans, romances, nouvelles, novels, histoires, etc. (11-37).

Doody simplifies the discussion. To her "[a] work is a novel if it is ficitional, if it is in prose, and if it is of a certain length (16)."[19] *La Promenade de Versailles* fits Doody's definition.

Doody's respect for Scudéry's contribution to the history of the novel is underscored by the fact that the index of *The True Story of the Novel* offers 35 citations referencing Scudéry. Doody compares Scudéry to several authors considered great novelists from antiquity to the twentieth century, from Heliodorus to Balzac and Proust.[20]

Doody reminds us that fiction can be truer than fact:

> The long-breathed French novel of the earlier seventeenth century was readily understood by contemporaries to be allegorical. An English

> translator of *Le Grand Cyrus* comments, 'the Intrigues and Miscarriages of War and Peace are better, many times laid open and Satyriz'd in a *Romance*, than in a downright History, which being oblig'd to name the Persons, is often force'd [...] to be too partial and sparing.' Novels can tell the true history, while historians are under pressures that make them false. As well as offering political allegories of the present, novels at a deeper level express the knowledge that individual human beings are subject to--and part of--human structures and arrangements over which they have little and sometimes no control--including war and slavery. In such a situation, even a heroic capacity of great deed (as in the case of Scudéry's Cyrus, modeled on Xenophon's hero) will not be all sufficient--there will be not only 'intrigues' but 'Miscarriages' in 'War and Peace.' Everyone wants power and feels the lack of it; even the great folks really have very little.(263-64)

Fiction can be truer than fact. Doody suggests the importance of Sapho's contribution to the historical and rhetorical traditions of the novel. *La Promenade de Versailles* unveils the intrigues and miscarriages of war and peace during the early years of Louis XIV's reign. The "Histoire de Celanire" becomes a dark allegory of absolutism that contrasts with the brilliant praise of Louis XIV and Versailles in the introductory description of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Consideration must be given to the definitions of allegory as opposed to example and how they intersect.

Doody places Scudéry in a novelistic tradition that begins with the ancient Greeks and Romans.[21] Reiss acknowledges Scudéry as a major French novelist. In their respective books, both of these critics speak to the exclusionary practices of critics from the seventeenth century to the present, practices which have attempted to marginalize the importance of Scudéry's works. The political content of her works may well have threatened both the male political and literary power centers of seventeenth-century France, especially since powerful literary figures such as Boileau, did work ostensibly in the interest of the king. The politically

sensitiv

censor

her wo

comin

that cu

well h

wome

of her

works

schol

Nicer

foste

broth

nume

unav

Cél

leng

1976

Made

sensitive nature of Scudéry's works, even though they managed to slip by the censors, may have forced those in power to mitigate her influence by denigrating her work and her lifestyle.

Doody and Reiss both affirm that the tradition of political commentary coming out of a pastoral literary setting has ancient roots. Scudéry tapped into that current of pastoral and political story telling. She spoke and her words could well have been dangerous. Only the twentieth-century re-reading of texts by women lost to the canon for centuries have brought Scudéry and the importance of her works back to center stage.

Late twentieth-century critical re-readings of Madeleine de Scudéry's works tend to cluster in two camps. A group of more traditional Scudérian scholars includes René Godenne, Nicole Aronson and Alain Niderst, of whom Niderst offers the most pertinent analyses of Scudéry's works. Niderst has fostered much of the current work being done on Scudéry as well as on her brother Georges and her sister-in-law, Marie Madeleine. He has written numerous articles and books on the three Scudéry.

One fact that has contributed to the repression of Scudéry's works is their unavailability. Aware of this critical problem, Niderst edited a modern edition of *Célinte*, one of Madeleine de Scudéry's *nouvellas*. Niderst also published a lengthy work entitled *Madeleine de Scudéry, Paul Pellisson et leur monde*, in 1976.

More recently, in 1991, Niderst organized a colloquium in Le Havre, Madeleine and Georges's birthplace. Niderst noted the millenarian spirit

motiva

to the c

respect

entitlec

wife. Th

Madele

Scudéry

Chapter

N

notion o

XIV as o

written a

in this ca

O
ali
à
ca
mo
au

He

and for th

However

de *Versai*

Se

motivated

colloquium

motivating the reunion. The dates of the conference approximately corresponded to the birth of Georges and the death of Madeleine in 1601 and 1701 respectively. The proceedings of the colloquium were published in a volume entitled *Les Trois Scudéry,* referring to Madeleine, her brother Georges and his wife. The depth of Niderst's research and its overall positive evaluation of Madeleine de Scudéry work attest to Niderst's favorable reading of Madeleine de Scudéry's works. Niderst's scholarship contributes to the arguments presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

Niderst and his followers believe in a true restoration of Scudéry. Their notion of a restorative reading of Scudéry confirms her place in the court of Louis XIV as one of his supporters. To Niderst, *La Promenade de Versailles* was written as a "promenade," that is a literary genre reflected in the title,[22] one that, in this case, was composed as a eulogy to the king.

> On y trouve comme un écho des grands romans d'autrefois--quelques allusions à Hérodote et à Polybe [. . .] Mais tout cède maintenant, au roi, à qui la nouvelle est d'ailleurs dédiée; le souverain est glorifié, la campagne de Flandre, la campagne de Franche-Comté, et le Dauphin, qui montre a "une soumission très-profonde pour son Roi et père, qu'il aime autant qu'il le craint."(483)[23]

Here, Niderst's reading implicitly yearns for a restoration of the monarchy and for the greater glory of the Royalist ancien régime of the Bourbon dynasty. However, in our conclusion, we will see that Niderst's reading of *La Promenade de Versailles* also points to the novel's underlying critique of absolutism.

Several of Scudéry's critics eschew the notion that her works are politically motivated, or more specifically, that they challenged Louis XIV. At the 1991 colloquium organized by Niderst, Jürgen Grimm presented a paper entitled "Les

Idées politiques dans les romans de Mlle de Scudéry." He begins by defending his thesis. "Proposer une telle lecture pour une œuvre qui, dans le passé, a plutôt invité à une lecture esthétisante, peut paraître quelque peu hérétique" (443) Noémi Hepp took exception to Grimm's characterization of Scudéry as a Frondeuse. 454/ Hepp asked Grimm "ce qui lui permet de voir dans *Le Grand Cyrus* une plus ou moins nette apologie de la Fronde (Grimm 455)"? She cites Grimm's own equivocacy when he first cites Marlies Mueller as a reference to Scudéry's "loyalisme monarchique" in *Cyrus* and then he declares that Scudéry was a "demi-frondeuse inconsciente." Hepp contends that her own work indicates that there is not textual evidence in Cyrus to classify Scudéry as a Frondeuse, rather that the text of Cyrus goes to extremes to to "éviter le dilemme, enfin le conflit entre le héros et le roi [...] (455)."

In her 1978 article "La notion d'Héroïne," Hepp defines female heroism in the seventeenth century strictly in terms of a traditional subservient role with regard to her hero and her king. The hero in Hepp's construction of Clélie, exhibits classic heroism, that the male protagonist performs heroic acts. The heroine exhibits "*feminité*." Hepp contends that "Clélie a voulu fuir le camp étrusque pour sauvegarder sa fidélité à Aronce [. . .] c'est l'amour d'un homme plus que la volonté de libérer un groupe de la servitude qui a été le mobile de l'action héroïque (15)." Hepp's construction of Clélie defines her as a heroine in search of her man, not as a woman seeking political ends.

Hepp's construction of female heroism rejects the possibility that a woman could or would actually perform heroic acts. Metaphorically, Hepp defines the

heroine

chose

notion

king!

que la

Certain

century

sexual.

most vo

Geogra

Grimm.

against

that with

fiction a

the found

indicatio

to the Fr

heroine as the moon, the pale reflection of her hero, the sun, obviously, a well chosen metaphor for the era of the newly rising Sun King, Louis XIV. Hepp's notion of female heroism dictates that a good woman stand by her man! And her king!

Hepp's derision of a truly heroic woman becomes more explicit. "On dirait que la femme-héros répugne profondément à la pensée du XVIIe siècle (16)." Certainly, the *femme-héros* was repugnant to those in power in seventeenth-century France, especially to males who saw the *femme forte* as a political, if not sexual, predator.

Clearly, Hepp resists the new feminist critical voice of the 1990's and its most vocal and successful proponent, Joan DeJean. DeJean's *Tender Geographies* offers an extended and complete answer to Hepp's question to Grimm.

> All the volumes of *Artamène* were dedicated to the Duchesse de Longueville, and the novel's central couple Cyrus and Mandane, were seen from the beginning as the fictional counterparts of the great Condé and his sister, the Duchesse de Longueville.(45)

These historical figures were the leaders of the rebellion of aristocrats against royal power that has become known as the Fronde. DeJean contends that with *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* "[t]he bond forged thereby between prose fiction and political subversion marks the origin of the modern French novel; it is the founding gesture that makes *Artamène*, rather than *Astrée*, the earliest indication of prose fiction's definitive early modern tradition (45-46)."

According to DeJean, the positioning of Scudéry and her works in relation to the Fronde and the rise of absolutism become part of the dramatic shift in

seventeenth-century feminist tactics, from political activism to literary subversion that becomes the modern novel. DeJean claims that the failure of the Fronde marked the end of an era of female political activism that was redirected to literary production. In her article "La notion d'Héroïne," Hepp interprets the heroines of Scudéry's novels as implicitly affirming the kings of the ancien régime and their allegiance to them.

Nostalgia for the ancien régime can hardly claim to be apolitical. Neither can a work that praises Louis XIV. Is praise for a monarch equivalent to an endorsement of the king's actions? In *La Promenade de Versailles*, many passages in Part One of the novel do praise Louis XIV. But, in an absolute monarchy, to do otherwise or actually to go so far as blatantly to criticize the king could have been considered an act of *lèse-majesté*. To criticize the king, as Chapter 3 will discuss, was a dicey matter at best.

The ingenuity of *La Promenade de Versailles* lies in the fact that the critique of Louis XIV was disguised. In this, Scudéry follows the model of kingship manuals such as Jean-François Senault's *Le Monarque ou les Devoirs du Souverain*, wherein Senault praises the king but also subtly suggests how he might improve as a monarch. Rather than accuse the king of being a tyrant, *Le Monarque* proceeds by describing positive role models for Louis XIV to emulate, enumerating the ways in which previous "great Princes" remained worthy monarchs and never abused their people.

The success of La Promenade de Versailles lies in its ability to advise Louis XIV without negative consequences for its author. In fact, Scudéry actually

ha

to

an

ma

De

rea

pol

wo

son

ner

abs

the

sup

of M

con

was

Fou

fact

Versa

beau

has an audience with Louis XIV and receives a *pension* from him, which speaks to the subtle art of Scudéry's critique of her king. Even though indebted to him and in his good graces, she still finds it her duty to criticize him, a tricky textual manoeuver .

The twentieth-century revisionist readings of Scudéry by feminists such as DeJean proclaim her feminist and political agendas. Proponents of this re-reading of seventeenth-century female novelistic production seek to re-visit the political discourse, whether obvious or subversive, embedded in Scudéry's works. Joan DeJean and Erica Harth are in the forefront of the feminist and sometimes deconstructive re-evaluation of Scudéry's works.

What some scholars purport to be Scudéry's critique of Louis XIV is neither blatant nor necessarily obvious. One can hardly be overtly critical of an absolutist regime and hope to stay alive. Many Frondeurs did not live to tell of their participation in the uprising. Even an indirect challenge to Louis XIV's supremacy could lead to severe punishment or death. Nicolas Fouquet, a friend of Madeleine de Scudéry and Paul Pellisson, died in prison after he was condemned to life imprisonment. Fouquet, Louis XIV's financial administrator, was charged with excessive irregularities in his administrative duties. However, Fouquet's audacity probably was his undoing, for his financial abuses were in fact no more blatant than previous financial ministers to Louis XIV.

Fouquet had made the mistake of building a palace that could rival Versailles. That Vaux-le-Vicomte might surpass Versailles in opulence and beauty threatened Louis XIV where he lived. Fouquet also propositioned Louis

XIV's lo

way as

soul ma

to Fouq

release

XIV's h

Prome

in Scu

489).

twenti

schol

schol

femin

of th

earl

play

fem

in t

abs

XIV's love interest, Louise La Vallière. Fouquet seems to have acted in such a way as to deliberately challenge Louis XIV. Pellisson, Scudéry's best friend and soul mate, took up the defense of their mutual friend Fouquet. For his allegiance to Fouquet, Pellisson was also imprisoned. Fortunately, Pellisson was eventually released, and shortly thereafter, in a dramatic change of fortune, became Louis XIV's historiographer.

This historical incident bears directly on a possible interpretion of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Niderst actually sees parallels between the characters in Scudéry's novel and the principals involved in Fouquet's case (*Leur monde*, 489).

Neither the more traditional school of Scudérian criticism nor the late twentieth-century avant-garde feminists avoid politics. The traditional, aesthetic scholars have their own implicit political and conservative agenda. The feminist scholars have an openly radical one, namely, the politics of feminism. In turn, feminist politics lead to innovative literary advances.

DeJean states her case in *Tender Geographies, Women and the Origins of the Novel*. "In the following pages I hope to go beyond the assertion that the early novel was a vehicle for feminism to demonstrate that the feminist ideas played a crucial role in the development of the French novel."(*Tender* 5)

Scudéry's novels are both central to the history of the novel and contain feminist ideology. Her novels are both literary and political. And they are political in two directions, exhibiting an interest in feminist ideals and the politics of absolutism in seventeenth-century France. Therefore, late twentieth-century

sch

Scu

com

in he

exce

real

finge

The

expe

alter

Dood

litera

Clear

to its

to off

politic

been

aroun

seven

intense

scholarship, whether emphasizing the aesthetic and formalist aspects of Scudéry's work or the political and feminist critiques found therein, share a common interest, that is, reappraisal of the Scudérian oeuvre.

Margaret Anne Doody consciously combines both aesthetics and politics in her discussion of Madeleine de Scudéry's works. To Doody, the novel is par excellence the aesthetic form that defines itself by its political agenda. "There is a real sense in which all history and most written discourse is fictional (from *fingere*, to shape, mold or model): that is, it is something made or made up"(16) The novel provides an opportunity for "aesthetic pleasure and thinking about experience (28)." "There is a political dimension to imagining any kind of alternative to a present reality (15)." And finally, about the genre "Romance," Doody says "is most often used in literary studies to allude to forms conveying literary pleasure the critic thinks the reader would be better off without (15)." Clearly, at the onset of her discussion of the history of the novel from its inception to its modern incarnations, Doody believes that Scudéry's novels have something to offer the reader.

Doody contends that "the seventeenth-century novel is by and large a political novel in a political age (262)." She contends that "novels have always been playing around with history (28)." Certainly, literary history has been playing around with the reputation of Scudéry since she began writing in the seventeenth-century. The last twenty years of the twentieth century bring an intense revitalization of the interest of scholars in Scudéry's work.

Consider a specific aspect of Scudéry's life and work, namely, the world of *préciosité*. Madeleine de Scudéry's talent as a novelist has been fraught with disagreement and dissent through the centuries. Now, in the new millennium, twenty-first century scholarship about the world of seventeenth-century *préciosité* and Scudéry's place in that literary and cultural milieu remains controversial.

[1] I am tr

the Novel

the twenty

appreciate

[2] See Maît

the seventh

summary a

[3] See Lan

Scudéry]

[4] See *The*

Compani

left a wid

other the

professio

[5] The las

vertu ini

specula

word ini

a collea

someo

turn as

incomp

Notes

[1] I am truly indebted to Margaret Anne Doody for her work *The True Story of the Novel.* I appreciate Doody's insightful and timely reference to the coming of the twenty-first century as a privileged moment for scholarly reflection.(4-5) I appreciate that Scudéry figures extensively in her book.

[2] See Maître 21-36. Her chapter on the history of the *précieuses* reception from the seventeenth century to the present presents a most cogent and thorough summary and much of it relates directly to Scudéry's reception as well.

[3] See Lanson 388. "La longeur de tous ces romans [those of Madeleine de Scudéry] s'ajoutant à leur fausseté, les rend illisibles."

[4] See *The New Oxford Companion to French Literature* 167. The *Oxford Companion* states that after the death of her husband, Christine de Pizan "was left a widow in 1390 with her financial affairs embarrassed and with no resource other then her pen." Certainly both Pizan and Scudéry were exemplary in their professionalism.

[5]The last words of Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* were " des exemples de vertu inimitables," and Lafayette's description of Scudéry thus invites further speculation. After suggesting that Lafayette pays a tribute to Scudéry with the word inimitable, DeJean further explains the importance of the gesture of calling a colleague inimitable. "It was thus an accepted maxim of salon society that someone whose incomparability was a 'reputatation justly dispensed' could in turn assign a share in this status to others. It was also accepted that incomparability defined someone's essence, that it functioned as a nom

(d'auteur). 'Incomparable' and 'inimitable' were thus the collective names of salon writers, signatures that identified a particular conception of originality by acknowledging that the individual voice was also a collaborative production. An 'author" wrote with a single voice; salon writing was 'inimitable' because it resulted from the combined forces of collaborators. When at the end of their careers Lafayette called Scudéry "still inimitable,' she both took her place as Scudéry's successor and gave Scudéry her due" (*Tender* 125-125). I would also add that La Princesse de Clèves as Madeleine de Scudéry both chose to remain single, the fictional Clèves making this choice after the death of her husband and Scudéry choosing to remain single her entire life. Scudéry's marital choice, i.e., decision to remain single, thus lives on in the fictional work of Lafayette.

[6] See Kent, Leonard J. and Elizabeth C. Knight (xxxiv). In their introduction the editors find the tale entitled "Mademoiselle de Scudéri" to be "one of Hoffmann's greatest stories [...] an early example of detective fiction...a splendidly exciting plot [...] set in a Paris which is described in wonderful and accurate detail [...] along with the magnificent Madeleine de Scudéri [...]".

[7] See DeJean 48-49 for her riveting analysis of this pivotal moment in the history of the novel.

[8] Given Borowitz's meticulous documentation of her comparison of Scudéry and Staël, it is surprising that she did not mention either of Staël's plays we have considered here. Perhaps because she was focusing on the genre of the novel, she overlooked these plays that could also have served to support her argumentation. Staël on the other hand, had personal as well as professional

re

"p

S

w

"R

sie

on

"c

int

11 S

12 I

tha

13 S

rem

et P

repr

and

to "

Agé

ident

cours

Conra

Penne

reasons for satirizing Molière's satires. Her mother had been labeled a "précieuse ridicule" by a contemporary and she also performed in "Les Femmes Savantes" So Staël was very familiar with the seventeenth-century satirist's works. (See Borowitz 32, 39)

[9]Refer to the different editions of Cousin's *La Societé Française au dix-septième siècle*. Note that the sixth edition of 1886 is sometimes more nuanced than the original edition of 1858.

[10] See Barthes and Foucault in Rabinow for a discussion of authorial intentionality.

[11] See Doody *The True History of the Novel* 30, 257 and *passim*.

[12]I would like to acknowledge the positive contribution to Scudérian scholarship that Rathery and Boutron's compilation of Scudéry's correspondence provides.

[13] See Mesnard "Pour une clef de *Clélie*," 378. "Toutefois il existe un rapport remarquable entre *Clélie* et un échange de correspondance entre la romancière et Pellisson du 9 au 13 octobre 1656." Mesnard references the letters reproduced in Rathery and Boutron, pp. 258-267. And, indeed, therein Rathery and Boutron cite the Conrart Ms. which contains an exchange of letters that refer to "l'incomparable Sapho, le généreux Cleodamas, la sage Ibérise, l'aimable Agélaste et le galant Mérigène," all characters in *Clélie* that Victor Cousin identifies as specific seventeenth-century French personalities: Sapho being, of course, Madeleine de Scudéry, Cleodamas and Ibérise, Monsieur et Madame Conrart, etc. What is less certain is whether the Conrart Ms. letters were actually penned by Scudéry and Pellisson. The manuscript as it is reproduced in Rather

y and Boutron and in Victor Cousin's *La Société Française au XVIIe Siècle* do not have addresses. Those are provided by Cousin and reproduced by Rathery and Boutron. Further inspection of the Conrart Ms. might clarify this point.

[14] Not to put too fine a point on it, phonetically one could read the title of *Clélie,* as *Clef lis*! A familiar entreaty to look for keys, that is to say, allegorical characters representing contemporary seventeenth-century figures in the novel *Clélie*.

[15] See Niderst *Leur monde* 490. He suggests that the prince of the far-off land of Celanire may represent a darker side of Louis XIV.

[16] See *Le Pastoralet,* Blanchard, editor. See also Blanchard *La Pastorale en France aux XIVe et XVe siècles.* In the Avant-Propos of Blanchard's critical edition of *Le Pa*storalet, he describes the work as an "atypical text "qui évoque sous le voile de la pastorale une des périodes les plus agitées de l'histoire de France, le conflit tragique entre les factions des Armagnacs et des Bourguignons [...] (5)." In Chapter IV entitled "Fiction et histoire, Le Pastoralet," Blanchard hails the text as an "[h]istoire-fiction qui est la promesse d'un nouvel âge d'or, la représentation de la lutte que mène l'imaginaire contre les fantasmes destructeurs du désordre et de la mort. En elles s'investissent des valeurs exemplaires (149-150)." Le Pastoralet is indeed a precursor to the exemplary historical fiction of Madeleine de Scudéry.

[17] A study comparing Zenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Scudéry's *Cyrus* could prove most enlightening.

[18] The definition of "Romance" depends on the literary period with which it is associated. Here, Doody's point is to emphasize the historical continuity of a broad definition of narrative fiction that she defines as the "novel," from ancient times to our day.

[19] I interpret the non-specificity of Doody's definition of the novel with regard to its length as a contrast to other theoreticians' definitions, such as Showalter's , which she implies try to split hairs to differentiate the various historical forms of the novel such as the roman, romances, etc. The implication is that the novel will be rather long, that is, longer than a short story. Doody's very simple definition supports her contention that readers should begin to concentrate on the similarities rather than contrived differences of the novel in the historical perspective beginning with ancient Greek and Latin texts through time to the present.

[20] See Doody, 257-258, 315. Doody discusses Scudéry in relationship to Heliodorus, Proust, and Balzac.

[21] See Doody's *The True History of the Novel.* In her historical review of the novel, she argues this point convincingly.

[22] Another work in this genre would be Jean de La Fontaine's *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*, published in 1669. The work resembles Scudéry's in several ways. In it, the characters also visit Versailles and the work is also interlaced with poetry. The reference of Cupid in the title reminds us of the several Eros *ekphraseis* in *La Promenade de Versailles*. See Picard, 52. "La Fontaine's genius is astonishingly rich and varied. He also composed a

mytholo

Cupidon

adventu

Versaille

friends a

in *Les a*

Promen

D'Urfé's

[23] See N

work ent

also Goo

modern e

1920. Go

Promena

1920. 60

notes tha

mythological novel in prose with verse interludes--*Les amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*(1669) in which the story, both touching and humourous, of the heroine's adventures alternates surprisingly with the description of the gardens of Versailles which were then being laid out, or the literary discussions of four friends as they strolled in the grounds (52)." The narrative strategy of La Fontaine in *Les amours de Psyché et de Cupidon* appears most similar to Scudéry's in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The style of La Fontaine's novel is more similar to D'Urfé's *Astrée* than *La Promenade de Versailles*.

[23] See Niderst, *Leur monde* 483. The page numbers of his citations refer to the work entitled *Celanire*, a 1671 re-release of *La Promenade de Versailles*. See also Godenne (*La Promenade de Versailles*, Preface III). Godenne notes that a modern editor published Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles* separately in 1920. Godenne references the text in a footnote. "Mlle de Scudéry, *La Promenade de Versailles,* Paris, 'A l'enseigne du masque d'or,' chez Devambez, 1920, 60 p.(Estampes de Robert Mahias) (*Etudes* 61)." See also Niderst 483. He notes that Mongrédien thought the two parts of the novel were two different texts.

Chapter Two

Feminism and Scudéry:

Préciosité and *Écriture féminine*

Since the seventeenth century, more ink has been spilt defining Madeleine de Scudéry as the incarnate *précieuse* than has been spent on determining the degree to which her literary works define *écriture précieuse*. A twenty-first century scholar must decide whether to free Scudéry of the mantle of *préciosité* that historically envelops her biography and the analyses of her extensive literary corpus or to embrace the term, appropriating it to refashion the author and redefine the vast Scudérian corpus.

Joan DeJean clearly chose the latter. She appropriates the historic icon of Scudéry, the *Carte de Tendre*, as the design for the book jacket of her ground-breaking work, *Tender Geographies, Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. The title of her work refers to the geography of Tender that Scudéry's map details in *Clélie*.

DeJean intends her reappropriation of the iconography of *préciosité* to be a feminist re-reading of seventeenth-century female authors, especially, but not exclusively, Scudéry and Lafayette. *Tender Geographies* includes a chapter devoted to each novelist and ample references to both can be found throughout the text. In fact, DeJean offers many examples of Scudéry's influence on Lafayette, as well as Staël, Sand and Colette.[1]

Historically Scudéry has been considered the epitome of the *précieuse* and her works *précieux* tracts, whereas Lafayette's novel *La Princesse de Clèves* has been identified as the avatar of the modern novel. To her great credit, DeJean's text dispels the myth that *La Princesse de Clèves* sprang miraculously from the pen of Lafayette to become a historical literary landmark. She traces at length Lafayette's literary debt to Scudéry. One of the important reasons to study *La Promenade de Versailles* lies precisely in the fact that due to its political and feminist daring, it was a precursor to Lafayette's historic novel.

In her introduction, DeJean acknowledges that applying the terms "feminist" and "feminism" to seventeenth-century female authors may be anachronistic. DeJean relies on Joan Kelly for the solution, namely, that the activities of "defenders or advocates of women" from Christine de Pizan to Mary Wollstonecraft can be ascribed the same feminist terminology as their twentieth- and now twenty-first-century descendants(6). Even though the terminology of modern feminism did not yet exist in the seventeenth century, the project of feminist advocacy begins in the Middle Ages and continues today.

DeJean asserts in the introduction to *Tender Geographies* that "[i]n seventeenth-century France, the strength of prowoman sentiment generated repeatedly, in a space where history and literature meet, what can be termed a feminist textuality."(6) *La Promenade de Versailles* models the radical, narratological shift from exteriority to interiority that DeJean posits as the beginning of the modern French novel (82).

c

p

fe

ex

co

te

thro

Sig

cer

term

their

DeJean's re-appropriates the rhetoric of *préciosité*. A manifest feminist textuality by definition infers gender marking. The terms of this discussion of feminist textuality in *La Promenade de Versailles* are *écriture précieuse* in two instances, that of *écriture politique* and of *écriture féminine*. Scudéry's *précieuse* writing yields an intricately woven *écriture politique* and *écriture féminine* that will be considered in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The *conversation*, an invention of salon women, but ingeniously adapted to the genre of the novel by Madeleine de Scudéry, allows a gender-marked discourse in Scudéry's works, and particularly in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Because of the importance to this dissertation of the terms *écriture féminine* and *préciosité*, they must be carefully defined. The noun *précieuse* existed as a lexical item as early as the fourteenth century, so it will be considered first, followed by a discussion of the the twentieth-century feminist term *écriture féminine*.

The Problematics of *Préciosité*

Préciosité is a construction and the construction of *préciosité* changes through time, depending on the intention of the person or persons using the term. Significantly, unlike the *Pléiade* poets of the Renaissance or the nineteenth-century Romantics, the seventeenth-century *précieux* did not self-identify with the term. It has always been a term applied to the so-called *précieux* from outside their enterprise.

Philippe Sellier unearths a quotation from the correspondence of the Chevalier Renaud de Sévigné to the Duchess de Savoie. "Il y a une nature de filles et de femmes à Paris que l'on nomme Précieuses, qui ont un jargon et des mines avec un démanchement merveilleux: l'on a fait depuis peu une Carte pour naviguer en leur pays (*Névrose*, 95)." One must read Sévigné's comment accurately. His statement does not prove that the so-called *précieuses* identify themselves with the term, but only that others have so labeled them. The fact that Sévigné alludes to what has become Scudéry's iconographic label, the *Carte de Tendre*, indicates that he considers Scudéry a *précieuse*, whether she did or not.

To his credit, however, Sellier has been part of a late twentieth-century critical movement to stimulate the reading of texts that have been identified as *précieux* works. In 1998, Sellier published an article entitled "'Se tirer du commun des femmes': La constellation précieuse," in which he again attempts to define *préciosité* as a self-actualizing movement. He cites a character from Scudéry's *Mathilde d'Aguilar*, published in 1667, two years before *La Promenade de Versailles*. "Il est bon de se tirer du commun des femmes, qui sont d'ordinaire plus considérées pour les enfants qu'elles donnent dans leurs familles, que pour leur propre mérite (*Constellation*, 313)." Sellier comments on the citation. "Se tirer du commun des femmes, c'est évidemment se donner du prix, être précieuse (*Constellation*, 313)." According to Sellier, Scudéry's text links the desire to escape the common duties of motherhood with female self-

improvement. He then implies that a woman's self-conscious desire to realize her own merit requires her to look beyond motherhood, to *préciosité*.

Sellier presents a protracted argument. One would hardly conclude on the merit of this citation alone that Scudéry suggests that women abandon their children for their own betterment. But, Sellier correctly points to an idea that *La Promenade de Versailles* promulgates, namely, that women take control of their lives. Juxtaposing *préciosité* and female emancipation may prove enlightening.

The present inquiry will trace the history of *préciosité* through the overarching discourses of particular historical, political, and social currents germane to the discussion. The definition and evaluation of *préciosité* changes as a reflection of the agendas of literary critics of differing time periods.

One cannot expect to find a single, precise definition of *préciosité* in the discussion that follows. Sellier's attempt to affirm the value of *préciosité* demonstrates how tricky the enterprise can be. However, both history and historiography reconstruct the term over the centuries.

In his opus on *préciosité*, written in 1966, Roger Lathuillère's lengthy definition of the term emphasizes its ambiguity. Myriam Maître recently penned her own lengthy volume in an attempt to situate the illusive term.

In the history of *préciosité* from seventeenth-century France to the present, several major evaluative shifts can be discerned in the reception of the term from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first. At its inception in the mid-seventeenth century, *préciosité* received a favorable reception as literature and as a life-style. Several scholars have identified the apogee of *préciosité* as

occuring approximately in the decade between 1650 and 1660. In her work entitled *Precious Women*, Dorothy Anne Liot Backer claims that the "précieuses had seven years they could call their own (154)." "These years (1653-1660) can be seen as a kind of hiatus in the history of France, a moment of suspension between the wild and willful heroics of the Fronde and the final relieved descent into absolutism (154)."

Backer contends that *préciosité* thrived during a "hiatus in the history of France," does she mean to imply that the *précieux* were not or should not be considered part of that history? Backer suggests a political frame for the advent and closure of the *précieuses'* success. And, she chooses colorful and evocative adjectives to describe the Fronde and Louis XIV's absolute reign. Her word choice subtly reveals the aristocratic bias of her text. It is fortunate, her text tells us, that the "wild and willful" *frondeurs* and *frondeuses* who played at limiting the French monarchy's power were subdued. And, she implies further, that French society was thus saved by its fall into absolutism. Absolutism brought relief.

Political persuasion proves to be an important element in the historical evaluation of *préciosité*. We shall see that the politics of *préciosité* frame most reactions to the writings of the so-called *précieuses*, and certainly the reactions to the *Reine de Tendre*, Madeleine de Scudéry. The writing and the publication of two of her most important works, *Cyrus* and *La Promenade de Versailles* were written in the same crucial political moments in seventeenth-century society that Backer suggests frame the *précieux* movement.

DeJean claims: "Madeleine de Scudéry had become the official novelist of the rebel camp, whose military and amorous exploits she fictionalized in *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* [...] (Salons 301)." In *La Promenade de Versailles,* Scudéry became the conscience of the king and his absolutist policies, regarding politics, female rights and in general with regard to the rights and well-being of his subjects.

Scudéry published *La Promenade de Versailles* in 1669, several years after the ten-year period that Backer calls the "precious decade." Scholars of *préciosité* vary as to the time period that should be delineated as that of the *précieuses*. Sellier, for example, extends the boundary from 1643 to 1715, a time period that embraces most of Scudéry's publications. Continuing his commentary on his citation from *Mathilde d'Aguilar*, Sellier adds:

> Cette revendication d'une réussite personnelle et d'une supériorité, cette quête de 'gloire' féminine caractérisent un mouvement de longue durée dans la culture française, puisqu'on peut le faire partir à peu près de l'avènement d'Anne d'Autriche comme régente, en 1643, et qu'il se prolonge jusqu'à la mort de la marquise de Lambert, la protectrice de Marivaux, en 1733.(*Constellation*, 313)

The presence and power of the female regents and protectors aided the cause of the female voice in seventeenth-century France, but also contributed to a phantasmagorical fear of women in power as well. Ironically, Scudéry's success and the vicious satirical tirades against her, especially Boileau's, both may have been the result of the preeminence of powerful women in the seventeenth century.

P*récisoité* has been defined metonymically as the space of the literary salon of the seventeenth-century. The literati engaged in a flourish of literary activity, encouraged by the societal construction of the literary salon. The salon[2] of Mme de Rambouillet metonymically stands for the original and purifying notion of *préciosité*. Rambouillet, remembered as a paragon of virtue and purity, has been defined as the first *précieuse* and thus the creator of the *précieux* movement. Charles-Louis Livet describes her thus, "Madame de Rambouillet est le type le plus pur et le plus élévé de la vraie précieuse, dans le meilleur sens du mot: elle paraît d'abord dans ce livre, et elle y occupe la principale place [etc.] (xxxv)."

Literary historians suggest that Rambouillet's distaste of the crude warrior King Henri IV and his courtiers inspired her to set up her own off-site court. Her salon became known as *la chambre bleue* where strict rules of decorum and speech were enforced and an appreciation of fine literature was *de rigueur*. Madame de Rambouillet, born Catherine de Vivonne-Savelli, married Henri d'Angennes, who inherited the family title of Marquis de Rambouillet. *La divine Arthénice* (Arthénice being an anagram of Cathérine[3]) is further attributed with inaugurating a sea-change in the profile of the French nation, setting a lasting model for good taste in manners, literature and in all things polite.

The heroine of *La Promenade de Versailles* compares favorably to Mme de Rambouillet. While Rambouillet has left no writings to attest to the truth of her legacy, Scudéry has. In fact, the genius of Scudéry's novelistic shift from

exteriority to interiority is due to her inscribing the rules of decorum and speech of the salon into her novels. Her work reflects her salon and her exemplary life.

Further, in *La Promenade de Versailles*, the heroine Celanire stands as a paragon of virtue and purity. She too provides a model for good taste in manners, literature and in all things polite. And, she takes leave of a court in her far-off land because of the crude demands of her uncle Euribiade who wants to marry her off to a rich old cad unworthy of her graces. While historically Scudéry herself has been compared unfavorably to Rambouillet, Celanire seems a worthy counterpart to the founder of the *chambre bleue*. *La Promenade de Versailles* reconstructs through Celanire a perfect *précieuse*, the legacy denied to its author.

The original moment of *préciosité*'s conception always described in glowing, complimentary terms is strictly associated with Rambouillet who becomes the patron saint of French manners and decorum and supposedly sets the standard for the behavior and language of polite society in France for future generations. *La Promenade de Versailles* reenacts the language and behavior of that Parisian society.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Scudéry creates a fictional character worthy of Rambouillet's reputation. The rules of decorum and speech attributed to Rambouillet become a format for a Scudérian invention, namely the *conversation*. Wherever la belle Etrangére and her entourage travel, the *conversation* proves the favorite pastime of Celanire and her companions. Godenne goes so far as to suggest that in *La Promenade de Versailles* the *conversations* are too numerous to consider. "Quant aux conversations de salon

sur les mérites de tel amant, sur les qualités de divertissement, elles sont bien trop nombreuses pour qu'on s'attarde à les relever (*Études*, 59)."

The 1985 edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature* gives a definition of *préciosité* based on Rambouillet as the original pure *précieuse* whose imitators fell into excess, pedantry and affectation.

> *Précieux, Précieuses. Préciosité*, brought into fashion by Mme de Rambouillet and her circle [. . .] was in origin the pursuit of elegance and delicacy in thought, language, and manners. In language, it led to the coining of metaphorical expressions (some have survived, e.g. *travestir sa pensée*), the avoidance of low or barbarous words, and a general attempt to achieve clarity and precision. But in checking coarseness it also inhibited spontaneity, and in time it was carried to excess, e.g. in the cult of periphrasis for its own sake. The *précieuses*, the ladies who practiced it, were ridiculed for their pedantry and affectation, and Boileau, Racine and Molière reacted against it.(491)

Note that though historically Scudéry has been associated with *préciosité* as often as Rambouillet, this particular definition fails to mention her or any works by *précieuses*, only the works of their detractors, Molière, Boileau and in this case Racine. The entry for Madeleine de Scudéry repeats Gustave Lanson's claim that her novels were unreadable(582).

One hesitates to include such a definition at the onset of a chapter seeking to define *préciosité,* lest this vague and exclusionary definition leave a lasting impression with the reader. The association of Scudéry's work with pedantry and affectation has been all but too frequent in the critical literature on seventeenth-century France. Until most recently, there has been little recognition of the clear and precise nature of her work. In the final analysis, this work will demonstrate the clarity, precision, and even daring displayed by Scudéry in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

pedant

the ver

conver

equalit

works a

sevente

synony

been b

compa

poses

of impo

medici

imitatio

just be

less im

Scudé

chamb

purpor

A discussion of Scudéry's *conversations* proves them to be anything but pedantic and affected. The rules of decorum for a formal *conversation* require the very clarity and decorum purported to be Rambouillet's forte. The *conversations* by definition are informative, lively, and establish a dialogue of equality between the speakers.

The last few years have seen a phenomenal rebirth in interest of her works and an acknowledgment of her great literary accomplishments in the seventeenth century. But, as surely as Rambouillet's name has become synonymous with an original and refined moment of *préciosité*, Scudéry has been branded as a pedantic and affected *précieuse*.

As late as 1900, Leon H. Vincent reiterates the Rambouillet/Scudéry comparison. In his publication *Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Précieuses,* Vincent poses the question "Who were the Précieuses (71)?" He alerts us to the danger of impostors. "Every good and useful thing has its parody. There is not a patent medicine of reputed worth which does bear upon its label the warning, 'Beware of imitations(73).' " He goes on to say that,"The salons which came into existence just before and during the decline of Hôtel de Rambouillet were modeled more or less imperfectly upon it (73)."

Fortunately, we have Scudéry's ample corpus that allows us to re-evaluate Scudéry's salon in terms of Rambouillet's. Only the legend of Rambouillet's *chambre bleue* provides data on which to evaluate the *précieux* exchanges that purportedly took place in her salon.

Vincent refrains from commenting on Scudéry's work, but he does speak about her salon. "She began to hold her famous 'Saturdays' some time between 1645 and 1650. Her house became the 'normal school' of *précieuses* of the thorough-going sort (84)." He compares Rambouillet's salon to Scudéry's. The participants "talked of everything, of war, of religion, or politics (85)." "On the other hand," Vincent contends,"the 'Saturdays' were out and out literary, and therefore apt to be afflicted with that malaise which is always apparent if a number of people with 'literary leanings' get together. The salon of Mademoiselle de Scudéry had its better and its worse state, to be sure, but the general tendency was in the direction of preciosity pure and simple (84-85)." Vincent wrote as a historian, so perhaps we can understand his bias toward Rambouillet's salon over Scudéry's, since the former, according to Vincent, concerned itself with issues beyond literature. It is more difficult to understand his bias against literature and the literati.[4] At any rate, it will become clear that *La Promenade de Versailles* dealt with issues of war and politics, if not directly of religion, just as Rambouillet's salon supposedly did.

Vincent's little history of the salon links Scudéry to *préciosité* supposedly at its worst. Beyond the association of *préciosité* with the space and place of the salon of Rambouillet and Scudéry, scholars have studied the satirists of seventeenth-century France for further definition of the term and Scudéry's link to it.

While the so-called *précieuses* do not call themselves by this term, Molière, Somaize, Tallemant des Réaux, Pure and Boileau do. These writers

satirize the *précieuses* and several use the term in the title of their works. Molière pens *Les Précieuses ridicules*. Somaize compiles *Le Grand dictionnaire des précieuses* and writes *Le Procès des précieuses*. Pure entitles his novel *La Prétieuse*. Tallemant de Réaux's *Historiettes* and Boileau's *L'Art poétique, Satires, and Les Héros du roman* also satirize Scudéry, but the targets of their satire are not reflected in their titles. Tallemant's work includes dozens of satirical descriptions. Boileau's works satirize other seventeenth-century writers as well, but he takes Scudéry to task more severely.

The dichotomy between history's favorable attribution of the term *préciosité* to Rambouillet as opposed to its negative depiction with regard to Scudéry is important to this thesis. In his preface to the published version of *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Molière himself put forth the idea of worthy *précieuses* to be contrasted to despicable *précieuses*. He defends his attack on *précieux* men and women by insisting that his play only satirized the ridiculous *précieuses*.

> J'aurai voulu faire voir qu'elle [*la comédie Les Précieuses Ridicules*] se tient partout dans les bornes de la satire honnête et permise; que les plus excellentes choses sont sujettes à être copiées par de mauvais singes qui méritent d'être bernés; que ces vicieuses imitations de ce qu'il y a de plus parfait ont été de tout temps la matière de la comédie...aussi les véritables précieuses auraient tort de se piquer, lorsqu'on joue les ridicules que les imitent mal.(Flammarion 225)

Here, Molière claims to reserve the force of the satire for those p*précieuses* aping the true *précieuses*. Attempting to emulate the true *précieuses*, they fall far short of the mark. Instead of bettering themselves, they make themselves ridiculous.

Historically, the good, the bad and the ugly *précieuses* have been so designated.[5] Rambouillet always the good, founding *précieuse*, holding court from her *ruelle,* Scudéry a blatantly bad imitator of Rambouillet and a third group of largely unidentified "false *précieuses*" defined as truly deplorable.[6]

The binary opposition between the true and the false or the good and the bad *précieuses* has been around since Molière. He establishes the opposition between the good and the bad *précieuses* that still stands today. In 1658, Molière's play *Les Précieuses ridicules* opened a literary Pandora's box that has yet to be closed.

Molière tries to mitigate the furor over the possible identity of his *précieuses* leading ladies, Cathos and Madelon, by specifying in his Preface that he was only making fun of the false *précieuses* and not the true ones. However, his hedging only served to encourage more speculation. Historically, Madame de Rambouillet, whose first name is Cathérine, and Madeline de Scudéry are the two women most consistently identified as *précieuses*. The similarity of Cathérine and Madeleine to Cathos and Madelon is all too obvious.[7] After the success of Molière's play poking fun at the *précieuses*, several other seventeenth-century satirists take on the newly invoked world of *préciosité*.

Between 1660 and 1661, Antoine Baudeau de Somaize writes his own satirical comedy *Les Véritables précieuses* and publishes two dictionaries purporting to define *préciosité*, the *précieuses* and their *précieux* language. In the twentieth century, critic after critic refers to the work of Somaize as if he were a certified sociologist. In their zeal to either defend or deride the *précieuses*,

twentieth-century critics seem to have lost all sense of perspective themselves, to say nothing of their sense of humor.

In serious tones and with a strident style, writing in 1963, Mongrédien introduces a collection of seventeenth-century works devoted to the *précieuses* and their definition. In his work, *La Préciosité et les précieux*, he includes excerpts from Somaize's several dictionaries defining the *précieuses*. [8] One dictionary, *Le Grand dictionnaire des Précieuses ou la clef de la langue des ruelles* [9], purports to translate the euphemisms of the true *précieuses*. Examples are as follows. "Asseoir(s). Seyez-vous, s'il vous plaît: Contenez, s'il vous plaît, l'envie que ce siège a de vous embrasser (72). Under the letter K, there are no words, just an advisory. "Les Précieuses, qui ne veulent pas que l'on connaisse rien à leur K [k(ilo)], l'ont ôté de leur alphabet (78)." A twentieth-first century reader can still identify with a woman's desire to hide her weight, or a man for that matter. Today, it is less comprehensible that a woman would feel so compelled to avoid the verb to sit that she would impute a desire to a chair to embrace her in order to do so.

Lathuillère confirms that the renowned historian of seventeenth-century French literature, Antoine Adam, also believes Somaize's dictionary is just a laughing matter. "M. Antoine Adam ne voit dans son Dictionnaire qu'une 'plate sottise', un 'livre ridicule' qu'il faut se garder de prendre au sérieux (158)." Lathuillière also demonstrates that most of the expressions in Somaize's *Grand Dictionnaire*, were borrowed directly from Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* (164).

Somaize's definitions persist. The works of two other French seventeenth-century satirists are also taken as deadly serious critiques of the *précieuses*. Tallemant des Réaux wrote a two-volume work called *Les Historiettes*. In it, he writes short, caustic biographies of seventeenth-century personalities of the court and of the literary world. His joint entry for Madeleine de Scudéry and her brother becomes acerbic. While most of his barbs are aimed at Georges de Scudéry, he ridicules Madeleine de Scudéry's looks and her vain airs.[10] To his credit, Tallemant des Réaux does publish the attribution of Madeleine de Scudéry's novels to her. However, his goal may have been to discredit Georges rather than to compliment Madeleine.

The 1995 edition of the *New Oxford Companion to Literature in French* describes the H*istoriettes* as salacious, scandalous and entertaining anecdotes (791), but also notes that Tallemant's work was not published until the 1800s. Of course, unpublished copies of his work may have circulated as works by Boileau did.

Michel de Pure, also known as l'abbé de Pure or simply Pure, wrote an account called *La Précieuse ou le Mystère de la ruelle* published 1656-68. Backer, in *Precious Women,* compares Somaize and l'abbé de Pure.

> Perhaps the abbé de Pure was wiser than Somaize, he refused to pin down the butterfly, but contented himself with contemplating it, in a long, *spongy* novel...He portrays the typical précieuse in her shadowed retreat, spinning out her conversations, discussing womanly problems with her friends. This mysterious woman has no past or future. She is the persona of the précieuse, the paragon for all the girls in Somaize's *Dictionnaire* to emulate.(17)

One wonders exactly what Backer meant by a "spongy" novel and whether that characterization affirms or negates Pure's description of the *précieuses*. Did he soak up a lot of information about the *précieuses* or does the work lack focus? Backer suggests that his ephemeral portrait of a *précieuse* ressembles the description of the women in Somaize's satires. In this case, Backer uses one satirical definition, Pure's, to support a second portrait, Somaize's, and hopes to come out with a biographically sound definition of a *précieuse*.

Reading biography into satirical fiction can be treacherous. In the critical literature of Scudéry, much of what passes for biography draws on fictional and often satirical works of the seventeenth century. Thus, separating fact from fiction proves problematic in determining the "reality" of Scudéry's life and and the merit of her works. Indeed, Domna Stanton, informed by Barthes, de Certeau and Haydn White reminds us of the limits of historical discourses.

> Literary historians, even the most revisionist, have interpreted the précieuse, like the précieux or Preciosity, as the expression of 'a great social current'[see Fukui p.41] Some have identifed her with a specifically female outcry, what Mongrédien called complaints of 'bourgeoises mal-mariées'(pp.16-17), and more dissident critics, such as Lathuillère and Lougee, define as an emancipatory, feminist impulse. These nominations and associations, however, presuppose that the etiology of literature can be located in the real, as history records it. According to Barthes, Le[sic]Certeau and White, however, history cannot record the real, which always remains inaccessible; instead historical discourse signifies or constitutes the real, citing 'facts' which function as indices and create a referential illusion. Indeed, historiography may be more prestidigitorial than fiction, since the myth of the resurrection of the past, propounded by historians, has been accepted as fact.(119)

As this review of the historical reception of *préciosité* unfolds, it contains its own a reading of *précioisité* as "emancipatory, feminist impulse." In Chapter 4, the definition of *écriture précieuse* as it is manifested in *La Promenade de*

Versailles will be explored in terms of Scudéry's innovative narrative technique of the *conversation*.

Scholarship may be undertaken from a particular point of view, such scholarship must be interpreted with an awareness of the prejudice of the scholar in order to neutralize his or her bias. Too many scholars have been all too willing to accept Madeleine de Scudéry as the model of the false *précieuses* of Molière's play.

Certainly, Molière has maintained a favorable position in the French literary canon as an author and playwright. Today, Molière's works are still known by the general reading population and his plays are still successfully produced and are immensely enjoyed. On the other hand, until most recently, few have heard of Madeleine de Scudéry outside of the seventeenth-century literary academic community. We trust that the growing interest among seventeenth-century French scholars in Scudéry will encourage an ever-widening audience for her works.

Audiences continue to enjoy Molière's plays today. However, the facile association between Scudéry and *Les Précieuses ridicules* must be re-examined. We can reconsider the reliability of Molière's play as a source for literary critical judgments.

The rigorous negativity of much Scudérian scholarship would be as laughable as a Molière play, if the results of the centuries of biased scholarship had not done so much damage to the literary reputation of Madeleine de

Scudéry. Let us consider Backer's "analysis" of Molière and Boileau's relationship to Scudéry as a case in point.

Backer claims that "Molière made Paris laugh with the best kind of laughter, laughter which is a kind of self-criticism (187)." Her statement seems fair enough. "We" still laugh at Molière's plays today. But, do we do so because we see in them "self-criticism"?

In his work *Laughing Matter, An Essay on the Comic*, Marcel Gutwirth quotes Molière as saying "C'est une étrange entreprise que celle de faire rire les honnêtes gens," which he translates as "It is not easy matter to make the better sort [les honnêtes gens] laugh (31)." Did Molière intend to have the "better sort" of his audience laugh at themselves or at the so-called less good sort, *les Précieuses*? Do we laugh at ourselves when we laugh at the Other? Molière may well have considered Madeleine de Scudéry to be an *honnête femme*., even as he considered her to be ridiculous. Whatever the playwright's intention, we can imagine the face that the seventeenth-century theater patrons put on the characters of Cathos and Madelon.

To return to Backer's analysis, essentially, she admits that she has not read Scudéry. She contends: "And on the scale of art, it is Molière who still makes us laugh at our own folly, Racine who makes us wring our hands in despair. The writings of Madeleine de Scudéry, if we were to read them at all today, could only make us yawn (200)." Of course, I disagree with Backer. One can read her writings today and Scudéry's writings can arouse our interest.

To dispel the myth of unreadability of the Scudérian corpus is one of the important underlying goals of the present study. *La Promenade de Versailles* offers a provocative read. Because it is a relatively short and an engaging text, it offers an excellent primer for further Scudérian reading.

Backer's praise for Molière confirmed, she continues with a reading, not of Scudéry, but of Somaize. She reminds us that his *Les Véritables Précieuses* also attempts to define the difference between true and false *précieuses*, but that his "'true précieuses,'at least in the play, prove to be only a pair of silly fools modeled more or less on Molière's (161)." She refers the reader to a footnote that claims that "Somaize, always eager to blow with the wind, ineptly tried to copy Moliere's wit in this play, while in other works he lashes out at Molière in defense of the précieuses (171)." Backer does not comment on Somaize's inconsistency.[11]

Even today the critical reaction to Molière's play continues to promote the hypostatization of the apocryphal representation of the good *précieuse* Catherine Rambouillet (Cathos) versus the bad *précieuse* Madeleine de Scudéry (Madelon)). Even if apocryphal, Molière's play has proven the most pervasive and damaging source of negative criticism against Scudéry.

Roger Lathuillère discusses *Les Précieuses ridicules* and the possible targets of the satire. He suggests that Scudéry herself had condemned not only provincial imitators of "le bon ton de Paris" but also pedants putting on airs (131). In a lengthy argument, he concludes that in order to evaluate Gorgibus's tirades against reading Scudéry's novels, one must consider the source. Gorgibus appears as a character in *Les Précieuses ridicules* and *Sganarelle*. Lathuillère

contends that in both plays the audience will understand that one must do the opposite of what this ridiculous character Gorgibus says!

> Les Précieux, amis du Surintendant [Fouquet], et les admirateurs de Sapho, pas plus que Sapho elle-même, ne pouvaient se choquer de ces propos de Gorgibus; sa raillerie à l'égard de la *Clélie* n'a pas plus de valeur que ses éloges d'ouvrages d'un autre âge. Ils étaient même en droit d'estimer que ces contre-vérités, proférées par un personnage ridicule, déconsidéraient seulement celui qui les énonçait. A la limite, c'était un hommage indirect rendu à Mlle de Scudéry."(127)

Lathuillère posits an argument that runs against much of the literature concerning *Les Précieuses ridicules* and Madeleine de Scudéry. To suggest that Scudéry herself attacks false provincial *précieuses* and becomes part of an appreciative audience of Molière's plays at her good friend Fouquet's residence runs counter to the endless discussions in the literature featuring Scudéry as the butt of the satire in the plays. Scudéry may well have enjoyed Molière's plays in the company of her friends. However, to further suggest that the play indirectly paid hommage to Scudéry runs in the face of centuries of literary criticism, even though it may be the "true" intention of Molière.

Yet Lathuillère presents a plausible, well-documented argument. His interpretation of Molière's plays represents an affirmation of Madeleine de Scudéry and her life. It suggests that the alignment of Scudéry with the false *précieuses* of Molière's play must have entered the critical literature well after the success of *Les Précieuses ridicules*. Molière may have alluded to Madeleine de Scudéry and her works in his plays to capitalize on her immense success. The playwright cannot be held accountable for the interpretations of his viewers and readers.

Obviously, one cannnot contend that Molière's play *Les Précieuses ridicules* does not allude to Scudéry. The play contains an allusion to the characters of *Clélie* and the famous *Carte de Tendre,* followed by a heated discussion between Madelon and her father Gorgibus about courtship. Her long speech provides the sketch for the production of a play about how to affiance your lover. Her father responds; "Quel diable de jargon entends-je ici? Voici bien du haut style." To which Cathos, Gorgibus's niece, replies with a description of the *Carte de Tendre*. (230-231)

Again, Lathuillère does not find the representations of Madelon and Cathos problematic with respect to Madeleine de Scudéry.

> De manière analogue [to his discussion about Gorgibus and *Clélie*], Cathos et Magdelon, petites bourgeoises encore tout engluées dans la province, en invoquant la *Carte de Tendre* et en récitant gauchement, sans considérer leur propre condtion, toutes les péripéties d'une recherche dans les formes, digne d'Aronce et de Clélie, de Cyrus et de Mandane, ne ridiculisaient qu'elles-mêmes; leur snobisme maladroit trahit par une application grossière un idéal qu'elles admirent, amis que ni leur niveau social, ni leur éducation, ni leur intelligence ne leur permettent de réaliser. Incapables d'imiter les modèles qu'elles se proposent, elles ne peuvent que les singer. Mlle de Scudéry serait-elle concernée plus directement dans *les Précieuses ridicules* que la vrai dévotion dans Tartuffe? On a vu qu'elle n'en voulait aucunement à Molière [...].(127)

Scudéry may well not have been upset with Molière. In fact, Molière is cited in *La Promenade de Versailles* in the section entitled "La Feste de Versailles, A M.*** (574)."

> Ensuite, une agréable comedie de Moliere fut representéé, le theatre changea plusieurs fois tres-agréablement, & la comedie fut entremêlée d'vne symphonie la plus surprenante & la plus merveilleuse qui fut jamais, de quelques scenes chantées par les plus belles voix du monde, & de diverses entrées de balet, tres-divertissantes,& tres-bien danséés.(586)

Scudéry's description of Molière's presentation of *George Dandin ou Le Mari Confondu* for the *Fêtes de Versailles* of July 1668[12] certainly seems to indicate her approval of the playwright and that she harbors no grudges with regards to *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

The epigraph to Chapter 3 of this work quotes Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*. "Si vous jugez sur les apparences en ce lieu-ci [. . .] vous serez souvent trompée: ce qui paraît n'est presque jamais la vérité (157)." The citation from *La Promenade de Versailles* just quoted certainly raises the topos of paraître/ être. Alain Niderst identifies this passage of *La Promenade de Versailles* as a citation of André Félibien's "Relation de la fête de Versailles de juillet 1668 (*Leur monde* 484)." Félibien plays an important role in recording the celebrations of Louis XIV and Versailles. Obviously by 1669, Scudéry was willing to allude to the words of one of the king's architects and historiographers in her work. Scudéry's inclusion of Félibien's "*Relation*" gives credence to DeJean's theory of collective literary writing in seventeenth-century France.[13] (*Tender* 101)

Perhaps Molière had read *Clélie,* since most everyone was reading Scudéry's novel. The substantive though humorous dialogue between Gorgibus, his daughter and his niece about love, marriage, and the casuistics of *Tendre* respond to a greater threat to patriarchy than the status of Scudéry as a good or bad *précieuse* or her personal description. Young women suggesting marital practices that could undermine the sanctity of matrimony, such as the Arnolphe's marital "protégée"Agnès in Molière's "*L'École des femmes*,"

must have been perceived as a far greater threat.[14] In Chapter 4, the feminist issues regarding marriage in *La Promenade de Versailles* will be discussed.

Historically, critics had much at stake in pitting Molière against Scudéry. Defining Scudéry as the ridiculous *précieuse* devalues her person and her works. What better way to undermine Scudéry's liberated views on marriage than to label her a precious, ugly prude? It is a characterization that we find in anthologies published as recently as 1993. Backer describes Scudéry as a precious prude in her *Precious Women*.

The speculation about the authorship or authority behind *Les Précieuses ridicules* is discussed in Appendix C, "The Mysterious Origins of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*." The possible roles of Michel de Pure, Somaize, Molière, and unknown Italian actors in the writing of *Les Précieuses ridicules* are considered. The arguments presented demonstrate the cabalistic nature of this centuries long debate about Madeleine de Scudéry's identity as a bad *précieuse*. Indeed, Scudéry's work gave established masculine power bases reason to feel discomfiture. But the incessant personal attacks on Scudéry's character and appearance, the descriptions of her as an ugly, false *précieuse* can be put aside forever. Scudérian scholarship must focus on the substantive issues to which her works give rise.

The debate as to whether Molière stole Michel de Pure's outline for the play, gives credence to the idea that Pure might have penned a comedy that aimed the satire at conversative establishment views, especially regarding questions of female marriage and sexuality, rather than at the so-called

précieuses. Carolyn C. Lougee demonstrates that Pure among other male seventeenth-century thinkers, sought to "rehabilitate" women's roles. Perhaps an overly paternalistic enterprise, but at least one of some merit for its sympathetic support. According to Lougee, for example, Pure supported women's "rejection of domestic roles [which] extended beyond the role of household management to the rejection of marriage itself and of all family relationships (22)." In *La Promenade de Versailles,*as in many of Molière's plays, the heroine must struggle with paternal restrictions of marital choices. The substantive issue at stake in *Les Précieuses ridicules* and in *La Promenade de Versailles* will prove much more pertinent than any discussion of Scudéry's attribution as the *précieuse ridicule*.

The reception of Scudéry as *précieuse* continues in the literary criticism of the nineteenth century, during a period of great nostalgia for the aristocracy of the ancien régime.

In his *La Société française au XVIIe siècle d'après le Grand Cyrus de Mlle de Scudéry,* Victor Cousin's overall evaluation of Scudéry's work and life proves double-edged. . His critique includes obsequious praise too often followed by damning qualifications, the most blatant example being Cousin's praise of *Cyrus* but condemnation of *Clélie*.

While Cousin denies that Rambouillet could have been the target of Molière's *Précieuses ricidules,* neither does he believe that Scudéry or her entourage served as a model for the play (206). However, his endorsement of *Cyrus* and rejection of *Clélie*, subtly reinscribes the true/false, good/bad binary

oppositon of Molière's preface. As James S.Munro reminds us, "*le Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie* are both *romans à clef*, in each of which a different social group appears in transparent disguise-in *Cyrus* the *hotêl de Rambouillet*, in *Clélie* the guests at Mlle de Scudéry's own samedis (14)." So by favoring *Cyrus* over *Clélie*, Cousin once again confirms his bias for the aristocratic over the bourgeois. Granted, at the time of writing *La Société*, Cousin believed there was no key for *Clélie*. Cousin points out that *Cyrus* represents both the aristocratic and the bourgeois milieu of seventeenth-century society since the Sapho of *Cyrus* is purported to be the self-portrait of the bourgeois writer, Scudéry herself.

Other nineteenth-century critics besides Cousin are disdainful of Scudéry's novels. However, Sainte Beuve did find merit in Scudéry's *conversations*, as did Lanson. In fact, the *conversation* plays a pivotal roll in Scudéry's novels. Despite Scudéry's innovative narrative invention, Cousin, then Lanson, and other critics following them, find Scudéry unreadable.

Scudéry's birthright suddenly becomes part of the argumentation about her work. She was born at best into the *petite noblesse*, but in point of fact was a bourgeois. Scudéry's successful seventeenth-century career could not change her societal status. An anti-bourgeois bias clouds the interpretation of Scudéry and other seventeenth-century writers labeled as *précieux*, such as her contemporary, the poet Vincent Voiture.

Another classic instance of Rambouillet and Scudéry being paired as the good and bad *précieuses*. The most important factors determining their respective status as good or bad *précieuses* resides in their social standing,

Rambouillet the respected aristocrat, Scudéry the underated *bourgeoise*. The reason for the attacks on Scudéry and the p*récieuses* by these nineteenth-century critics becomes clear once one realizes that the political agenda of their works takes precedence over their formal literary criticism.

Maître summarizes their *parti pris* cogently in the "Chapitre liminaire" of her opus entitled *La Préciosité ou Les Précieuses? Du Mythe Critique à l'Enquête Historique*:

> [N]ous ne saurions commencer cette enquête et nous lancer à la recherche des précieuses sans exposer brièvement la façon dont les critiques ont posé le problème avant nous ni interroger les circonstances historiques, morales et esthétiques dans lesquelles s'est élaboré le mythe complexe de la préciosité[...] L'idéalisation de la civilité française d'Ancien Régime est à la source de ce mythe.(21)

Maître explains that post-revolutionary nostalgia for the *ancien régime* brought about a definition of *préciosité* "construite prématurément à des fins polémiques."(21) Based on Norbert Elias's reading of *La Société du cour*, she continues:

> La société du XVIIe siècle, séparée de celle du XIXe siècle par la fracture de la Révolution, se substitue à la pastorale défunte pour incarner les anciens rêves arcadiens et l'ultime expression du "romantisme aristocratique." C'est dans ces circonstances que s'élève un véritable monument aux précieuses, qui fournira le socle d'un mythe critique vivace. (22)

Rambouillet becomes the emblem for the romanticization of seventeenth-century aristocracy. Victor Cousin reading after Louis de Roederer's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la société polie en France*, published in 1835, published his *La Société du XVIIe siècle d'après le Grand Cyrus de Mlle de Scudéry*. Maître asserts that it is Roederer's work that contains:

> l'opposition, qui va devenir un topos de l'histoire de la préciosité, entre l'hôtel de Rambouillet, berceau du bon goût, et son imitation dégradéé par Mlle de Scudéry ou par d'autres femmes de lettres à la conduite moins respectable.(25)

Stanton had already identified Roederer's *Mémoires* as the source of this binary opposition in 1981. She states that the *Mémoires*:

> gave rise to the myth of an initial, pure, aristocratic phase of préciosity, exemplified by the Marquise de Rambouillet and her celebrated *chambre bleue*, and a mid-century bourgeois, degenerate imitation, represented by Madeleine de Scudéry.(111)

Maître adds the motivation of Roederer to Stanton's reading of the *Mémoires*, that is the patriotic nostalgia for absolution. Maître appropriates Stanton's reading of the unstable status of the Rambouillet/Scudéry binary and the associated and suspect nature of the critical myth of *préciosité* in the title of the chapter where Maître elaborates on Stanton's thesis, "La Préciosité ou les Précieuses? Du Mythe Critique à l'enquête historique (21)" Separating the myth from the speculated truth defines the problematics of *préciosité*!

In the 1989 edition of *The New History of French Literature*, Joan DeJean already suggests the link between political events and a favorable interpretation of *préciosité*. She cites French historian Roger Picard, writing from exile during the German occupation of France, who believed France would be reconstituted with the help of the "Salons (298)." And in 1966, Lathuillère has already warned us that overly simplistic definitions of *préciosité* have lead to mythical constructions of the concept.

> A son image véritable on a substitué des représentations partielles ou erronées qui ont fait naître tant d'interprétations problématiques qu'il s'est crée des mythes de la préciosité, interposés entre elle et nous comme des écrans.(15)

Maître reminds us that Cousin had found the key to *Cyrus*, an icon of the greater glory of the *ancien régime*. According to Maître, Cousin's avant-propos:

> souligne son ambition de réveiller par ce livre la foi dans les destinées de la patrie,'profondément monarchique et profondément libérale.'Les propos contre la monarchie absolue sont cependant moins vifs que ceux contre la république, contraire au génie français et fourrière de l'anarchie qui guette la France depuis la fatale surprise de 1848.'"(24-25)

Other examples can be found in the literature of the Rambouillet/Scudéry *topos* no doubt written by authors also influenced by Roederer. Lanson's anti-bourgeois bias extends beyond Madeleine de Scudéry to any writers male or female associated with Scudéry's salon. For example, his depiction of Voiture as the haughty son of a wine merchant reveals his class bias. Lanson entitles the chapter in which he condemns Scudéry's novels as unreadable and in which he links class and the shortcomings of other writers of her ilk, "Attardés et Égarés." Lanson explains that the writers of the school of *préciosité* were mislead by foreigners, the Italians led by Marino and the Spanish led by Gongora. Although Lanson was a champion of the Third Republic,[15] in the chapter entitled "Attardés et Égarés," the text seems to be haunted by a fear of the Other, manifested in the bourgeoisie and in the foreign born.

The misogyny and class bias of Roederer and Cousin are not justified by having been identified. Linking their anti-female and anti-bourgeois attacks to their clearly deep-seated desire to return to the mythic grandeur of the ancien régime at least begins to explain their prejudices. Their deep-felt hatred for the politics of the Republic motivate their angry assaults against bourgeois writers of the seventeenth century.

Lanson's description of *préciosité* has endured. Literary history proves the high esteem in which this influential scholar has been held. For example, critics and literary dictionaries published in the last decade of the twentieth century reflected Lanson's association of *préciosité*, gongorism, marinism, and a host of other devalued terms.

René Bray, for example, states that one must cross "linguistic borders" to fully define *préciosité* and further suggests one must explore "l'euphuisme, le marinisme, le gongorisme (9)." He devotes a chapter of *La Préciosité et les précieux* to "Repères Étrangers: De Lily à Gongora." Lathuillère also devotes a chapter to *Les Influences étrangères*, in which he discusses the British Lyly, the Spanish Gongora and the Italian Marino.

Lanson's association of *préciosité* to other European literary schools can still be seen in J. A. Cuddon's 1991 edition of *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. First, we need to read the definition of *préciosité* that is found in Cuddon's dictionary.

> "préciosité, la" The term denotes that refinement of language and manners which became the concern of civilized and sophisticated French men and women early in the 17th c. The Marquise de Rambouillet appears to have been one of the prime movers in this matter. From 1608 and for forty years thereafter, she established salon (q.v.) life at her town house. To this venue came many of those who wished to refine and polish manners and literary style. Honoré d'Urfé's pastoral (q.v.) novel *L'Astrée* (1607) inspired many aspects of their urbane code. The main sources for a knowledge of *les précieuses* are A. B. Somaize's *Dictionnaire des précieuses* (1660), Madeleine de Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus* (1649-53) and *Clélie* (1654-60, and Tallemant des Réaux's *Historiettes*. The pursuit of elegance was a civilizing influence, but it also led to affectation. Some of the *habitués* of this salon helped to found the Académie Française in 1653. Their affectations were satirized in Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659) See also BLUE STOCKING CIRCLE/SOCIETY; SECENTISMO." (739)

The definition refers to an original purity and a fall into disgrace. It speaks of an original elegance that becomes pedantic. The definition reinscribes the true/false binary of *préciosité* that glorifies Rambouillet and denigrates Scudéry. If one then goes on to read the definitions that are suggested for further clarification or comparison, the content of those definitions *all* include a parallel fall into abusive exaggeration.

Granted, a definition of *préciosité* in a literary dictionary would be very different from the definitions that inform many French literary critics. And there is only one word that is immediately offensive in the definition of *préciositié*: "affectation." But the definition once again points to the source of the good/ bad *précieuse* paradigm.

The *quo vadis* interspersed in the definition and the citations suggested for further reference prove troubling as well. The definition for "Blue Stockings" is very non-prejudicial until the caveat that "[w]hen used pejoratively, as it often has been (and was in the 18th century) the term 'bluestocking' denotes a woman who affects literary tastes and behaves in a dilettante fashion, a pedant (99)." Bluestocking, by implication, thus becomes the definition of the "false précieuse."

In Cuddon, a constellation of dictionary entries including *préciosité*, bluestocking, secentismo,[16] baroque, euphuism, gongorism, marinism, and salon are heavily cross-referenced. Each definition has something that devalues the literary description and thus directly or indirectly devalues the concept of *préciosité*. Euphuism for example yields the following definition:

> An ornately florid, precious and mazy style of writing (often alliterative, antithetical and embellsihed with elaborate figures of speech) which takes its name from a two-part work by John Lyly; namely Euphues, the anatomy of wyt (1578) and Euphues and his England (1850) [...] (314-31).

Gongorism is defined as an "affected style [...] Comparable features are to be found in the French la préciosité (380)." Marinism is defined as an "affected style [...] Writing characterized by an exaggerated and rather aritificial language and imagery (526)." The cross-references for marinism are to euphuism, gongorism, mannerism, and secentismo, all of which contain an explicit or implicit reference to *préciosité*.

A similar study of the index listings for *préciosité* in Bernard Dupriex's *A Dictionary of Literary Devices, Gradus,A-Z*, yields the same cross references to gongorism, euphuism, etc.

Even a recent edition of a standard French dictionary, that is, one that has no pretension of being a literary dictionary, subtly reflects the history of the binary reception of the *précieux*. *Le Robert, Dictionnaire des Synonymes*, continues the myth of the pure and the impure, the aristocrat and the bourgeois, the elegant and the affected *précieux* in its definition of *précieux* and its opposite.

If Scudéry had been an aristocrat, perhaps *préciosité* would have maintained its non-literary value-laden characteristics, as they are enumerated in *Le Robert, Dictionnaire des Synonymes*:

> précieux, précieuse. I. Quelque chose: avantageux, beau, bon cher, inappréciable, inestimmable, introuvable, irremplaçable, parfait, rare, riche, utile. II. Quelqu'un: favorable, compétent, efficace, important, utile.(534)

As bourgeois literature, the *précieux* and the synonymes for *précieux* become its opposite. "III. Litt. affecté, difficile, efféminé, emprunté, maniéré, mignard, muscadin, musquét recherché (534)." *Le Robert* goes on to offer a list of synonyms for *Préciosité* itself.

> Préciosité. Affectation, afféterie, concetti, cultursime, entortillage, euphuisme, galanterie, gongorisme, manière, manièrisme, marinisme, marivaudage, mignardise, raffinement, recherche(sic), subtilité.(534)

To the credit of the *Le Robert* editor, the definition recognizes the dawning of a new and positive definition of *préciosité* with the addition of the terms "refine," "subtlety," and perhaps even "*recherché*."

However, Lanson's descriptions of the *précieux* and *préciosité* as affected and pedantic after the fashion of Gongora and Marino have had a lasting influence. This fact demonstrates the power of the gesture of nomination. It also suggests how pervasive and permanent the association of a name with an idea or ideology can be. Stanton's critique of *préciosité* rests on the premise that power resides in the hands of those who may name, that is, always already male patriarchy.

> No field of human enterprise, no system for the production of meaning lacks the magic stamp of man's naming, and literary history is no exception. Our conceptions of genres and schools, methods and readers, first and second-rate texts, these are the ideological creations of the first, not the second sex.(107)

Notice the painstaking detail the negative stamp of male naming of *préciosité* from the seventeenth-century horde of masculine critics including Molière, Somaize, Pure, Boileau to the eighteenth-century critics Livet, Cousin, Sainte-Beuve, to the turn-of-the-century critics Roederer and Lanson. For

Stanton, the history of *préciosité* serves to demonstrate "a replay of the mythic drama that predicated the exclusion of the female as subject from the symbolic [as pre-ordained in Genesis] (107)."

It is logical that a writer such as J.-E. Fidao-Justiniani, reading and writing after Roederer, Cousin and Lanson, marginalizes Scudéry in his *L'Esprit classique et la préciosité au XVIIe siècle*, written in 1914. His work demonstrates the exclusion of the female that Stanton describes.

At the turn of the century, Lanson had declared Scudéry unreadable. However, Fidao-Justiniani needs to appropriate Scudéry and *préciosité* in order to rehabilitate the reputation of Jean Chapelain. To re-define Chapelain as a classicist, Fidao-Justiniani finds he must rely on Scudéry's depiction of Chapelain. Knowing that *préciosité* had become completely devalued property, he begins by innuendo. "[L]a préciosité était peut-être, de toutes les questions du monde, la plus mal posée [...] (1)." The propose of his book is to "bien poser la question (1)." Having stated his goal, he immediately covers his argument with a disclaimer. Yes, he admits, habit has attributed certain locutions to the ridiculous *précieuses*. "Il n'en pouvait guère aller autrement, puisque les précieux, dans l'espèce, étaient personnes de si peu de conséquence, qu'il y eût de la sottise à se compromettre pour eux [...] (2)."

Fidao-Justiniani does include a famous anecdote describing Madeleine de Scudéry's audience with the Louis XIV. "Elle [Madame de Sévigné] fit obtenir, en 1663, à Mlle de Scudéry, une pension du roi et Mme de Sévigné raconte la chose fort joliment," and he then quotes Sévigné in the same footnote.(72)

> Vous savez comme le roi a donné deux mille livres de pension à Mlle de Scudéry. C'est par un billet de Mme de Maintenon qu'elle apprit cette bonne nouvelle. Elle fut remercier Sa Majesté un jour d'appartement, et elle fut reçue en toute perfection. C'était une affaire que de recevoir cette merveilleuse muse: le roi lui parla et l'embrassa, pour l'empêcher d'embrasser ses genoux. Toute cette petite conversation fut d'une justesse admirable; Mme de Maintenon était l'interprète. Tout le Parnasse admirable est en émotion pour remercier et le héros et l'héroine.(72)

Fidao-Justiniani nominally pays homage to Scudéry by this marginal account in a tone that could almost be described as *précieux*! This extra-textual tribute to Scudéry, intending to congratulate her posthumously on her *pension*, at the same time paints a picture of Scudéry hovering beneath Louis XIV who embraces her to keep her from embracing his feet. It's an embrace that wards off embarrassment. Remember that Fidao-Justiniani's reading is influenced by Lanson. How appropriate that he would freeze this particular moment in time that depicts the bourgeois Scudéry supposedly groveling at the feet of the most exalted aristocrat of the seventeenth century, her monarch, Louis XIV.

In his concluding chapter, entitled "Grand Précieux et Précieux Ridicules," Fidao-Justiniani once again repeats the *topos* that has become famous since Molière's successful comedy, *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

> Nous avons distingué ceux que nous avons appelés les grands précieux des précieux ridicules, et c'est peut-être le moment de nous demander si ceux-ci sont nés de ceux-là, et s'il y eut des uns aux autres descendance directe et légitime, ou au contraire filiation suspect. Mais je m'exprime mal, car il eut des précieux--Madeleine de Scudéry, en particulière, et un peu ses amis Conrart et Pellison, qui furent successivement grands précieux et précieux ridicules, quoiqu'ils ne soient jamais tombés dans le galimatias dénoncé par Molière."(99-100)

In a footnote to the words "précieux ridicules" Fidao-Justiniani adds " Grande précieuse dans le Cyrus (1649-1653) Mad. de Scudéry fut précieuse

ridicule dans la Clélie (1654-1661) (99)." By the end of the work, Fidao-Justiani has thus repeated Victor Cousin's approval of *Cyrus* and rejection of *Clélie* and reinscribed Molière's mythic topos of refined and true aristocrat versus the pendantic, affected and false bourgeois .

The post-war years finally bring an end to the worst critical attacks on Scudéry. Critics in post-war France, looking to glorify all things French, even the *précieux*, finally begin a slow re-valorization of Scudéry and *la préciosité*. In 1948, René Bray once again poses the perennial question: "Qu'est-ce que la préciosité (7, 9)?" To answer the question he writes *La Préciosité et les précieux, de Thibaud de Champagne à Jean Giraudoux. He* defines *préciosité* in such a way as to expand the notion beyond the historical boundaries of the seventeenth century. Instead of delimiting the notion of *précioisité* to the seventeenth century, Bray finds elements and examples of *préciosité* and *précieux* writers scattered throughout the history and the entire corpus of French literature, from the medieval troubadour Thibaut de Champagne to the twentieth-century playwright and novelist Jean Giroudoux.

In 1964, Yoshio Fukui poses the question once again. "Qu'est-ce qu'une Précieuse (12)?" Fukui actually formulates reasonable guidelines to conduct his search for the answer to his question. He writes at the beginning of the new generation of Scudérian critique which will flourish and then like a ray of sunshine finally bring enlightened research to the field of *préciosité* and so-called *precieux* writers.

Not surprisingly, the dramatic increase of interest in Scudéry's works coincides with the entrenchment of feminist studies at universities across the United States and Europe. The interest that feminist scholars have shown in Scudéry has encouraged other seventeenth-century specialists who though not feminists nonetheless begin serious studies of Scudéry's works. Their studies go beyond the simplistic definitions of *préciosité* and begin to re-read the Scudérian corpus in a scholarly fashion.

Fukui informs his research by etymological documentation. He finds an acceptation of the word *précieux* in both fourteenth- and seventeenth-century contexts. He cites a line from a letter dating from 1654: "Il y a une nature de filles et de femmes à Paris que l'on nomme Précieuses [...] (11)." Also, he finds the word used in the fourteenth century:

> A la vérité, de temps à autre, depuis le XIVe siècle, on usait substantivement du féminin de l'adjectif "précieux" mais dans une acception fort différente de l'ordinaire, pour désigner les femmes hostiles à l'amour; catégorie de femmes qui s'apparentent de façon assez sensible aux "Précieuses" du XVIIe siècle. (11)

Fukui cites Bray's work as the source of this revelation. Bray's attempt to define the word *précieuse* historically proves laudable. Lathuillère, writing against Bray, does his own etymological search and finds the term to be historically vague. Lathuillère begins with a twist on the question most often asked question, what is *préciosité?*

> Il ne s'agira donc pas de se demander: Qu'est-ce que la préciosité? en posant la question à toute l'histoire de la littérature française; d'une manière plus modeste et plus limitée, on s'efforcera de comprendre ce qu'ont été les Précieux et les Précieuses au temps de Mlle de Scudéry [...] ."(13)

Lathuillère's introductory comments make it clear he intends to read against Bray's definition of *préciosité* as a literary enterprise that spans all the centuries. Lathuillère, as several other scholars studying *préciosité* in the late decades of the twentieth century, prefers to focus on the mid-seventeenth-century years which Backer called the "precious decade." To begin his analysis, Lathuillère insists on the triple ambiguity of the term.

> Ambiguïté tout d'abord du mot *précieux* et de ses dérivés, comme *préciosité*, *précieusement*, qui reçoivent, selon les emplois, une acception tantôt favorable, tantôt défavorable [...]Ambiguité aussi de la situation historique de la préciosité [...] qui laisse une trop large place aux interprétations esthétiques ou subjectives...ambiguité enfin, par voie de conséquence, des rapports du mouvement précieux avec les autres courants de son temps auxquels on a voulu le comparer: le burlesque, le baroque et le classicisme; les parallèles, les filiations ou les oppositions s'en trouvent faussés.(16)

A survey of the literature on *préciosité* confirms Lathuillère's hypothesis as to the ambiguity of the term. The critical literature on *préciosité* that constantly reiterates the paradigm of the good versus the bad *précieuse* inscribes that ambiguity. We agree with Lathuillère that the proliferation of aesthetic and subjective interpretations, rather than clarify the term, leads to further ambiguity. And, finally, we have seen, for example in the work of Fidao-Justinani, the (con)fusion of *préciosité* and classicism.

In his discussion of *préciosité*, Fukui readily admits the success of Scudéry's novels in mid-seventeenth-century France. "La période qui s'étend de 1650 à 1660 est la belle époque du "Royaume de Tende," dont Mlle de Scudéry était la reine. *Le Grand Cyrus* et *La Clélie* ont porté Mlle de Scudéry au sommet de la gloire." (283)

Fukui credits Bray with one of the acceptations of *préciosité* that we find most problematic. That is, *préciosité* as a term to "designer les femmes hostiles à l'amour; catégorie de femmes hostiles à l'amour qui s'apparentent de façon assez sensible aux "Précieuses" du XVIIe siècle (12)." Our reading of *La Promenade de Versailles* will show that the heroine of Scudéry's novel is not hostile to love, rather she refuses to partake in arbitrary, paternal restrictions and requirements.

Lathuillère also takes up this issue, that is, the purported hostility of the *précieuses* to love, as part of an overarching discussion of the amibiguity of the seventeenth-century testimonials to *préciosité*. Given that *préciosité* and the *précieuses* were not uncontested in the seventeenth century, Lathuillère outlines the three principal complaints of seventeenth-century contemporaries with regards to *la préciosité*: "le jargon (la corruption de la langue), l'affectation des manières, le refus de l'amour (3)." To his credit, Lathuillère also finds critics who offer a favorable acceptation to *l'esprit précieux*. Lathuillère quotes Larroumet: "L'esprit précieux, comme l'esprit gaulois, est une part nécessaire de l'esprit français (27)." Lathuillère even paraphrases Fidao-Justiniani who surprisingly finds Louis XIV himself to be not just *précieux* but "*le plus précieux* (27)."

Even before Lathuillère defines the three complaints of seventeenth-century contemporaries of the *précieux*, he is already building a case for the insufficiency of the data to verify the validity of those arguments.

Significantly, since so much criticism, as described herein, relies on the satires of Molière, Somaize and de Pure, Lathuillère casts doubt on their reliability as "witnesses" to the the trial of *préciosité*.

> Il s'agit là [in the words of the three satirists], semble-t-il, d'une démarche fort naturelle; pourtant, chacune de ces oeuvres, de qualité très inégale et de caractère différent, soulève de grandes difficultés d'appréciation; on a émis à leur sujet les opinions les plus divergentes, parfois diamétrialement opposées, minimisant ou même niant complètement la valeur de leur témoinage.(29)

Thus, in a subtle, understated fashion, in the first thirty pages of his opus, Lathuillère succeeds in undercutting the impact of the three seventeenth-century writers most often cited as denigrating Scudéry.

In another subtle move, Lathuillère also dismisses the seventeenth-century critics' concern with the *précieuses'* "refusal of love". Intelligently, with regard to Michel de Pure as a witness of this complaint against *préciosité*, Lathuillère simply states that there is a difference between refusing love and believing in marital rights. In so saying, Lathuillère turns one witness supposedly hostile to of *préciosité's* into more of an equal rights advocate than many of the so-called *précieuses* themselves.(59) We shall see that the heroine of *La Promenade de Versailles* may herself be classified as an equal rights advocate. Arbitrary determinations regarding her freedom cause her to flee to Versailles in self-imposed exile.

In the introduction to his collection of seventeenth-century works, Mongrédien denegrates *préciosité*. However, *Madeleine de Scudéry et son salon,* Mongrédien offers a short but rather charming tribute to *La Promenade de Versailles*.

> Admise à la Cour aux fêtes somptueuses que le souverain galant donne en l'honneur de Mlle de la Vallière, puis de Mme de Montespan dans son domaine de Versailles, où architectes, décorateurs, maçons et jardiniers travaillent fiévreusement à la transformation du château, Madeleine décide de conserver par écrit le souvenir de ses visites. C'est la façon à elle de remercier le Souverain de son accueil et de lui faire sa cour. C'est ainsi que paraît en 1669, sous le titre de *La Promenade de Versailles*, un agréable petit livre où sont chantés les charmes de la demeure qui est en train de devenir la plus belle des résidences royales. Encore agréable à lire aujourd'hui, la relation de Madeleine est aussi un document fort précieux, dont les historiens modernes ont très grand profit, sur le premier Versailles, celui qui précède l'installation définitive de la Cour.(180)

Mongrédien wrote this short but cheerful homage to Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* in 1946. Mongrédien, of course, does not give any specifics as to what in *La Promenade de Versailles proves* "fort précieux."

Carolyn C. Lougee in *Le Paradis des Femmes*, offers yet another definition of *préciosité*. The term *précieuse* requires definition, she tells us:

> The term was originally coined in the early 1650s to ridicule the affectation of one group of young women in Paris. At that time other women prominent in polite society, Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madeleine de Scudéry among them, vigorously distinguised between the overzealous côterie of précieuses and themselves. Gradually, however, the term came to be applied without pejorative connotations to more and more groups of women until by 1661, when Somaize published the *Grand Dictionnaire des prétieuses* [...] the term précieuse was commonly applied to all women in Parisian salons.(7)

In her study, Lougee tells us, "the term conforms to this more general usage, designating simply a woman who frequents a salon, a member of Parisian polite society (7)."

As the documentation shows, since the time of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Scudéry has become synonymous with the term *précieuse*. It took all of the 350 years since Molière's stage success for a feminist of the seventies like

Lougee to reappropriate the label of *préciosité* that the enemies of the salon writers had used to denigrate them.

In the late twentieth century, a different solution for the problematic term *préciosité* attempts to argue the term out of existence. Maître identifies this strategy in the writing of Domna Stanton, and Ian MacLean and Roger Duchêne. Maître finds a rational for their point of view.

> [Ils] partagent cette opinion: il nous semble que c'est leur féminisme ou du moins leur respect des femmes qui conduit ces critiques à refuser statut de réalité à une figure féminine qui semble sortie tout entière de la satire, de la malveillance ou du phallocratisme.(32)

Stanton's posture on *préciosité* needs clarification, which will be forthcoming. Maître and Lougee embrace the term.

Maître's work builds on the scholarship of the last twenty years. Since around 1980, scholars have tried to resuscitate the notion of *préciosité* in an attempt to rescue from oblivion through revisionist feminist readings the seventeenth-century female *précieuses* writers. Clearly, these readings are a step in the direction that will lead to significant re-evaluations and re-readings of Scudéry's works. Maître recognizes, as I do, the importance of Joan DeJean's work, *Tender Geographies*, for the realization of this project. As we have noted, DeJean's work provides the cornerstone of this thesis.

Carlo François offers a revisionist reading in his 1987 work entitled *Précieuses et autres indociles, Aspects du féminisme dans la littérature française du XVIIe siècle.* François defines Molière as a feminist apologist and reads his satires as feminist tracts for women's rights. In chapter 2 of his work, entitled "Molière, l'avocat des femmes," François perpetuates the myth of the good/bad

précieuses of Molière's plays, but insists that Molière pleads in favor of the "vraies précieuses."

> Mais il [Molière] avait toujours laissé entendre que la pacotille qu'il dénonçait dissimulait de vraies perles. D'autre part, les précieuses elles-mêmes n'avaient rien fait pour le tirer d'embarras; plus elles se multipliaient, plus elles devenaient ridicules et plus les vraies précieuses refusaient de livrer leurs secrets...Molière, courageux, avait élévé le débat d'où avait surgi la Querelle des Femmes; du même coup, le 26 décembre 1662 [avec L'Écoles des Femmes], il portait ce débat sur les tréteaux du Palais-Royal et il mettait en lumière les préoccupations principales dont les vraies précieuses s'obtinaient à parler dans la pénombre et le secret des alcôves."(65)

If François intends to include Scudéry amongst the "vraies perles," in the same gesture, he fails to recognize the degree to which Scudéry was also an "avocat des femmes." Given the sheer volume of her works and their popularity, she hardly chose to speak of women's rights only in the shadow and secret of her salon. François does recognize that *Les Précieuses ridicules* concerns the feminine issue of life choices, which most often came down to marriage or the convent in the seventeenth century.(56) This particular feminist issue is also a central concern in *La Promenade de Versailles*. However, perhaps it is disingenuous of François to profit from the changing fortunes of the erst-while maligned *précieuses*.

Lathuillère's thesis that Molière did not intend Scudéry as the target of his satire encourages re-evaluations and new interpretations of Molière's play. In fact, appropriating Molière into a feminist critique could prove fruitful. Molière's views on women's rights in marriage and particularly on a woman's right to choose her own husband are forward thinking. And, indeed, Chapter 4 will demonstrate, they mirror the pro-female views of marriage implied in *La*

Promenade de Versailles. How ironic that one of the seventeenth-century French authors whose work most harmed Scudéry's reputation, Molière, can be considered an advocate of women's rights!

Can one differentiate between Molière's representation of women as opposed to his representation of *précieuses*? The *précieuses* are most clearly targeted in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Les Femmes Savantes*. Roxanne Decker Lalande's recent work, *Intruders in the Play World, the Dynnamics of Gender in Molière's Comedies*, provides an answer. "Most frequently, women are portrayed as outsiders, outcasts and spoil-sports in Molière's comedies.[. . .] By articulating their otherness, Molière's female characters inevitably articulate the powers attempting to marginalize that otherness, opening up, albeit momentarily, the possibility for modification of the societal structure only to be ultimately reappropriated by the reigning political order (31)."

According to Lalande's argument, female characters in Molière's plays seek empowerment in the course of the "ludic circle." However, in the end, the male hierarchy recuperates the power momentarily gained by the women in the plays. "Molière's texts generally close in upon themselves, suturing the open wound caused by a female presence. They harden themselves to intrusion, yet not without having offered a glimpse of what might be, what might have been (32)."

Molière's satire of the *précieuses* begins even with title of *Les Femmes savantes*. In the *précieuse* economy of his play, the title must be considered an oxymoron. In his works, there are no learned *précieuses*. Lalande studies the

role of women in *Les Femmes savantes* and she sets it apart from Molière's other plays. She contends that in this play "[m]ore than in any other of Molière's plays, this comedy offers a view of a world in which a balance of power is carefully established between feminine and masculine circles of play (187)." Further, Lalande concludes that, "the final scene of *Les Femmes savantes* does seem to suggest the potential for a more permanent form of feminine empowerment to be acquired through knowledge (208)." However, it is the mother, Philaminte, and not her daughter Armande, the identifiable *précieuse* of the *Les Femmes savantes*, who has maintained her ground.

Lalande's work is well-informed by theories of laughter and her analysis of the women in Molière's plays draws from credible contemporary feminist theory. The flaw in her analysis of *Les Femmes savantes* is that she grounds her discussion of *préciosité* on the apocryphal notion that the *précieux* "*refus d'amour*." She describes Molière's construction of Armande accurately, but it does not define the *précieuses* writers of the seventeenth-century, least of all Madeleine de Scudéry.[17] Acting as the *nouvelle précieuse*, Scudéry reinvented the novelistic genre by means of a revolutionary new focus on interiority. And, interiority, as opposed to exteriority, may be intrinsically gendered-marked as feminine and *précieuse*. It leads to a most tenuous connection, namely, the link between Scudéry's writing style and her personal life choice to remain unmarried.

A satirist's goal is not necessarily to annihilate the target of his satirical attack. Neither does a satire aim at gratuitous humor. The intention of a satire is to take aim at its target. Molière's fortune has not been damaged over the course

of history, nor do productions of his work lack for audiences. Female seventeenth-century authors, on the other hand, need more readers.

Predominantly, in this discussion of the reception of *préciosité* and particulary Scudéry's place in the production of the myth of *préciosité*, the opinions of male researchers through the centuries have been considered. Late twentieth-century feminist scholarship brings a dramatically new look to the scholarship of *préciosité*.

Précieuse Identity: *Écriture féminine*

In this work one finds *préciosité* italicized and in a foreign language, French. Each time the word appears it typographically signals its strangeness. The onomastic gesture of leaving *préciosité* in its foreign acceptation intends to permeate the text with its esoteric nature. A stranger, like la belle Etrangére in *La Promenade de Versailles*, *préciosité* comes to France from a distant past.

Where does this term come from? In final analysis, what does *préciosité* come to mean? Like la belle Etrangére it comes from *un pays étranger. La Promenade de Versailles* weaves a tale that becomes an allegory of *préciosité*'s strangeness. It comes from the past and from the future. *Préciosité* emanates from the Ancient Greeks and Romans, from the medieval pastoral and *poésie chevaleresque*, from the sixteenth century's Marguerite de Navarre and Rabelais.

After Scudéry's works, p*réciosité* continues in the works of Lafayette and Montesquieu and in the long tradition of the novel, which flourishes today. For,

with the coming of the millennium, the late twentieth century defined *préciosité* in terms of a feminist and political critique, as in reality it did in the seventeenth century in the novels of the seventeenth-century French writer, Madeleine de Scudéry.

In *The Newly Born Woman*, Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément define the woman as the Other, the second term in a binary opposition that has defined the relationship of man to woman since the beginning of the logos. "Father/Mother, Head/Heart, Intelligible/Palpable, Logos/Pathos...Always the same metaphor: we follow it, it carries us, beneath all its figures, wherever discourse is organized (63)." Cixous and Clément's essay creates a new space for woman that explodes the historic binary pairings of Man/ Woman.

In order to do so, the position of woman must be redefined and the harm done from the oppression of the female sign must be repaired. Rather than abhor their bodies, women must learn to embrace them. "Woman is disgusted by woman and fears her [...] We [women] have been frozen in our place between two terrifying myths: between the Medusa and the abyss (68)."

The redemption of Madeleine de Scudéry and her works from many years of maligning criticism becomes the return of the repressed that Clément and Cixous theorize. The myth of Medusa and the abyss will be replaced by a reappropriation of Medusa, who, rather than falling into oblivion, soars to a critical mountaintop. Wishing to demonize her image, Boileau described Scudéry as a Medusa-like creature in the seventeenth century. With Clément and Cixous, the legend of Medusa will now become an empowering female figure. "They, the

feminine ones, are coming back from far away, from forever, from 'outside'[...] (69)." The legendary Medusa, the historical figure of Scudéry associated with her will both be reborn as exemplary women in the twentieth-first century.

This dissertation inscribes *Préciosité* and la belle Etrangére into the new feminine construction "they, the feminine ones" create. Scudéry must be considered exceptional in space and time because of the enormous success of her works in her lifetime. Through the character of la belle Etrangére and the literary technique of *préciosité* most highly identified with her work, Scudéry allegorizes her own coming to writing.

Cixous and Clément poetically describe the woman writer.

> *"A Woman's Coming to Writing*:
> *Who*
> Invisible, foreign, secret, hidden, mysterious, black, forbidden
> *Am* [...] (69)"

The story of la belle Etrangére's Odyssey to Versailles allegorizes the female, the Other, who is characterized as foreign and strange in French feminist tracts.

In *Writing and Sexual Difference*, Elizabeth Abel defines *écriture féminine*.

> The concept of *écriture féminine*, the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text, is a significant theoretical formulation in French feminist criticism, although it describes a Utopian possibility rather than a literary practice. Hélène Cixous, one of the leading advocates of *écriture féminine*, has admitted that, with only a few exceptions, "there has not yet been any writing that inscribes femininity" and Nancy K. Miller explains that *écriture féminine* "privileges a textuality of the avant-garde, a literary production of the late twentieth century, and it is therefore fundamentally a hope, if not a blueprint, for the future." Nonetheless, the concept of *écriture féminine* provides a way of talking about women's writing which reasserts the value of the feminine and

identifies the theoretical project of feminist criticism as the analysis of difference.(16)

Scudéry was truly avant-garde in writing *La Promenade de Versailles.* Scudéry's seventeenth-century novel already inscribes *préciosité* as *écriture féminine. La Promenade de Versailles* truly represents a literary and feminist back to the future. The novel is a way of talking about women's writing that asserts the value of the feminine and outlines a project of feminist criticism as an analysis of difference.

The foreign, the strange and the Other are symbols of female writing, and these elements pervade Scudéry's novel. In *La Promenade de Versailles,* la belle Etrangére comes from an unknown, secret place. The first paragraph of the novel introduces the heroine as la belle Etrangére and the reader never learns of her true identity. The reader learns of the details of la belle Etrangére's adventure, however, her true identity and that of her entourage remains secret to the end. The female narrator assigns aliases to the mysterious guests of Versailles.

In the original 1669 edition of *La Promenade de Versailles*, the novel has two parts. Again, the title of the first part, repeats the title of the work, "La Promenade de Versailles" and the second part is entitled "Histoire de Celanire." In the 102-page introductory "promenade," the reader accompanies la belle Etrangére and her relatives as they visit Versailles and discuss the aesthetics of art versus nature and description versus narrative. The entourage becomes engaged in a debate concerning the supremacy of art or nature. The reader will accompany la belle Etrangére and her relatives as they explore Versailles.

Even as Versailles is revealed to la belle Etrangére and her entourage, the identity of the visitors remains cloaked in secrecy. "Pour moi qui aime passionnément les beaux lieux, dit Glicere, (c'est ainsi que j'appellerai une parente de cette belle inconnuë), je me prépare d'avoir beaucoup de plaisir à la promenade de Versailles (3-4)." The "je" of Part 1 of the novel remains anonymous. And as Glicere prepares for a pleasurable interlude, the narratrice, who herself is never named, assigns aliases to la belle Etrangére's relatives. The female relative of la belle Etrangére is named Glicere by the *narratrice*. The true identity of la belle Etrangére is never revealed in the storyline of the novel. Note that Glicere suggests that she will take pleasure in her "promenade de Versailles." Glicere clevely alludes to her dual role in the diegesis of the novel, as la belle Etrangére's companion and as the narratrice of the "Histoire de Celanire," in Part 2.

To the end of the novel, the characters' identities remain hidden. Though the identity of la belle Etrangére is never revealed, the dynamic of secrets revealed and masks unveiled is evoked by this lingering secret. In addition to the secret identities and the secret love affair of Celanire, the reader will discover the most important secret in the hidden critique of absolutism embedded in a *conversation* in the second part of the novel. Like the belle Etrangére, the term *préciosité* also retains its elusive quality over the centuries.

The feminist criticism of Scudéry echos the concept of the foreign, the distant, the strange which is essential to *La Promenade de Versailles*. *La Promenade de Versailles* is the story of a woman who wants to keep her

personal life private. To control one's own destiny, one must keep one's own counsel. Celanire (the pseudonym given to la belle Etrangére) wants above all to control her own destiny, so she values secrecy above all.

In Chapters 3 and 4, the importance of the secret in *La Promenade de Versailles* will be discussed. The sensitive political critique embedded in the novel obviously had to be cloaked in a nuanced discourse in order to avoid serious repercussions from Louis XIV's book censors. Historically, in the genre of prose fiction, the secret is a highly charged metaphorical sign. Also, in Louis XIV's realm, even the king himself loved secrets.

The secret was one of the qualities of Cixous and Clément's poetic definition of a woman coming to writing. The secret, as opposed to the public, also carried particular significance for the literary society of seventeenth-century France

Erica Harth remarks that "[i]t was indeed the 'public,' in a narrow sense of the term, that separated the salon from the academy"(*Cartesian Women*, 24). The most important example of "the academy" was, of course, the exclusively male, state supported and controlled Académie Française. Harth continues:

> 'To publish'(publier) was, according to Furetière, to make something public, either in speech or in writing. Its opposite was not the 'private,' but rather, [...] 'the secret,' a word frequently used at the time. Furetière cites the following example of *publier*: 'It is said of an indiscreet person that he *publishes* the secret of his friend when he reveals it to another.' The academy, where writing was central, was more 'public' than the salon. It gave its members instant access to the res publica of letters, a republic in which women, if admitted at all, were generally second-class citizens. Many women of the salons, if they wrote at all, did so anonymously or pseudonymously. Similary, it was not unusal for women to pursue their studies under a strict veil of secrecy and to hide their learning."(24)

re

th

ele

exc

pseu

point

secre

Scude

centu

with it

Furetie

person

The lo

of indi

in the

In the

dichot

So many aspects of Harth's explanation of the published versus the secret relate to Scudéry and her writing. Obviously, she was of the salon society not of the academy. As we know, though she was considered for election, she was elected to the Académie Française. Most other French academies were also exclusively male domains.

Scudéry also published much of her work anonymously or under the pseudonym, if you will, of her brother's signature. Remember Huet's making a point of her generosity to French males' egos by having kept her authorship a secret.

And, of course, the secret looms large in *La Promenade de Versailles.* Scudéry's novel appropriates a favorite preoccupation of the seventeenth-century, the secret. However, the novel's preoccupation with the secret contrasts with its very public representation of Louis XIV and his palace.

And, last but not least, *La Promenade de Versailles* exemplifies Furetière's definition of the secret. It bears repeating. "It is said of an indiscreet person that he publishes the secret of his friend when he reveals it to another." The love story of Celanire and Cleandre becomes the tale of the consequences of indiscretion.

According to the twentieth-century German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, in the seventeenth century, the notion of public versus private was in its infancy. In the seventeenth century, public and private had not yet become the dichotomous terms of modernity. One must substitute published for the public

and secret for the approximate definition of private to interpret correctly Habermas' proposition.

Habermas recognizes Scudéry and the salon as significant forerunners of the major socio-political shift toward democracy.

> Mademoiselle de Scudéry reported in her *Conversations* the stress of the grand festivities; these served not so much the pleasure of the participants, as the demonstration of grandeur, that is, the grandeur of the host and guests. The common people, content to look on, had the most fun... In the etiquette of Louis XIV concentration of the publicity of the representation at the court attained the high point of refinement.(10)

The shift to democracy evolved out of the relationship between the published, that which is made public, and the private, or in the seventeenth century, that which remains secret. Scudéry played a small part in that transition.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, as in her *Conversations*, Scudéry describes the great festivities that took place at the palace. Part 1 depicts the "grandeur of the host and guests." Her novel participates in the "publicity" of Versailles, that is, Louis XIV's showing off his palace to his advisors, his courtiers, and his people. Chapter 4 discusses Louis Marin's interpretation of the spectacle of Versailles.

For now, consider the revelation of Scudéry's *Conversations*, wherein she describes the stress of the participants. Scudéry understood the necessity of paying homage to Louis XIV. One could not afford to appear indifferent to Louis XIV's continual and extravagant sound and light show that was the palace of Versailles, for the spectacle of Versailles represented the king, as he stood for the spectacle.

par e

the K

imme

and c

Versa

takes

indica

the in

precu

even

Scude

the ev

the wi

forbid

in a nu

her. St

travelin

rely on

her rul

both fa

Ironically, Celanire travels to Versailles to conceal her secrets. Versailles, par excellence, dramatically represents the glorification of the public as the site of the king's extravagant representation of himself as the Sun King. From the immensity of the palace to its splendiferous gardens and fountains to the daily and continuous display of the king in even his most personal, intimate moments, Versailles glorifies the sanctity of the published, the revealed. But the glorification takes place even as or perhaps because with the Fronde come the first indications of the eventual dissolution of the power of the absolute monarchy and the institutions that will supplant the monarchy after the Revolution. The precursor of what Habermas would call the private sector begins to have a voice, even if it is heard ever so faintly and covertly in seventeenth-century France. Scudéry's novel, *La Promenade de Versailles,* plays no small part in describing the evolution Habermas theorizes.

Celanire travels to Versailles to conceal that she loves Cleandre against the will of her uncle and her family. Because of a family feud, Celanire has been forbidden to associate with anyone of Cleandre's lineage. She has taken refuge in a nunnery because she refuses to marry the man her uncle has selected for her. She takes her destiny into her own hands by escaping the convent and traveling to Versailles. She becomes the agent of her own desire. She does not rely on her man to solve her problems, whether he be her lover, her surrogate or her ruler. *La Promenade de Verailles* voices a defiant cry against patriarchy, both familial and governmental.

La Promenade de Versailles presents the heroine and the literary style of *préciosité* as the Other, whose voice now cries to be heard. Recall that Stanton argues that *préciosité* is a male myth born of a fearful male phantasm. The title of Stanton's article "The Fiction of *Préciosité* and the Fear of Women," inscribes her contention that "seventeenth-century texts make no mention of a précieux style or school, much less of a précieux man or poet (109)." Seventeenth-century women, especially female writers, and especially Madeleine de Scudéry, did not call themselves *précieuses*. The myth that Stanton's article describes was inscribed in the fictional writing of the seventeenth-century male satirists we reviewed in Part 1 of this chapter, "The Problematics of *Préciosité*." For example, eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics such as Cousin, Lanson, and Mongrédien promulgated the fiction of satirists such as Molière, Boileau, Tallemant des Réaux and Somaize by their interpretations of Scudéry informed by them.

The truth of *préciosité* defined *préciosité* as the ideologies expounded in the works of women writers who have been labeled *précieuses*, can only be revealed by re-reading their works. Stanton's article exposes the myth of the *fictions* of *préciosité*, that is, the satirical and fictional works of the four major satirists, Molière, Boileau, Tallement des Réaux and Pure. This thesis reveals *truths* of Scudéry's *précieux* discourse on politics of the polis and of women's rights *La Promenade de Versailles*. Chapters 3 and 4 define the praxis of a *nouvelle préciosité*.

warn

she

Writi

biolo

Identi

dange

Nonet

female

may a

of the

the ex

Her wo

A second significant aspect of Stanton's work informs this thesis. She warns of the dangers of feminist critiques based on biological metaphors, a fear she shares with several female feminist critics (Difference 157-182).

In her article "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," which appeared in *Writing and Sexual Difference*, Elaine Showalter explains the drawback of biological metaphors in feminist critiques.

> Organic or biological criticism is the most extreme statement of the gender difference of a text indelibly marked by the body: anatomy is textuality. Biological criticism is also one of the most sibylline and perplexing theoretical formulations of feminist criticism. Simply to evoke anatomy risks a return to the crude essentialism, the phallic and ovarian theories of art, that oppressed women in the past.(17)

In her work entitled *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler rehearses Luce Irigaray's discourse of the Other and the danger it poses for representation of the female.

> But it is, of course, Irigaray, who exposes this dialectic of Same and Other as a false binary, the illusion of a symmetrical difference which consolidates the metaphysical economy of phallogocentrism, the economy of the same. In her view, the Other as well as the Same are marked as masculine; the Other is but the negative elaboration of the masculine subject with the result that the female sex is unrepresentable-that is, it is the sex which, within this signyfying economy, is not one.(103)

One must be cautious of the dangers of essentialism in feminist critiques. Nonetheless, the degree to which Scudéry's *précieux* novels are marked by the female body, that is by the French feminist metaphor of the female as the Other, may account for the oppressive reception she has received. The omnipresence of the female Other in *La Promenade de Versailles* may well have engendered the exclusionary tactics of Scudérian literary criticism across several centuries. Her work provoked the phantasmagorical fear that Stanton so well delineates in

"The

exci

meta

that

away

hero

of the

femin

disco

being

biolog

repres

arouse

précios

seventi

it and r

builds

seventi

negativ

Scudér

"The Fiction of *Préciosité* and the Fear of Women." The tactics designed to exclude her works were all too successful.

However, mindful of the essentialist trap, in point of fact, a biological metaphor symbolically lies at the heart of this proposal. It turns on the argument that Scudéry's narrative shift from exteriority to interiority represents a turning away from a recognized male discourse, that is, the action oriented novel of the hero, to the feminine discourse based on the descriptive and thoughtful analysis of the *conversation*. Further, this narratological shift constitutes a radical feminization of the novelistic form.

The implications of the biological metaphor substituting an external male discourse with an internal female discourse are clear, male sexuality traditionally being configured as outer and female sexuality as inner. The use of an obviously biological metaphor because our gesture thus allows for a symbolic representation of female versus male narrative.

Stanton's article describes the fear that female writers such as Scudéry aroused in male critics for centuries. This dissertation reappropriates the term *préciosité*, as DeJean has done. Twenty-first-century feminist scholars of seventeenth-century literature seek to rehabilitate the term *préciosité*, to embrace it and redefine it. The lengthy analysis of Part 1, The *Problematics of Préciosité* builds on Stanton's theorization of the phantasmagorical fear of several seventeenth-century male readers. It is paramount to a full understanding of the negative, that is to say, misogynous criticism that pervades the literature on Scudéry to review those satirical works carefullly.

How does embracing the term *préciosité* add to feminist interpretation of seventeenth-century works, and particularly *La Promenade de Versailles?* Maître clearly embraces the concept of *préciosité*, and yet even after her lengthy analysis, she is unable to define the term succinctly.[18]

DeJean appropriates the term. She redefines *préciosité* and describes Scudéry's works as subtle *précieux* feminist and political critiques, as do we. DeJean's revised definition of *préciosité* in the 1995 edition of the *New Oxford Companion to French Literature* best describes Scudérian *préciosité*. "The assemblies subsumed under the name 'préciosité' were feminist in the full sense of this modern term. They worked to change women's lives, to promote reforms, in particular in marital and family law, designed to give women greater control over their fates (638)."

Scudéry writes in a pre-deconstructive past and can be forgiven for not recognizing the danger of a false binary opposition. After the fact, one realizes that Scudéry's novels redefine the genre in terms of an opposition between the traditional male action-oriented novel and the new novel of thoughtful exchanges under the sign of the feminist *précieux* discourse of the *conversation*. Scudéry exploits the binary opposition to transform a traditional male discourse of exteriority into a female discourse of interiority in *Cyrus*, *Clélie*, and *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Thus, Scudéry becomes a forerunner of the self-actualized Other in her narrative choices as well as in the actions of the heroine of *La Promenade de Versailles*, la belle Etrangére. She has come to Versailles in a bold move to

esca

sinc

Sign

her d

centu

Fran

voice

finall

name

Versa

DeJe

differ

such

exam

the fe

exclus

escape a patriarchal mandate forbidding her to marry her true love, Cleandre, since he was born into a family that was the enemy of her own family. Significantly, she becomes the agent of her own destiny. She takes matters into her own hands.

Scudéry's text dares to critique the repressive marital laws of seventeenth-century France. She was the most successful novelist of seventeenth-century France and that a female narrator speaks in La *Promenade de Versailles*, giving voice to la belle Etrangére's avant-garde strategies for female liberation. And finally, the appropriation and perfection of the précieux discourse of the salon, namely, the *conversation*, enables the liberating voice of *La Promenade de Versailles*.[19]

Agreeing with the traditional notion that *préciosité* springs from the salon, DeJean views the salon culture as "a world apart."

> It is fitting, she says, that these private academies were designated by *temporal and spatial terms*, for the essence of the salon's importance in literary life was bound up with its status as a world apart.(Emphasis mine. 299)

The space is the salon. And this space is the space of the Other, a different world. The temporal designation alludes to the fact that many salons, such as Scudéry's, met on a certain day of the week. So Scudéry's salon, for example, became known as les *Samedis*.

By "private academy," DeJean means private salon, which she defines as the female equivalent of the "public academy." The public academies were exclusively male, including the state supported Académie Française. *La*

Promenade de Versailles's story line emphasizes the separation of the published public and secret, therefore private, the personal from the crown.

P*réciosité* by contrast is the secret space controlled by women. Secret, that is to say exclusive, coteries existed under the control of women. An organization controlled exclusively by women was a foreign concept to seventeenth-century Frenchmen more accustomed to male controlled institutions, not to mention the king who preferred to control all institutions. In numerous scenes in *La Promenade de Versailles* the text emulates salon society.

The story begins *in medias res*. The narratrice's guests have arrived from afar. We learn that their anonymity is of utmost importance. La belle Étrangére asks if she is looking at the "la petite maison du plus grand Roi de la terre?"(2) But no sooner have the characters been introduced than the story line is redirected. The text neither begins the walk through Versailles promised in the title, nor does it elaborate on the incognito visitors to Versailles. Rather, the characters engage in a debate as to the merits of art versus nature and narration versus description. It is as if the implied author,[20] the Scudéry that can be constructed from the text, anticipates the criticism of her previous novels being too long on description and too short on action. The early discussions in the novel justify the incursion of the *conversation* in her work. Also, the discussion reads as a salon debate might have progressed.

In short, the novel begins by highlighting its radical new narrative technique. The *conversation* provides space for thoughtful reflection and debate.

The inte

based c

C

it more.

Not inci

voice of

learn the

innovati

In

historian

and Tela

Howeve

importan

annoyan

mytholog

the term

Scudéry.

Their ove

sentimen

Th

endured

opus on

The interiority of the discussion replaces the exteriority of the masculine novel based on heroic action.

Glicere claims she will enjoy the *promenade*. Telamon insists he will enjoy it more, because he will make a drawing or write a description of Versailles.(4) Not incidentally, Telamon illustrates the new narrative form. Ironically, the male voice of Telamon affirms the efficacy of an interior narrative discourse. We will learn the rules and conventions that govern the *conversation* and Scudéry's innovative inclusion of her invention in *La Promenade de Versailles* in Chapter 4.

In Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles*, the discussion of the great historians and monuments of the past ensues, with the debate between Glicere and Telamon central. The content becomes less important than the form. However, the *conversation* between Glicere and Telamon does allow for an important plug for Louis XIV's grandeur.[21]

Evidence of male critics' dissatisfaction, impatience, and general annoyance with Scudéry's works abounds in the critical literature regarding the mythology that has grown around the concept of *préciosité* and in particular as the term supposedly was manifested in the life and works of Madeleine de Scudéry. What ostensibly provokes the male reader? The length of her novels? Their overall lack of a linear, organized discourse? Their bourgeois sentimentality? In short, their unreadability.?

There is a darker side to the negative criticism that Scudéry's works have endured over the centuries. Myriam Maître's evocation of the "mythe noir" in her opus on the précieuses implies as much(124-207). Stanton's article,"The Fiction

of Préc

criticisr

women

critical

critics,

seemir

Bénich

equali

positic

of Préciosité and the Fear of Women," already begins to explain the negative criticism as a manifestation of certain male critics' phantasmagorical fear of women.

The critical fallout of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* pervades the critical literature concerning Madeleine de Scudéry and her works. Certain critics, such as Carlos François, attempt to present a rational explanation for the seemingly contradictory evaluation of the *précieuses* in Molière's plays. Paul Bénichou also acknowledges the conflict.

> Il est de fait que Molière s'en est pris par deux fois, au début et à la fin de sa carrière, à la galanterie romanesque. *Les Précieuses* renferment des allusions expresses au *Cyrus*, à la *Clélie*, à la carte de Tendre, et, sur les trois héroïnes des *Femmes savantes*, deux ou moins qui sont entichées de la philosophie amoureuse des romans. (324)

Bénichou goes on to explain the contradition.

> Cependant la contradiction, avant d'être dans les sentiments de Molière, est dans les conditions mêmes où se trouve placé le désir féminin d'émancipation. Pareil désir peut se faire jour en effet dans deux directions, qu'une tradition toute-puissante nous montre divergentes l'une de l'autre. Les femmes peuvent demander, à l'encontre de la morale répressive qu'on leur impose, le droit de vivre et de jouir selon le penchant de la nature–et elles peuvent demander qu'on leur accorde une dignité, un rang égaux à ceux de l'homme; Molière accède autant qu'il se peut à la première demande et ridiculise volontiers la seconde. Il s'émeut quand l'instinct est outragé beaucoup moins si c'est la fierté ou le sens de la justice. Tout le ridicule des femmes savantes est dans leur obsession d'égalité, dans leur révolte contre la supériorité de valeur et de prestige attributée aux hommes, car c'est bien à cela que revient, en dernière analyse, le problème de l'ambition intellectuelle chez les femmes."(325-326)

According to Bénichou, Molière believed that woman's obsession with equality goes against man's natural instinct. Bénichou's explication of Molière's position continues:

the all

He imp

love in

rehear

Molièr

love.

constr

Molièr

tease

"neuro

précie

élémer

ces fer

> Si elles réclamaient, même avec quelque scandale, le droit de se conduire et d'aimer à leur guise, Molière les écouteraient volontiers, mais justement elles se croient tenues de mépriser l'amour pour échapper à l'infériorité féminine. Molière a fait leur pruderie inséparable de leur révolte, et a condamné d'un seul coup l'une et l'autre."(326)

Bénichou's text reveals the "mythe noir" of *préciosité*. Bénichou describes the alleged prudery of the so-called *précieuses* as it unfolds in Molière's plays. He implies that Molière was correct in turning a deaf ear to women who despise love in order to escape their feminine inferiority. Most significantly, Bénichou rehearses the male myth and phantasmagorical fear of women demonstrated by Molière's male characters and in particular, their fear of a woman who refuses love. This "refus d'amour" is of course, one of the three aspects of the construction of *préciosité* that Lathuillère identifies.

Bénichou describes a contradiction at the heart of *préciosité* of which Molière was aware.

> Molière a bien vu la difficulté d'une doctrine qui réprouve l'amour sans cesser de l'exalter, qui en étend partout le règne pour faire régner partout la femme, et cependant y dénonce l'écueil de l'indépendance féminine. D'où d'un type de femme obsédée par l'amour et révoltée contre l'amour, coquette et prude à la fois, qui est exactement celui de la précieuse.(327)

Thus, the *précieuse*, coquette and prude, becomes the dreaded female tease who entices but does not deliver.

Through a well-placed "Freudian slip," namely the descriptive adjective "neurotic," Bénichou reveals the pièce de résistance of his critique of the *précieuse* in Molière's plays. "Molière a fait une place privilégiée, parmi tous les éléments de la névrose précieuse, au dispositif de guerre et de domination que ces femmes insatisfaites de leur sort maintiennent constamment dirigé contre

I'ho

to w

beh

How

wha

to a

cen

proc

role

pris

som

cen

the

hav

beg

con

l'homme (328)." The *précieuse* whose plan of action against the opposite sex is to withhold sexuality must be neurotic. The fear of that woman is the dark secret behind the male constructed definition of *préciosité*.

Bénichou perpetrated the myth of women writing and *préciosité*. However, he fails to ask who created the so-called neurosis of the *précieuses* or what was the source of the malady of *nevrosité*. Male society's inability to adapt to a radically new feminine persona, the newly born woman of the seventeenth century, that created the myth of the neurotic *précieuse*. In short, male society produces the *névrose*. Bénichou, as his predecessors before him, fails to see his role in the problem.

In his article "La Névrose précieuse: une nouvelle pléiade," Sellier's parti pris for the *précieuses* is meritorious, but his opening argumentation proves somewhat untenable. What Sellier's article does, as subtly as any seventeenth-century *précieux* text, is to appropriate slyly the target of his attack into his theory. The title of his article already alludes to the pages in Bénichou's text we have just related wherein he coins the expression "névrose précieuse." Sellier begins his article wherein he responds to Bénichou thus.

> Il arrive que la recherche des rythmes et des correspondances sonores, surtout dans les titres, nous égare. Celui-ci oscille dangereusement entre le paradoxe et la provocation. N'a-t-on pas, tout récemment, présenté la préciosité comme une "fable", "un mythe", une invention polémique?(96)

Sellier reveals the source of his expression in a footnote.[22] Then Sellier continues.

> Comment dès lors, risquer, même avec un point d'interrogation, l'expression "nouvelle Pléiade?" D'autre part, comme l'écrivaient ou

> s'écrireraient nos héroïnes,"le moyen de lier une réussite littéraire à un trouble, même léger, de la personnalité, à une névrose."(127)

Sellier's article procedes to verify to what degree seventeenth-century *précieuses* conformed to Bénichou's supposition that they were neurotic.

Using researched clinical definitions of varying neurotic syndromes, the article describes the potential maladies of several "réseaux de précieuses," from Rambouillet to Scudéry. For example, based on symptoms reported in seventeenthy-century letters, Lafayette is posthumously diagnosed as having suffered from "l'hystérie de conversion (106)." The "researched" symptoms of other précieuses suggest they suffered from phobias ranging from hypocondria to frigidity and homosexuality. Of course, the American Psychiatic Association no longer defines homosexuality as a clinical diease.

Sellier's article also suggests that certain clinical conditions might actually enhance one's literary talents. "Aussi est-on tenté de voir dans l'hystérie la plus 'littéraire' des névroses (107)." Sellier adds:

> Parler de coloration hystérique, à propos de cette riche efflorescence précieuse, cela ne constitue nullement une attaque, bien au contraire. D'autant plus qu'on ne peut 'réussir ' son hystérie, comme disent les psychanalystes [...] La névrose précieuse nous met en présence d'une extraordinaire réussite, d'un phénomène de contagion bénéfique, dont l'apport à la littérature, suggère la forme de 'nouvelle Pléiade.' Les réseaux féminins que nous avons rencontrés ont joué un rôle décisif dans l'assouplissement de la langue, l'affinement de l'analyse psychologique, dans l'essort du 'Portrait' et celui de la littérature épistolaires; elles ont contribué à imposer le genre le plus vivant de l'époque, le roman.(119)

Thus, in his article, Sellier plays on Bénichou's construction of "la névrose précieuse." Sellier never mentions Bénichou in his article. However, he does inscribe the term in his essay to point to Bénichou's critique of *préciosité*. Sellier

cleverly changes "la névrose précieuse" into a positive attribute, namely, the unconscious motivation of poetic genius.

Like the work of so many critics before him, Bénichou's text is blinded to its own paranoia, its fear of abandonment that the *précieuses* evoked and which produced the dark mirror image of neuroses and neurotic women, who in turn were made neurotic by a male dominated society.

Hélène Cixous exposes the male fear of female abandonment and domination in her article entitled "Le Rire de la Méduse." Sigmund Freud identified Medusa as a symbol of the male's fear of women. In a short article he entitled "Medusa's Head," Freud theorizes that the beheading of the mythical female Medusa, becomes a frightening symbol for male castration (212-213). In Cixous' text, poetically and explicitly, she exposes the Medusa complex. Cixous re-appropriates the myth to theorize a newly arrived woman, her head reunited with her body.

What makes the Medusa image so compelling, is that in Boileau's critique of Scudéry in *Les Héros du roman*,[23] uncannily, Boileau uses the Medusa image to describe Scudéry. Mocking Scudéry's self-portrait in the last installment of *Cyrus*, Boileau has the ancient Sapho describe the Sapho of *Cyrus*. Boileau assigns Scudéry a new pseudonym. Scudéry/Sapho becomes Tisiphone. However, the passage in Boileau's text is unmistakably a pastiche of the self-portrait of Scudéry in *Cyrus*.

> Tisiphone a naturellement la taille fort haute, et passant de beaucoup la mesure des personnes de son sexe [...] Elle a les yeux petits, mais pleins de feu, vifs, perçant, et bordés d'un certain vermillon qui en relève prodigieusement l'échat. Ses cheveux sont naturellement bouclés et

of ur

fema

213)

repe

Scu

reac

Scu

Scu

see

reje

cre

d'a

Cle

Ce

he

ne

> annelés; et l'on peut dire que ce sont autant de serpents qui s'entortillent les uns dans les autres, et se jouent nonchalamment autour de son visage. Son teint n'a point cette couleur fade et blanchâtre des femmes de Scythie; mais il tient beaucop de ce brun mâle et noble que donne le soleil aux Africaines qu'il favorise le plus prés de ses regards. (333)

Boileau literally defines Scudéry as Medusa. In the theory of unconscious motivation, Boileau envisions Scudéry as the serpent-headed female monster that Freud believes is a symbol for the castrating woman (212-213).

The compelling aspect of this application of this Freudian hypothesis is the repetition of the Medusa metaphor in the works that critique Scudéry. If Scudéry's writing truly elicited an unconscious castration complex in male readers, this fact in turn bolsters DeJean's suggestion that Boileau's fear of Scudéry demonstrated in Les *héros de roman* symbolizes a "ritual murder" of Scudéry. (DeJean, *Fictions* 110-114)

In the final analysis, then, who is more neurotic? The *précieuse* who seeks autonomy, at all cost? Or the male critic driven by his fear of female rejection, which he projects back to the woman supposedly rejecting him, thus creating the *précieuse* construction that has become known as "le refus d'amour?" In *La Promenade de Versailles*, one could say that the heroine refuses Cleandre's love. Celanire does not refuse Cleandre's love without reason. Celanire refuses his love because she desires self-determination in affairs of the heart as well as in affairs of state--in marriage, in divorce, in giving birth.

In order to construct a *précieuse* character who refuses love, due to a neurotic tendancy or to a reasoned and rational desire for self-determination, one

must v

and it

fictior

cours

conv

betv

"S'i

pas

Evc

he

im

7C

ar

V

b

p

m

ir

e

th

must write a love story. *La Promenade de Versailles* is after all such a love story, and it is also much more than that. The novel must set the stage for a romantic fiction, so the characters do finally embark on their tour of the palace. But of course, as expected, their promenade was interrupted by yet another *conversation* that resembles a salon gathering.

Friends of the *narratrice* arrive and ask everyone to take sides in a debate between two gentlemen as to whether one should say goodby to a lover or not. "S'il y a plus ou moins de tendresse à dire adieu à ce qu'on aime, ou à ne le dire pas (52)." The debaters include several verses of poetry in their arguments. Everyone is asked to take sides in the casuistic debate. Thus, the Scudérian text here brilliantly subverts the notion of narration to illustrate by example the importance of description and casuistic commentary, even as it introduces the 700-page story. The connection between narration and interpretive discourse and debate is already well established in the first 50 pages of *La Promenade de Versailles*. The exiled guests to Versailles have already established a link between fact and fiction.

DeJean traces the importance of the connection between real world political exile and fictional, often metaphorical, exile to the inception of the modern novelistic form. In Chapter 4 the notion of exile and its important implications for *La Promenade de Versailles* will be demonstrated.

In the seventeenth century, the term "retreat" was sometimes euphemistically used to describe what was actually a political exile. DeJean links the so-called retreat of Mademoiselle de Montpensier with a definitive moment in

the evo

genre a

from

femi

whic

Scu

of t

the

crit

rel

ce

pr

(7

Ve

re

the evolution of both Scudéry's novelistic enterprise and the evolution of the genre as a whole.

> While the Nouvelles françaises [of Montpensier] was not published until 1657, the work's incipit shows that it was begun early in Montpensier's exile, at the time when Scudéry was working on the final volume of Artamène, in which Sapho's entrance signals the death of the action--oriented model for fiction and in which the new amazons owe their independence to the power of the word rather than the power of the sword. In Scudéry's new model for prose fiction, as in the courts in exile like Montpensier's the making of history if eclipsed by the writing of history. This deferred, deflected perspective on action is a vision that, while fatal to romance, generates what can be seen as the great French tradition of the novel, the novel as saga of voyeurism and oblique action, progressing inexorably toward the livre sur rien.(*Tender*, 55)

DeJean speaks of the frame of the new novel in terms of shift in focus from the action to "the word." Scudéry's first novels speak in volumes about feminist and political issues. The new novelistic form, called the *nouvelle* and which will become the modern novel, speaks volumes in shorter texts than Scudéry's previous voluminous novels. They incarnate the momentous discovery of the power of the word. *La Promenade de Versailles* demonstrates brilliantly the realization of the power of the word to praise and in the same gesture to criticize.

DeJean elaborates a theory of the collective nature of salon writing. She relates this collective writing production to the forced exiles of seventeenth-century France. "The time for the extensive salon collaboration essential to the production of novels rather than poems was most often the result of political exile (75)." Again, la belle Etrangére, the central character of *La Promenade de Versailles*, is in exile for the duration of the novel for political and personal reasons of her own.[24]

DeJean cites Lafayette's *Princesse de Clèves* in the context of writings in exile.

> Like the Grande Mademoiselle [Montpensier] during her official confinement, Lafayette in the course of her "exile" on her husband's estate was working at the intersection of women's writing, the great actions that founded the French State, and the private history of women's legal rights in marriage.(*Tender*, 109)

La belle Etrangére finds herself in exile because of her interpretation of love and the personal and untenable restrictions on marriage to her love Cleandre, which force her to leave her native land.

DeJean reiterates this connection between love, marital laws, exile, and the *nouveau roman* of seventeenth-century France.

> Salon writing that was a product of the Princesse de Conti's exile indicated the path most frequently chosen for early French women's writing: the novels created at Eu elect a historical setting to develop a plot composed in equal part of political and amorous adventures. This would remain, until the mid-eighteenth century, the stock formula for French women writers recording women's involvement in the body politic.(23)

The plot of *La Promenade de Versailles* spins a tale of romantic adventure and political critique. DeJean also recognizes the inherent danger to patriarchy of the *précieuse* novelistic enterprise (*Tender* 9). It is the same perceived danger to patriarchy that Stanton describes as the male's phantasmagorical fear of women writers and that she believes creates the mythology of *préciosité*. The theories of DeJean and Stanton, while seemingly antithetical, actually reinforce one another. The critical inception of *préciosité's* literary productions becomes a major critical force in the history of the novel. Both DeJean and Stanton would agree.

By the time *La Promenade de Versailles* was written in 1669, Madeleine de Scudéry was widely known by all as Sapho. In her self-portrait in her novel

Cyr

Sap

dep

pro

liter

of t

Etra

hido

dar

Sap

Scu

com

Cyrus, Scudéry calls herself Sapho. Henceforth, Scudéry is known as the French Sapho. Like la belle Etrangére, Scudéry adopts a literary alias.

There are similarities in the biography of Sapho and Scudéry's self-depiction. DeJean reminds us that:

> both were orphaned at an early age; both had only one brother; both were dark, and neither was known for her beauty, although both were redeemed by their vivacity and by certain charms, such as "brilliant" eyes and graceful hands, show to their best advantage in a conversational situation. (*Fictions*, 104)

DeJean goes on to add that "[t]his resemblance established, Scudéry proceeds to translate her Greek precursor into the ideal image of the French literary woman of the mid-seventeenth century (104)."

DeJean argues that "Scudéry used Sappho as the heroine of a new fiction of the feminine (96-97)." The heroine of *La Promenade de Versailles*, la belle Etrangére also shares features of Sapho and Scudéry.

As the twentieth-century feminists insist on the "invisible, foreign, secret, hidden, mysterious, black, forbidden" female coming to writing, again we see darkness inscribed in the *autoportrait of* Scudéry, in her depiction of the historical Sapho, and in her character who comes to Versailles from afar. In *Cyrus*, Scudéry/Sapho is dark complected.

> Pour le teint, elle ne l'a pas de la dernière blancheur; il a toutefois un si bel éclat qu'on peut dire qu'elle l'a beau. Mais ce que Sapho a de souverainement agréable, c'est que'elle a les yeux si beaux, si vifs, si amoureux [...]."(Tome X, Livre II 554)

In his description of Scudéry, the critic Cousin insists on her dark complexion. In fact, in his own words he admits that he considers her ugly.

"[..

tout

affi

her

res

qu

be

Et

Et

So

16

So

cl

Et

su

"[...] Mlle de Scudéry était laide, son teint surtout tirant au noir, ôtait à sa figure toute prétention de beauté (Volume II 124)." Cousin's description ironically affirms Scudéry's entry into the realm of *écriture féminine*.

Further, Cousin implies that Scudéry's lack of beauty is compensated by her finesse in the salons of Paris.

> Mlle de Scudéry était la souveraine du lieu. Les charmes de son esprit, la noblesse et la douceur de son caractère, la sûreté et l'agrément de son commerce, la faisaient adorer, et elle se maintint constamment dans l'estime publicque par la parfaite innocence de ses moeurs.(121)

In *Cyrus*, Scudéry herself elevates her own and Sapho's wit over their respective beauty. "Mais ce n'est pas encore par ce que je viens de vous dire que Sapho est la plus aimable; car les charmes de son esprit surpassent de beaucoup ceux de sa beauté (557)." According to the *narratrice*, la belle Etrangére also:

> a mille charmes que je ne peux exprimer, qu'elle a beaucoup & de fort belles pierreries, que ce qu'elle a d'équipage a un certain air de qualité qui marque que ce n'est pas vne personne d'vn rang commun [...] & qu'enfin ce n'est pas du costé du bien que la Fortune lui est contraire.(25-26)

At a distance from Paris and Versailles, in her own realm, la belle Etrangére possesses both beauty and wit. Celanire resembles the personae of Scudéry and her literary double, Sapho. In *Cyrus* one might speculate that by 1669, Scudéry felt more comfortable in her own skin. The degree to which Scudéry self-allegorizes through the character of la belle Étrangére will become clear. The continual insistence on Celanire's beauty by her sobriquet la belle Etrangére points to a narrative strategy of *La Promenade de Versailles*, namely, subterfuge to allow the dangerous secret critique of absolutism embedded in the

romanesque story. Scudéry transforms herself into a beautiful princess to tell the true story of Versailles. This critique, central to the novel, will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, la belle Etrangére is not described as having a dark complexion, but she is shrouded in mystery, since the reader can never learn of her origins. Neither the characters of the novel nor the reader will learn of her true origin.

The novel successfully creates an aura of mystery around the characters. And Scudéry constructs a new narrative frame by placing the story under the pen of a female narrator. The gender of the narrator cannot be confirmed until page 64, at which the point the alert reader will realize that she is a female narrator. The French term narratrice inscribing the gender of the enunciator of the narration in the word, albeit by a simple change in the ending, is more evocative of the revolutionary female narrative forces which resound in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

The *narratrice* must make arrangements so that she and her guests might enter Versailles. As she writes a note to that effect, a friend of hers arrives and she inquires about the beautiful visitor.

> Mais pendant que j'envoiai vn billet que j'avois, afin qu'on nous laissât entrer, je vis sortir une de mes amies avec cinq ou six personnes qui parurent toutes extremément surprises de la grande beauté de nostre Etrangere, car sa coiffe estoit levée, parce qu'elle avoit voulu regarder l'aspect de ce magnifique Palais.(21-22)

It may not be accidental that the first person to note the beauty of the foreign guest is a woman. She needs an excuse to inquire about la belle

Etrangére. "[E]lle feignit d'avoir quelque chose d'important à me dire, afin de me demander qui estoit cette admirable personne (22)."

One is reminded of DeJean's argument that the Sapho/Scudéry connection in *Cyrus* subtly but successfully inscribes an affirmation of lesbian love. First, DeJean admits the suggestion is perhaps tenuous.

> I am unable to make the claim that would be most telling for the history of fictions of sexual propriety in France, that Scudéry plainly inscribes her Sapho's rejection of heterosexual relationships.(Fictions 104)

DeJean does go on to claim: "When Scudéry is read closely, it becomes clear that the French Sapho's position on sexuality and in particular on her precursor's sexuality is hardly so straightforward as it is generally considered (105)." DeJean teases out the Sapho biography to reveal a "feminocentric economy."

> Scudéry's portrayal of the sexual orientation of Saphho's poetry is more complex still. In Scudéry's revision, Sapho is constantly surrounded by four female friends[...] Indeed, when we meet her, Sapho's entire affective world is feminocentric.(106)

DeJean continues:

> Most crucially, she [Sapho] agrees to live with him [her lover, Phaon] only if he promises never even to mention marriage to her. Sapho thereby guarantees that she will never be submitted to the 'long slavery' (343) that is woman's legal status in marriage [...].(107)

In *Cyrus*, "safe within the confines of utopia, Sapho continues 'to write every day' (608)." Finally, DeJean claims that "Scudéry's Sapphic vision is in fact permeated with fictions of the feminine, in particular with fictions of the woman writer (*Fictions* 107-108)."

a wo

Nor

DeJ

for t

life

Cel

esc

whi

nov

day

she

mar

Etra

"qui

kno

admi

The fact that the first Parisian to notice the beauty of la belle Etrangére is a woman can be construed as a most subtle suggestion of lesbian attraction. Nonetheless, as the ancient Sapho's text inscribes female same-sex desire, DeJean argues that Scudéry's *Cyrus* "uses Sappho to initiate a new female plot for the novel: the process by which woman rejects marriage, and the story of the life she creates for herself outside marriage (110)."

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Scudéry uses the same female plot. Celanire also rejects an imposed marriage. She frees herself from bondage and escapes to Versailles. In the end, Celanire does marry her true love, Cleandre, which can be interpreted as a subtle concession to patriarchy at the end of the novel. However, because of a declaration her father added to his will several days before his death, Celanire can legitimately marry the man of her choice and she does.

Of course, Scudéry herself, though she had several suitors, never married. In *La Promenade de Versailles*, the first person to notice la belle Etrangére is a woman. The friend of the *narratrice* draws her aside and asks she "qui estoit cette grande beauté [...] (23)." The *narratrice* must admit that she knows nothing of la belle Etrangére's origins.

> Je vous assure, lui dis-je, que je n'en sai guere plus que vous, & tout ce que je puis vous en dire, c'est qu'il y a trois semaines que cét homme que vous voiez qui n'est plus dans sa prémiére jeunesse, & dont l'air est fort d'un homme de condition, vint me trouver, & m'apporta vne lettre d'vn de mes plus chers amis qui est en voiage[...] il me prie d'aimer & de servir cette belle Etrangére [...](23-24)

The *narratrice's* friend wishes to join the party. "Voilà une aventure admirable, me dit mon amie, & si j'osois, je rentrerois à Versailles avec vous,

pour avoir ma part d'vne si bonne compagnie (24)." The *narratrice* preempts this overture by her friend, however, by telling her that "la belle Etrangére cherche la solitude [...] (25)."

This passage hardly represents a budding and ardent lesbian relationship. Yet, as DeJean points out, Scudéry's texts are subtle. *La Promenade de Versailles* already creates a new narrative mold by placing the story under the pen of a female narrator. The comparison of Scudéry/Sapho and la belle Etrangére continues. Like Scudéry/Sapho, la belle Etrangére is orphaned at an early age. The *narratrice* of the first 100 pages of *La Promenade de Versailles* remains anonymous. Glicere, a relative of la belle Etrangére, then begins the *romanesque* story of Celanire with a description of the court in their far away realm. After setting the stage for the story, Glicere begins the history of Celanire.

> Mais sans m'arrester davantage, Celanire pouvait avoir seize ans lorsqu'elle perdit son pere, et peu de jours aprés sa mere: elle alla demeurer chez vn oncle qu'elle a, que j'appellerai Euribiade, dont la femme que j'appelle Elisene, a autant d'ambition que d'esprit.(106-107)

Like la belle Etrangére, Scudéry/Sapho lost her parents in her youth. As in *Cyrus*, the biographical implications are only too clear. Sapho, according to DeJean was orphaned at an early age, as was Scudéry. In 1613, at the age of five or six, "[a]fter the death of her father, followed closely by that of her mother, Madeleine is raised by an uncle [...] (Aronson, 13)."

To reiterate, Scudéry, Sapho and la belle Etrangére share biographical details as well as the metaphorical descriptions of the woman coming to writing. Sapho and Scudéry are described in like terms as to their complexion, for example, but all three shared darkened, that is, mysterious origins.

cha

Etra

rem

she

she

wou

oper

the t

pseu

must

to ev

from

this te

Other

of the

The beginning pages of *La Promenade de Versailles* introduce other characters that are also given pseudonyms. Glicere, a relative of la belle Etrangére, is also pseudonymous. Like la belle Etrangére, her real identity must remain a secret. Glicere becomes extremely important to the narrative because she takes over the role of the *narratrice* from Part 1. In the "Histoire de Celanire," she slides into that important narrative function almost seamlessly, as her name would indicate, i.e. *glisser*, to slide.

Yet another character and relative of the heroine is introduced in the opening pages of the novel. He responds to Glicere's comment about enjoying the tour of Versailles.

> Je prétends en avoir encore plus que vous, dit vn de leurs parens que je nommerai Telamon, car je suis si touché des beaux objets des belles maisons, des jardins, des bois, des fontaines, & de tout ce qui fait la grande beauté des Palais de la campagne, que je n'ai jamais vû de lieu qui ait quelque chose d'extraordinaire, sans en faire ou le plan ou la description; & comme j'ai extremément voiagé, je puis me vanter d'avoir les plus lieux du monde en ma disposition. (4)

Telamon is also a relative of la belle Etrangére. The *narratrice* assigns this pseudonymn to him. Like Glicere and la belle Etrangére, Telamon's true identity must be kept secret. In his response to Glicere he emphasizes his qualifications to evaluate the beauty of Versailles, the reader also learns that Telamon comes from a far. He has traveled the world over and now he comes to Versailles. By this textual gesture, the male becomes part of the metaphorical space of the Other as he is related to la belle Etrangére biologically and metaphorically.

Significantly, Telamon's speech begins a polemic that continues for most of the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles*. In the discussion of the merits of

lengthy description over narrative, Telamon and Glicere debate the merits of each. Telamon loves to linger over a beautiful description. Glicere is anxious to get to the action. Lanson found Scudéry's *conversations*, reflective of the best contemplative thought of the seventeenth century, but also, ironically, overblown. Scudéry, reassessing her works in 1669, and writing a novel dramatically shorter than her other works, acknowledges that the time for more succinct narrative exposition has come, a narrative that capitalizes on the powerful narrative force of the interiority of the *conversation*.

The beginning of the second part of the novel, *Histoire de Celanire*, reminds the reader of the importance of the secrets of the novel:

> Puisque par le secret qui est inséparable de cette aventure, je ne puis vous dire, ni le veritable nom de la belle inconnuë, ni son païs, ni precisément la naissance, quoiqu'elle consente que vous sachiez toute sa vie, je suis délivrée de la peine qu'ont d'abord presque tous ceux qui racontent des histoires; car pour l'ordinaire ils sont exactement la généalogie de ceux dont ils parlent. Il est vrai que je me prepare à vne autre peine qui n'est pas moins grande; c'est de m'empescher de vous découvrir par aucune circonstance, si cette aventure est arrivée en Italie, en Espagne, en Angleterre, ou en quelque autre païs. J'espere pourtant faire mon recit de façon que vous n'y pourrez rien connoistre. (103-104)

Chapter 4 will demonstrate the importance of the secret in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The second *narratrice*, Glicere, takes as much care to conceal the identities and the origins of her characters as the narratrice of the first part of the novel. She adds, "Les Romans pour l'ordinaire prennent des noms connus & celebres pour servir de fondement à d'agréables mensonges. Mais ici les aventures sont vraies, & les noms sont supposez (104)."

Celanire cannot stress too adamantly the necessity for the anonymity of the characters of her story. This insistence is due to the implied danger of a story

that

of a

priva

exile

conv

cons

sudd

cons

Hug

of S

Juri

his r

in se

frien

Mars

broth

that both favors women's liberation and reveals the belligerent nature at the heart of absolutism.

Scudéry's enterprise was foreign. Further, it is in exile. Being secret, private, apart and female, the salon writing of Scudéry abounds in metaphors of exile. The Scudérian biographer, Claude Argonnès, juxtaposes Scudéry's conversations with exile. Argonnès suggests that the Bishop Fléchier found consolation in his exile in his reading of Scudéry.

> À la même époque, Fléchier, nommé évêque de Lavaur, puise dans *les Conversations* de quoi consoler son exil: "Il me fallait une lecture aussi délicieuse que celle-là pour me délasser des fatigues d'un voyage, pour me guérir de l'ennui des mauvaises compagnies de ce pays-ci et pour me faire goûter le repos où la rigueur de la saison et la docilité de mes nouveaux convertis me retiennent dans ma ville épiscopale." (241)

In the secret critique of absolutism embedded in the story of Celanire, suddenly the exilic voyages of the characters takes on deeper meaning. For, consider the fact that the author of a tract similar to Scudéry's critique was a Huguenot and a political and religious dissident. Chapter 4 compares a segment of Scudéry's secret political critiques with a text presumedly written by Pierre Jurieu when he was exiled in Holland. Jurieu actually was exiled to Holland for his radical religious and political beliefs. Being in exile became a commonplace in seventeenth-century France.

Several times during her lifetime, Scudéry found herself or her family or friends in "exil." For economic reasons Scudéry and her brother had to reside in Marseille for a time. Her separation from Paris felt like a forced exile. Later, her brother had to go into exile during the Fronde.

Fr

br

sh

ex

mu

Ve

co

at

She

pré

Dic

rais

beli

She

the

bec

her

And

the

Cyrus proves to be an allegory set in ancient times of the Condé and the Frondeurs and Frondeuses of Paris. Even though Madeleine wrote *Cyrus*, her brother penned the work, which perhaps explains why he had to flee Paris, and she did not. As we know, Scudéry's good friend Paul Pellisson, though not exiled, was actually imprisoned for several years because of his support of their mutual friend Fouquet.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, la belle Etrangére finds herself exiled at Versailles. She had to flee her native country, her realm. From whence she comes is never disclosed in the novel. Her lover does find her in her hiding place at Versailles, after a period of exile and chivalrous escapades of his own.

Maître asks the question. "La Préciosité: 'Un empire des Femmes' (51)?" She suggests that even the seventeenth-century satirist Somaize defines *préciosité* as a metaphorical realm. "Urimédonte [a character in Somaize's *Dictionnaire*] est un objet digne d'estime et d'amour par tout où il y aura de la raison et des yeux, et que l'on doit placer au plus noble endroit du royaume de la belle *préciosité* (51)." La belle Etrangére comes from an unknown far off realm. She too is most noble. Allegorically, she represents an affirmation of the realm of the *précieuse* of the Parisian salon.

Scudéry herself was known as "La Souveraine des Précieuses,"[25] because she regally presided over her "*Samedi*" salon gathering. Also, because her novels reigned supreme in the written literary production of the *précieuses*. And, finally because she created the cartographic *Royaume de tendre*, in *Clélie*, the famous document which became known as the *La Carte de Tendre*.

Maître cites Dominique Maigueneau's definition of the term "Paratopie."

> L'appartenance au champ littéraire, n'est donc pas l'absence de tout lieu, mais plutôt une difficile négociation entre le lieu et le non-lieu, une localisation parasitaire, qui vit de l'impossiblité même de stabiliser cette localité paradoxale, nous la nommerons "paratopie".(408)

Tendre and *préciosité*, Maître hypothesizes, are such a "paratopie" or "hétérotopie"(Foucault's term). "Le salon rue de Beauce et dans le roman et dont la 'Carte de Tendre' dessine les espaces et les chemins (408)."

Scudéry is then, *La Souveraine des Précieuses*, the queen of her metaphorical realm of Tender. La belle Etrangére could be defined as the sovereign of beauty and of gentility. Because of her values, she could herself be catergorized as a true *précieuse*. La belle Etrangére implicity becomes an allegorical auto-biography of Scudéry, herself. By 1669, given that Madeleine de Scudéry actually alludes to Molière's contribution to the 1668 *Feste de Versailles*, albeit through Félibien's citation, we might assume a degree of amnesty between these two important seventeenth-century French authors. Molière may have considered la belle Etrangére "une bonne *précieuse*."

To conclude this discussion of *préciosité,* consider Maître's conclusion to her monumental work on *préciosité* where she alludes to *Clélie*.

> Il ne peut donc être question de camper la notion de *préciosité* sur une rive archaïque de l'orature[sic], opposée à la littérature, pratique moderne liée à l'imprimé. Tout ce que nous pouvons tâcher d'entendre, ce sont les "citations de voix",[as defined in Michel de Certeau's *L'Invention du quotien*] leurs effets de sens dans ce territoire du langage humain nommé *littérature* que les précieuses, femmes auteurs, ont elles-mêmes exploré, traversant, comme Clélie d'un rive à l'autre du Tibre, le fleuve langagier qui sépare la présence dans la parole partagée de *l'exil de l'écriture*.(Emphasis mine. 653)[26]

pres

deep

Cixo

journ

obliv

litera

alrea

obliv

A linguistic Tiber, *La Promenade de Versailles* is a river that embodies the presence of the word and the exile of writing. Scudéry's *précieuse* river runs deeper than many have thought for several centuries. The characteristics of Cixous and Clément's inscription of woman coming to writing can be found in the journey of la belle Etrangére. We may evoke Sapho's river Lethe, the river of oblivion.[27] The journey of *préciosité* metaphorically represents the feminist literary journey of her most exemplary author, Madeleine de Scudéry. Always already in the present and in exile, the Scudérian corpus now returns from oblivion.

Notes

[1] See DeJean *Tender*. DeJean speaks frequently of Scudéry's influence on Lafayette. The index directs the reader to at least a dozen discussions. DeJean sees Scudéry's influence as having spanned the centuries. "[. . .]Sapho's rejection of marriage indicates her creator's rejection of the closure and the order that had previously governed the novel. In Scudéry's wake, French women writers from Lafayette, to Staël, to Sand to Colette bring their novels to an end by calling into question marriage's function to regulate the social order (50)."

[2] See Harth. She contends that the term "salon" as applied to seventeenth-century gatherings is an anachronism. "*Salon* was not applied to social gatherings until the nineteenth century. In the sevententh century, the term salon was not used to refer to the interior meeting place of the gatherings which it later came to designate. In the earlier period, fashionable people of both sexes met either in spaces within room--*alcôves*, *ruelles*-or in *cabinets* (studies or "closets") and *chambres* (15)." Since the literary criticism we will be discussing here most often uses the word salon to designate alcôves, ruelles and cabinets, we will make no effort to correct the current anachronisitc usage here.

[3] See Livet 11. He credits Malherbe with "inventing" Arthénice as an anagramme for Catherine. "Arthénice, avons-nous dit était le nom poétique de Madame de Rambouillet. C'était Malherbe, qui, pour suivre l'usage et donner aux poëtes un moyen de la chanter, sans trahir pour le vulgaire le secret d'un nom si respecté, avait trouvé dans Catherine cet anagramme."

[4] V
aff
Hu
our
[5] I
not
hav
unf
ear
cha
Cha
Chp
Ultir
Scu
sinc
[6] Se
valu
the r
seve
of the
the g
[7] See
been

[4] Vincent's contention that those who gather to discuss literature are prone to an affliction of malaise would be humorous if the existing bias against the Humanities were not currently such a threat to Arts, Language and Letters across our country.

[5] In the many literary histories that have been penned concerning *préciosité,* the notion that there are three classes of précieuses is a commonplace. Here we have used the phrase "the good, the bad and the ugly" sarcastically, but unfortunately, literary historians have classified the *précieuses* this way in earnest. See Backer. Her work describes an historic topos. Several of her chapters and chapter sub-titles telegraph her evaluation of the *précieuses.* Chapter I entitled Rambouillet has a sub-titled section "Queen of the Fronde." Chpater II entitled "The Precious Decade has a sub-titled section "Sapho, the Ultimate Prude," and "Bourgeoisie and Worse (ix)." Victor Cousin insisted that Scudéry was ugly and that that accounted for her particular "refus d'amour," since she never married. See also DeJean *Préciosité.*

[6] See DeJean, Maître, Lathuillère, and Stanton. These authors present the most valuable texts on the subject of *préciosité* and Scudéry. Maître's work contains the most comprehensive look at the *précieuses* since they lived and wrote in the seventeenth century. It begins an exploration of the lesser known female writers of the seventeenth century who have so far been lost to scholarship because of the general problematics of *précioisté.*

[7] See Brunetière 12. He contends that Madame de Rambouillet may not have been a target of Molière's play, but that Scudéry surely was. "Le nom de Cathos

a tout l'air d'avoir quelque signification, mais celui de Madelon en a certainement une, et elle est directe, et Madeleine de Scudéry s'y fut difficilement méprisé." He goes on to say that the play's satire was aimed at "toutes les précieuses, de Paris ou de la province, les *illustres* comme les *ridicules*, à fond et indistinctement (12)."

[8] Mongrédien does offer fruitful insights to seventeenth-century French society in other essays, particulary his work on Louis XIV. However, Mongrédien's work on the *précieuses* proves prejudicial.

[9] See Mongrédien 72-84. *Le grand dictionnaire des précieuses ou la clef de la langue des ruelles* by Antoine Baudeau de Somaize is reproduced in Georges Mongrédien's *Les Précieux et les précieuses*.

[10] Tallemant describes her thus. "Sa sœur a plus d'esprit que luy, et est tout autrement raisonable. Mais elle n'est guères moins vaine: elle dit tousjours: "Depuis le renversement de nostre maison." Vous diriez qu'elle parle du bouleversement de l'empire grec." This citation is often quoted in the literature on Madeleine de Scudéry. Tallemant may have been one of Scudéry's contemporaries who began the cruel descriptions of her physical appearance. See Tallemant des Réaux, 685.

[11] What would motivate Somaize to waffle with regards to Molière? An anecdote involving Molière, Somaize, Pure, and a purported accusation of plagiarism could account for Somaize's seemingly inconsistent evaluation of Molière. See Appendix C, The Mysterious origins of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

[12] See Molière, *Oeuvres complètes*, Seuil 411. "La conquête de la France-Comté, la traité d'Aix-la-Chapelle, le rayonnnement sur l'Europe après sept ans de règne d'un "Roi-Soleil" de trente ans méritaient d'être célébrés avec éclat. Colbert, le duc de Créquy, le maréchal de Bellefond reçurent l'order d'organiser le Grand Divertissement [sic] royal de Versailles de juillet 1668, dont les fournisseurs furent Vigarani, Lulli et Molière."

[13] DeJean points out the advantages and disadvantages to collective writing. "[O]ne has no claim to originality, no absolute right to one's story [. . .]. "At the same time [. . .] the individual is protect by the collective from personal attacks [. . .] (*Tender* 101)."

[14] See Bénichou 329-337.

[15] See *A New History of French Literature*, Antoine Compagnon , "Gustave Lanson Publishes His Histoire de la littérature française" 895.

[16] Cuddon defines "secentismo" parathetically as "An Italianism from seicento 'six hundred' = 17th c." (851) However, Cuddon spells secentismo without an "I" following the initial s of secentismo.

[17] LaLande discusses Clitandre's condemnation of "the overt display of erudition."(192) She rightly points out that Madeleine de Scudéry herself voiced this concern. However, what can be interpreted as female modesty, may in fact have been more a reaction to the difficulties and dangers tied to authorship in the seventeenth-century France. I refer the reader to Joan DeJean's Chapter "What Is An Author?", in *Tender Geographies, Women and the Origins fo the Novel in France*. Therein DeJean states, "Lafayette's novel can be seen as an extended

me

of t

equ

pers

DeJ

to S

Scu

[18] Al

Philip

"Il se

trans

mièv

coura

conce

au cl

colloc

Miam

préci

concl

les tra

catég

Pelou

work

meditation on the powerful attraction of originality that was a necessary correlate of the establishment of modern authorial identity. However, it proposes an equally powerful reflection on the dangers of life in the public domain and on the personal price to the author who writes to establish a *nom d'auteur*."(97) While DeJean here refers to Lafayette, the same arguments are at least as applicable to Scudéry as they are to Lafayette. The original 1669 edition of Madeleine de Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* was unsigned.

[18] Although there has been an explosion of work on *préciosité*, scholars, such as Philippe Sellier, Maître's mentor, concede that much work remains to be done. "Il serait salubre, enfin, d'en finir avec la doxa, l'opinion floue, et même erronée, transmise par les dictionnnaires, selon lesquels précieux veut dire alambiqué, mièvre, et autres gentillesses. Bien sûr, nous n'abolirons pas ces usages courants. Mais nous pouvons espérer que la critique littéraire, elle, précise ses concepts. Un tel travail conduirait à situer la préciosité par rapport au baroque et au classicisme." p. 328 "Se tirer du commun des femmes," in Actes du 4e colloque du Centre International de Rencontres sur le XVIIe siècle, University of Miami 23 au 25 avril 1998. He calls for twentieth-century critics to define *préciosité*. In other words, the parameters of *préciosité* are yet to be defined. The conclusion to Maître's opus begins: "La question de la préciosité peinait, malgré les travaux de Roger Lathuillère, à sortir du débat hérité du XIX e siècle sur les catégories esthétiques, et se trouvait suspendue, depuis la thèse de Jean-Michel Pelous, à la preuve de l'existence historique des précieuses." Maître entitles her work *Les précieuses, Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVIIe*

siècle. The title acknowledges that a renaissance in the interest of seventeenth-century *précieux* texts requires that archival work be done to unearth the lost, female précieuses writers. Her work makes great strides in that direction. However, in order to describe *préciosité* adequately as a movement or an esthetique one must overcome the problems of its critical history. "Les ambiguités de la question des précieuses et de la préciosité au XVIIe siècle (la distinction entre 'vraies' et 'fausses' précieuses en particulier) ont été reprises et refondues par l'histoire littéraire naissante dans des systèmes explicatifs qui n'avaient plus grand chose à voir avec les pratiques sociales et langagières du XVIIe, mais qui permettaient aux écrivains et aux critiques du XIXe siècle de se poser en héritiers directs du Grand Siècle, tout en tenant à distance les femmes auteurs de leur propre temps (649)." In the ambiguous characteristics ascribed to it by seventeenth-century contemporaries, Maître traces an essentially negative critical history of *préciosité* from the seventeenth century to the present, particularly the attachment of nineteenth-century critics to a classicism of nostalgia joined to an abhorence of so-called *préciosité*. Before one can enunciate an affirmative aesthetic of *préciosité* one must undo the work of past criticism and begin again by reading *précieux* texts buried in the archives and re-reading the *précieux* texts that are more readily available. Maître goes on in her conclusion to question linking *Préciosité* to *galanterie* or to a discussion of orality versus printed text. She concludes that having begun the search for the *précieuses*, now the task is to read their works and glean an aesthetic from the texts of the *précieuses* rather than from the analysis of their critics. "Il reste donc

l'espoir que notre contribution, se joignant à celles d'autres lecteurs devenus ces derniers temps toujours plus nombreux, fendille plus avant le bloc d'illisibilité dans lequel sont encore tenus la plupart de ces textes prolixes, innombrables. Lire est une aventure déconcertante, et plus déconcertante encore lorsque l'objet à lire est depuis longtemps déclaré illisible (653)." In short, the existence of *précieuses* writers can now be assumed as fact. The enunciation of a *précieux* aesthetic must be determined from the works themselves. It cannot be enunciated a priori.

[19] Stanton agrees that Scudéry's texts offer an exemplary model of *conversation*, but she would call Madeleine de Scudéry an honnête femme, rather than a *précieuse*, since Stanton denies the construction of *préciosité* in the seventeenth century. In this dissertation Scudéry is defined as a p*récieuse* writer, given the revised definition herein described.

[20] See Prince 42-43.

[21] The text's comparison of Louis XIV to historic firgures of the past is important. In Part 1, Louis is compared to the ancient kings of Egypt, Medea and Spain. For practical as well as for historical reasons, no comparison proves more important than comparing Louis XIV to Julius Caesar. In fact, this gesture was almost obligatory in the age of royal ad campaigns for King Louis. Elizabeth Goldsmith makes the following claim. "Of the five decades of Louis XIV's personal reign, the 1660's saw the most intensive state effort to impress upon French society and the governments of all the European powers the image of *Louis XIV Imperator*, heir to the glory of the Roman empire. Every major state institution introduced at

th

st

ar

tha

kir

imp

mis

foll

text

[22] S

préc

Pure

[23] Bo

[24] Se

of wr

[25] Se

havir

[26] Pre

literat

[27] See

this time was ceremoniously presented as part of a massive rebirth of the Roman state, made possible by the appearance of a new French Caesar. Writers and artist were expected to assist in strengthening the links between myth and history that were necessary to generate political power from the symbol of the 'sun king'(81)." In light of Goldsmith's contention, suddenly René Godenne's impatience with Madeleine de Scudéry's lengthy historical descriptions seems misplaced. Scudéry was able to critique the king because she had the wisdom to follow the 1660's formula for success. In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Scudéry's text compares Louis XIV to Julius Caesar.

[22] See Sellier 121. Sellier's footnote refers to Jean-Michel Pelous' *Amour précieux, amour galant* and I.M. Richmond's *Héroisme et galanterie, L'abbé de Pure témoin d'une crise (1653-1665)*.

[23]Boileau's play is also known as "Dialogue des Heros de Roman."

[24] See *Tender* 109. DeJean cites Lafayette's *Princesse de Clèves* in the context of writings in exile.

[25] See Sellier "Se tirer du commun des femmes" 314. Sellier cites Maître as having discovered the expression in "*La Gazette galante*, 12 et 16 juin 1657."

[26] Presumably, Maître defines *orature* in juxtaposition to *littérature,* that is, oral literature versus written literature.

[27] See DeJean *Fictions* 112-113.

Chapter Three

Exemplarity and Subversion in *La Promenade de Versailles*

> The Louvre is assuredly the most superb palace in the world...This house of Versailles has much more to do with Your Majesty's pleasure and diversion than with Your glory [...] What a pity if the greatest King were to be judged by Versaillles. -Colbert

Rhetoric of Exemplarity

La Promenade de Versailles describes a space that was the center of influence and power in the seventeenth century, the court of the Sun King, Louis XIV. Hidden within the frame of the description of Versailles lies a bold critique of the absolutist monarchy and Louis XIV himself. Scudéry uses both the rhetorical device of example and the rhetorical strategies of exemplarity. Her text then powerfully subverts the exemplum. The most striking example in the text is none other than that of the absolute monarch and his court at Versailles. But the text diverts attention from the Sun King only to redirect it to him in a subtle yet critical description of absolutist policies.

How does Scudéry's text use example as a rhetorical device? Her choice of example as a prime metaphorical device in her works is not accidental. According to John Lyons, the example proved to be a particularly powerful rhetorical device in early modern texts. In *Exemplum*, Lyons explores the "possibilites of exemplary rhetoric and its display or concealment"(x) in early modern French texts. In *La Promenade de Versailles* the continual push-pull of revelation and concealment permeates the text. In Chapter 4, the notion that secrecy is a major trope of the *La Promenade de Versailles* will be discussed.

ap

Cy

lite

sev

exe

a b

as

an

Fro

DeJ

Lyons gives the following working definition of example:

> An example is a dependent statement qualifying a more general and independent statement by naming a member of the class established by the general statement [...F]or the early modern period examples are predominantly chosen to reach common ground of belief in a domain that writers and readers will recognize as reality.(x)

Lyons goes on to make the following important point.

> The difficulty of reaching such common ground in the early modern period is what gives the rhetoric of example in that period a particular fascination. This is a period stricken by a *crisis of belief* so severe that it led to wars, massacres, executions, yet writers differing in both general principles and the specific ground in reality by which they attempt to clarify and validate those principles nonetheless continue to make use of a basic rhetorical figure, example.(x)

Scudéry's novels use example for their own purposes, that is, they appropriate ancient exemplum to critique her contemporaries and her society. In *Cyrus* and *Clélie*, the characters are given the names of ancient historical and literary figures. Scudéry's readers knew the stories were parables of seventeenth-century court figures. While her novel provides examples of classic exemplarity as defined by Lyons, *La Promenade de Versailles* also demonstrates a bold subversion of the example. In her earlier novels, what might be construed as a simple gazette of the machinations of courtly society, in fact, demonstrates an audacious move to appropriate antique models for her own purposes.

Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus boldly ennobles central players in the Fronde. Cyrus clearly portrays the dissident leader Condé. As we know, Joan DeJean makes a powerful statement about the importance of this novel.

> All the volumes of *Artamène* were dedicated to the Duchesse de Longueville, and the novel's central couple, Cyrus and Mandane, were seen from the beginning as the fictional counterparts of the great Condé and his sister, the Duchesse of Longueville. The bond forged thereby

> between prose fiction and political subversion marks the origin of the modern French novel...(45)[1]

Scudéry demonstrates a dangerous exemplum in *Artamène*. And, the novel was a tremendous publishing success. Scudéry's best seller was thus both popular and pivotal in an important evolution of the novel.

DeJean goes on to point out that:

> When, in *Artamène*'s final volumes, Scudéry shifts the spotlight from the life of the warrior-king Cyrus to that of the woman writer Sapho, all the elements are in place for the redefinition of the traditional heroic novel she completes in *Clélie*.(82)

DeJean says further:

> In *Clélie*, Scudéry makes the two nonnarrative components found in *Artamène*, the conversation and the portrait, her fictional staples until,in sections of the novel, characters seem to live in order to converse, and action is virtually limited to the displacement from the setting for one conversation to the next.(83)

In the seventeenth century, France's literate population was living to converse in their favorite salon, as were the characters in Scudéry's novels. Scudéry's salon was, of course, one of the most renowned. Since the salon as a site of *conversation* and portraiture became associated with *préciosité*, it is not surprising that DeJean acknowledges that "*Clélie* has been widely hailed as the monument of *préciosité* [...] (83)."

DeJean makes a bold claim for Scudéry's invention. She contends that in *Clélie*, Scudéry "makes what may well be the major stylistic innovation in the early development of the novel when she introduces conversations on a large scale (84)." Chapter 4 will explore the importance of the *conversation* in *La Promenade de Versailles* in detail.

DeJean reiterates that "in *Clélie*, Scudéry follows the political subversiveness of *Artamène* with a novel of social subversion."(86) *La Promenade de Versailles* combines Scudéry's innovative narrative device, the *précieux* discourse of the *conversation*, with a socio-political critique of Louis XIV's seventeenth-century court society. The *précieuse conversation* becomes a vehicle of the novel's subtle exemplarity.

La Promenade de Versailles uses both ancient and contemporary examples to tell its story. Through its description of Versailles and the subtle critique of Louis XIV, the novel itself becomes even more exemplary of the modern French novel than *Artamène* or *Clélie* and more daring. Using the king and his court as examples subtly enables the subversion of both political and social exemplarity in the novel. *La Promenade de Versailles* demonstrates *par excellence* the important shift in exemplarity that Lyons demonstrates in *Exemplum*. *La Promenade de Versailles* is a model piece for the crisis of exemplarity in early modern France that Lyons theorizes.

Lyons describes the power of the example.

> Example is the figure that most clearly and explicitly attempts to shore up the inside of discourse by gesturing toward its outside, toward some commonly recognized basis in a reality shared by the speaker and the listener, reader and writer.(3-4)

The familiarity of the reader with the example outside of the discourse allows the text to reinterpret the reality of the reader as it bolsters its inner discourse.

Versailles represents one of the most exemplary edifices of seventeenth-century Europe. Obviously, the palace holds preeminence in Scudéry's text.

Versailles first appears in the title. And, Versailles metonymically stands for Louis XIV. The Sun King is his palace and the palace is the Sun King. Scudéry's text dramatically points to Versailles as the "outside," the incontrovertible shared reality of her readers, in order to "shore up" the inside of her discourse, a critique of the absolutist society of seventeenth-century France.

Scudéry's text continually draws the reader to shared visions, vistas, and views. From la belle Etrangére's initial exclamation "Que voi-je [...] couronner si magnifiquement cette éminence opposée (2)," to the intricate and myriad of descriptions of the palace of Versailles presented in Part One of *La Promenade de Versailles.* The text also invites the reader to be part of the discourse by continually offering recognizable historical figures and places, including renown historians such as "le Pere de l'Histoire, (10) (presumably Tite-Live) to Pline le Jeune, writers of antiquity, such as Homer, and most importantly, famous historical rulers and their palaces, the kings of Egypt, Spain, and most importantly, Julius Cesar and the famous architecture of Rome. The story line is often interrupted by literary passages, such as poetic citations from Pellisson to Voiture.[2] The novel presents a sophisticated array of literary quotations, usually unidentified literary passages. The historic examples and literary quotations, easily recognized by seventeenth-century readers, serve as the shared reality of the text and the reader. They provide the "outside" that allows the text to "shore up" the potentially dangerous "inside" discourse, the political critique found in *La Promenade de Versailles.*

Lyons contends that:

> once the text has advertised an example, the complexity, not to say trickiness, of the relationships established is often completely unperceived by the reader. Perhaps, this is because example is so central to systems of belief that we occasionally think of it as the direct manifestation of reality, when, in fact, example is a way of taking our beliefs about reality and *reframing* them into something that suits the direction of a text. Example may therefore qualify as the most ideological of figures, in the sense of being the figure that is most intimately bound to a representation of the world and that most *serves as a veil* for the mechanics of that representation."(ix)

Though Lyons does not discuss Scudéry in *Exemplum*, the novel serves as a set piece for what Lyons calls the "possibilities of exemplary rhetoric and its display or concealment (x)." And, of course, the subversion of the exemplum as it plays out in *La Promenade de Versailles* becomes one of the most interesting aspects of the novel.

In this novel, the example that theoretically allows for a subversive frame becomes a frame-up and is therefore potentially very dangerous. In absolutist France of the seventeenth century, the term subversion must not be taken lightly. To subvert means "to ruin or overthrow." However, we maintain that Scudéry's novel praises the spectacle of Versailles even as it seeks to overthrow the menacing forces of absolutism.

Readers of *La Promenade de Versailles* have long appreciated the beauty and the charm of Scudéry's description of Versailles. Perhaps not since the seventeenth century, have readers fully appreciated the internal discourse of dissent framed by the text's depiction of the glorious façade of Versailles.

Lyons explains that "the example must construct or reconstruct its reference, altering the perception of the world by selecting, framing and regulating (that is, subordinating to a rule) some entity or event (4)." Of course,

no one can not change reality, but the perception of reality can be changed. It can be influenced. To see behind the magnificent façade of Versailles to the secret machinations of seventeenth-century political and social reality is to behold the crisis of exemplarity in Scudéry's text.

An Exemplary *Conversation*

In order to subvert the example, that is Louis XIV, Scudéry's novel first constructs a monument that praises the king. Since Scudéry dedicated the novel to the king, the reader anticipates the eulogy of Louis XIV. However, a *conversation* between the assembled characters, la belle Etrangére, Glicere, Telamon, and the narratrice delays the beginning of the story, as well as the anticipated praise of the king. Instead, an example of Scudéry's formal narrative construction, namely the *conversation,* precedes a lengthy description eulogizing Louis XIV as the characters tour the palace.

This first *conversation* valorizes the use of description itself. Thus, the eventual description of the palace by the characters and their praise of Louis XIV prove to exalt the king twice over. The *conversation* prepares the way for the eulogy of the king. *La Promenade de Versailles* presents an exemplary description of an exemplary figure, *le Roi Soleil.*

To wit, the characters begin a debate on the importance of descriptions. Glicere wants to embark on their promenade for the pure joy of walking. "[J]e me prepare d'avoir beaucoup de plaisir à la promenade de Versailles (3-4)." Telamon, on the other hand, wants to "faire, ou le plan ou la description (4)."

Rather like a modern tourist, Glicere is content simply to take in the sights of Versailles. Telamon contends that while Glicere is just going to see Versailles, he is going to master it. "Mais pour vous [Glicere], je voi bien que vous vous preparez à voir Versailles, lorsque je songe à m'en rendre le maistre [...] (4)." Telamon, by means of the drawings and descriptions he will undertake, dreams of making Versailles his own.

Telamon, and, therefore, Scudéry, understand the potential power of narrative. To have the ability to describe the palace of the most powerful ruler of the seventeenth century renders the author of the description, through the power of narration, master of his or her subject. In the case of *La Promenade de Versailles*, because of Scudéry's meticulous description of Versailles in Part 1 and the allegory of Louis XIV's court in Part 2, her text rules the ruler.[3]

The reader must appreciate the difference between Glicere and Telamon's points of view. One must not "slide by" the words of this novel, as the meaning of Glicere's name, *glisser*, "to slip or to slide," might imply. Instead, one must read the novel carefully in order to make it one's own, as Telamon plans to make Versailles his own.

To read Scudéry's novel as thoroughly as Telamon intends to examine Versailles, requires an effort on the reader's part. The novel's continuous labyrinthine passages of description and *conversation* require the reader's full attention if he or she is to follow the point of the discussions, not to mention an overall narrative strategy of intent.

This thesis will describe the extent to which Scudéry's text becomes a narrative of power. Ironically, Glicere's seemingly more simplistic joy in merely "seeing Versailles" also contains the seed of a powerful critique of Louis XIV. As Chapter 4 will explain, every textual lure beckoning the reader to *observe* Versailles and therefore the king in *La Promenade de Versailles* contributes to the underlying message of Scudéry's novel.

In order to master the subtleties of the text, the reader must be engaged in the text, just as Telamon will be engaged in rendering his impression of Versailles in pictorial and verbal descriptions as he tours the palace. Yet, Glicere's desire to "see" Versailles also serves as a model for the reader. Recall DeJean's juxtaposition of Scudéry's new novelistic form with voyeurism (55).

The *conversation* that apparently interrupts the novel's purpose, the description of Versailles and the king, actually presents the required strategies for reading the text. Glicere and Telamon's *conversation* offers a textual challenge to the reader. The reader must take up the challenge to follow the endless narrative and conversational turns of the novel. The adventurous reader will follow *La Promenade de Versaille's* textual maze, eager for the next unexpected turn and the ultimate outcome of the novel. In the end, the message of *La Promenade de Versailles* proves neither obvious nor facile.

Glicere and Telamon's *conversation* becomes a discussion of the merits of description versus narrative in histories or in novels. René Godenne, a twentieth-century Scudérian critic, reveals his impatience with descriptions that interrupt the action of the novel.[4] Nonetheless, he correctly identifies this

particular *conversation* between Glicere and Telamon as Scudéry's *plaidoyer pro domo* with regard to her narrative predilection for description over action.(IX)

Thus, the first *conversation* of *La Promenade de Versailles* signals the importance of the visual aspects of a text. Telamon's subtle remarks that Glicere intends to simply enjoy the sites of Versailles. "[V]ous vous preparez à voir simplement Versailles [...] (4)." Thus, Telamon alludes to Glicère's expected ocular appreciation of Versailles. Telamon's comments in the *conversation* also point to the pivotal role of description as a powerful narrative strategy as well. To reiterate, the exemplary conversation leads to the description of an exemplary figure, Louis XIV.

Praise of Louis XIV

"cét incomparable Prince [...] (678)."

When the gates of the palace open, the first view la belle Etrangére sees represents Louis XIV, the Sun King. The narratrice explains.

> [E]lle me demanda l'explication de la figure du Soleil qu'elle voioit en divers lieux. Je luy dis alors que c'estoit la devise dont le Roi s'estoit servi dans un Carrousel qui avoit esté & fort magnifique & fort galant; & qu'en effet, on ne pouvoit prendre un corps de Devise plus noble que celuy-là pour le Roi, & où il se trouvait plus de choses capables de convenir à un Prince qui étoit la lumiere du monde, & qui avoit esté donné à la France pour la combler de gloire. *(26-27)*

Scudéry's text acknowledges Louis XIV's ingenious appropriation of the sun as the symbol of his personal reign. He has turned himself into the "light of the world" in order to cover France and its king with glory.

The great king has drawn the attention of all of Europe to the palace of Versailles. La belle Etrangére has heard of Louis's commitment to his royal duties. "C'est donc quelquefois ici...que vostre grand Roi a formé ces grans desseins, qui ont attiré tant de fois sur luy les yeux de toute l'Europe (34)." And the "eyes" of the reader also turn toward Louis XIV.

The *conversation* on description that preceded the opening of the royal gates thus laid the groundwork for Glicere's sceptical reaction to the metonymic association of Louis XIV's grandeur and that of his palace. We will revisit Glicere and Telamon's little exchange. "Pour moi, dit l'aimable Glicere, comme j'aime toûjours mieux les Héros que leur Palais; je croi qu'avant que de voir celui-ci vous devriez nous bien representer quel en est le maistre (35)." Though a man's home may be his castle, the castle does not make the man. Before "seeing" the palace, Glicere asks to know about the man behind the image.

Telamon mitigates the potential danger of Glicere's impertinence by accusing her of an effrontery. "[Q]uelle injure nous faites-vous, & vous mesme? Pouvons-nous donc ignorer ce qu'est un Roi que toute la terre connoist & admire (37)?" Glicere insults her companions and herself by suggesting that they need an explanation of Louis'renown. She should know that the entire world knows and admires Louis XIV.

However, if Glicere, who loves heroes, wants proof, then she is going to get proof. Telamon assures his hostess, the narratrice, that "les étrangers ne se laissent guere surpasser par les François" when it comes to acknowledging the greatness of the king. Nonetheless, it is the narratrice who begins the *éloge* of

the king. (Remember Godenne's suggestion that the narratrice might be Scudéry herself.) She acknowledges that Telamon could relate the great deeds of Louis XIV as well as herself.

> Vous me direz sans doute, si je vous laisse parler...ce que toute la terre sait, & que la Renommée publie par tout avec tant de pompe, qu'il est né dans les triomphes, qu'ils n'ont fait que croistre & augmenter comme son âge, excepté que le cours & le nombre de ses victoires a toûjours passé de bien loin celuy de ses annéés.(36)

Triumphant at birth, the king's triumphs have only increased with his age. The narratrice's praise for King Louis increases as it advances, only to be augmented by Telamon's praise that he offers with the narratrice's permission. "Un esprit amoureux de la gloire, & qui en fait sa première passion [...](37)." "Un honnête homme...Que personne ne l'égale ni à dire toûjours ce qu'il faut, ni à ne dire jamais que ce qu'il faut: Qu'il a de la magnimité sans orgueil, de la magnificence sans ostentation, de la civilité sans abaissement; etc. etc.(38-39)." In short, "un grand Roi (40)."

La belle Etrangére temporarily ends the eulogy with a suggestion that there might not be anything to add to such praise. "[I]l est bien difficile de rien ajoûter à cet éloge (40)." The narratrice and Telamon heaped praise on the king for two and a half pages. The narratrice expresses her joy at the foreigners' knowledge of her king. But, the text has not yet finished eulogizing Louis XIV.

> [T]out ce que Telamon vient de nous dire convient à Louis Quatorziéme, tel qu'il étoit avant les conquestes de Flandres & de la Franche-Comté. Il nous a fait admirablement en fort peu d'espace un grand Roi fort honeste homme, mais si la fantaisie m'en prend en quelque endroit de la promenade, je vous le montrerai encore aussi grand Capitaine que vaillant soldat, & nous verrons alors, s'il ne me reste rien à dire.(41)

Despite the stream of praise, the text offers the slightest hint that there may be more to the picture of Louis XIV than has just been exuberantly detailed. The text implies that the narratrice may heap more praise on Louis XIV. But her statement offers the possibility of a secret she has held back.

The critical literature on *La Promenade de Versailles* almost universally claims the text to be pure adulation of the king. In his preface to a 1991 edition of Madeleine de Scudéry's *Les Femmes Illustres*, Claude Maignien makes the case that she praised the palace, if not directly the king, in the novel. "Pensionnée par le roi, reçue à la Cour, admise aux fêtes somptueuses, elle rédise en 1669 *Promenade à Versailles* où elle chante les louanges du plus magnifique palais royal."[5] We can safely assume that praising the palace of the king implied praising its most important resident, Louis XIV.

Alain Niderst may be Madeleine de Scudéry's most ardent admirer among late twentieth-century Scudérian scholars. Like Godenne, he has conducted extensive research on Madeleine de Scudéry, as well as on her brother Georges, and his wife Marie-Madeleine.[6] He contends that *La Promenade de Versailles* presents a positive reflection of Louis XIV and his court. "La nouvelle est d'abord un flatteur miroir de la cour, des courtisans et du roi. Par delà le beau parc et les belles fêtes de Versailles, par delà le sublime dévouement de Cleandre pour son prince, Louis XIV à droit à de longs éloges [...](*Leur monde*, 489)."

Niderst convincingly quotes Scudéry's text to prove his points. He situates Louis "au bal," and offers Scudéry's description of Louis XIV. "[I]l danse de la meilleure grace du monde & est le maistre par tout (600)." He fervently believes

that Scudéry's novels are examples of *roman à clefs*. He lists "Le prince" of "Histoire de Celanire" as a "clef sûre (529)." For Niderst, "Le prince" of the faroff land of Celanire is Louis XIV. According to Niderst, then, a description of the prince in the "Histoire de Celanire" also describes Louis XIV. Thus, the prince *comme* Louis XIV, as described by Scudéry, becomes a remarkable ruler.

> Un grand Roi, jeune, bien fait, aimable & aimé; redoutable à toute la terre, à qui tous les plaisirs courent en foule, ne peut jamais par la seule force de ses inclinations naturelles renoncer à tout cela pour courir aprés les travaux & les dangers; il faut donc que ce soit sa raison qui estant maistresse absoluë de son cœur, le porte à entreprendre quelque chose d'extraordinaire pour acquerir de la reputation [...].(489)

Mistress Reason rules Louis' heart absolutely. Administrative work and the dangers of warfare take him away from the pleasures to which he is so naturally predisposed. The king's reputation as a valiant warrior is thus enhanced and paves his path to glory.

The above passage subtly points to Louis XIV's obsession with his military exploits that take precedence over his pleasant interludes at Versailles. The narratrice tells us that while Louis seems to be enjoying himself at the palace, actually he is often planning grand projects.

> En effet, c'est à Versailles [...] où le Roi pendant qu'il ne sembloit songer qu'à divertir toute sa Cour, & qu'à se divertir luy-même, formoit ces grandes entreprises que nous luy avons vû si glorieusement exécuter; c'est delà qu'il partit pour aller conquerir la Flandres; c'est-là qu'il revint lorsqu'il en eut conquis une grande partie, & borné luy-mesme ses grandes victoires; & c'est-là encore qu'il conçut l'heroïque dessein de faire la guerre en une saison destinée au respos, & de conquerir la Franche-Comté aussi promptement que Cesar vainquoit autrefois. (12-13)

The description of Louis XIV's comportment at Versailles affirms his commitment to his duties. And, the glory that comes of his conquests justifies

Louis leaving his pleasure palace. Taken at face value, Niderst's description of Louis XIV and the narratrice's quotation from the introduction to *La Promenade de Versailles* seem to praise Louis XIV. So far, both the text, that is Scudéry's novel, and Niderst's interpretation describe Louis XIV as an exemplary and heroic leader and Versailles as an exemplary edifice.

Louis XIV's choice of domicile could prove problematic in several ways. As the epigraph to the chapter suggests, Colbert, Louis XIV's financial minister preferred that the king reside at the Louvre rather than Versailles so that he could better attend to matters of state. The narratrice's statement refutes Colbert's criticism. Versailles was not just a house of pleasure and diversion. The king made plans for battle and set out to war from Versailles for the greater glory of France and himself.

Louis XIV's attraction to Versailles obviously went beyond the king's work habits. Reason was not the only mistress determining the king's behavior. In his discussion of "The Prince's Palace," in addition to detailing Colbert's insistence that Louis should spend more time in the Louvre instead of Versailles, Marin identifies another reason for the king's attraction to Versailles.

> 'Why does he [the king] go there, once or twice a week, with very little company?' To 'see the buildings that he is having built there; nevertheless, it is said that there is something even sweeter,' writes Guy Patin; and Saint-Simon: 'To be more in private with his mistress.' 'The love for La Vallière (which was at first a mystery) gave rise to gallant promenades.'(182)

The introductory chapter of *La Promenade de Versailles* agrees that all is fair in love and war. The introductory chapter of *La Promenade de Versailles* clearly praises Louis XIV for his military exploits. The chapter also obliquely

refers to Louis XIV's mistress. And, DeJean posits the use of an oblique view as precursory to the modern novel.

In his informative and charming text entitled *At the Court of Versailles, Eye-Witness Reports from the Reign of Louis XIV*, the author Gilette Ziegler describes Versailles through the accounts of seventeenth-century personalities. The epigraph to chapter II, "La Vallière: the Springtime of Versailles," is an excerpt from Ezechiel Spanheim's "Relation de la Cour de France." It reads:

> This tender and mutual love, however irregular, accompanied by the all delicate consideration which it is capable of inspiring in two impassioned lovers, proved the original reason for the expeditions to Versailles and thereafter for all the amusements and gay parties laborated there to flatter the passion of a king in love. (35)

Clearly, by 1669, the publication date of *La Promenade de Versailles*, there was no longer any mystery about the king's mistress, Louise de La Baume Le Blanc La Vallière.[7] However, a seventeenth-century Parisian reader of Scudéry's novel might well have identified the standoffish guest to Versailles, la belle Etrangére, as La Vallière. Mongrédien's description of La Vallière "avec sa timidité, sa réserve et son désintéressement (*La Vie* 96)" fits the comportment of la belle Etrangére in Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles*. The reference to the promenade in the title reinforces the hypothesis. The "gallant promenades" to which Saint-Simon refers find an echo in the first part of Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles*.

However, in the second part of the novel, "Histoire de Celanire," when in the story named for her, la belle Etrangére becomes Celanire, her portrayal no longer permits the identification of the protagonist as La Vallière. Celanire, being

the exemplar of female discretion and self-determination, hardly serves as a model for the king's mistress. La Vallière lived at the king's wishes and the king's discretion, not her own. Celanire rewrites La Vallière's destiny.

Scudéry's choice of title for her novel clearly was not serendipitous. The term promenade proves to be laden with meaning in seventeenth-century France. Chapter 4 presents evidence that a promenade was synonymous with the *conversation* that accompanied the walk. Scudéry chose her title wisely, because the promenade was one of Louis XIV's favorite pastimes. "Le grand plaisir du Roi avec la promenade était la chasse [...](La Vie 151). " Saint-Simon's depiction of the king's "gallant promenade" coyly adds the pleasure of a promenade accompanied by his mistress.

It is not coincidental that Louis XIV's successful campaign in Franche-Comté is mentionned several times in *La Promenade de Versailles.* It was so easily won that it has also been called a promenade. "[L]a guerre de Dévolution (campagnes de Flandres et de Franche-Comté, 1667-1668) n'était guère qu'une promenade [...](Morel 12)." The Feste de Versailles celebrated in *La Promenade de Versailles* was in part a celebration to commemorate Louis' successful campaign.

The importance of the promenade at Versailles suggests that even in her choice of title, Scudéry plays to the king's pleasure. Besides Niderst, several other critics believe *La Promenade de Versailles* was designed to do just that.

At Niderst's colloquium entitled *Les Trois Scudéry*, Daniela Dalla Valle refers to Galli Pelligrini's construction of "la fonction descriptive et laudative" in

Scudéry's nouvellas. *La Promenade de Versailles* praises "la demeure royale (Dalla Valle 512-513)."

At the same colloquium, Jürgen Grimm finds *La Promenade de Versailles* an unequivocal endorsement of Louis XIV. "[...*La Promenade de Versailles*] est un éloge inconditionnel et sans restrictions de la personne d'un jeune roi et d'une monarchie héréditaire, roi bien concret dans le cadre réel de "La Promenade" et "La Feste", roi fictif dans L'Histoire de Celanire." Nul doute que le modèle de ces deux rois est le jeune Louis XIV lui-même, à qui d'ailleurs *La promenade* [...] [sic] est dédiée (Grimm 448)."

Grimm cites Nicole Aronson as another devoted Scudérian scholar who considers Scudéry to be "profondement royaliste (449)."

In fact, the consensus of Scudérian scholars seems completely in agreement that *La Promenade de Versailles* praises Louis XIV. And so it does. Nonetheless, the text of the novel offers subtle, but clear indications of Madeleine de Scudéry's disquietude with regards to certain of Louis XIV's policies, particularly, the king's proclivity to wage war at the expense of his people and the absence of women's rights in governing their own destiny.

Even Niderst, who, as we have seen, characterizes *La Promenade de Versailles* as an *éloge* of Louis XIV, finds a current of dissent in Scudéry's text.

> *Celanire* paraît donc nous présenter un édifice cohérent et majestueux. Les parfaits courtisans sont comme les cariatides de ce temple où le roi, sacré, redoutable et charmant à la fois, réside au milieu de l'adoration de tous. Mais cette fadeur est parfois troublée.(*Leur monde* 489)

The Frontispiece

The frontispiece to the novel presents the first (de)mystifying sign.[8] Facing the title page with the dedication to Louis XIV is a reproduction of an engraving depicting *Cupidon* standing before a Versailles-like château. Cupid casually leans against a column bearing the words "La Promenade de Versailles, dédiée au Roi." He coyly smiles, finger pointing to his lips as if to say, "I've got a secret."

Cupid may have a secret. And his gesture represents the secrets to be kept and to be revealed in the novel. Cupid's gesture points to two central concerns of the novel, discretion in love and discretion in politics. The discussion of the secret in *La Promenade de Versailles* in Chapter 4 will expand on the importance of an *ekphrasis* of Eros in a novel. For now, consider premise that the *ekphrasis* of Cupid that introduces *La Promenade de Versailles* represents an initial and powerful narrative sign and further that the message of the ekphrasis was intentional, not coincidental.

Thus, the engraving inaugurates the text's insistence on Versailles's secrets and further indicates that it is both as playful as a tambourine player and as serious as the dark-eyed figure centered in the picture. The posturing figures of the foreground convey a sense of movement in opposition to the monumental stability of the palace and their haunting eyes capture the gaze of the viewer before it is directed to the palace. In short, the palace is not the focus of the engraving, nor is a simple description of Versailles the point of the novel *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Further, the figures in the engraving reveal the narrative strategy of *La Promenade de Versailles* that juxtaposes playful *préciosité* and deadly serious critiques of patriarchy in the personal realm of *la vie quotidienne* of women and in the political realm of the absolutist King, Louis XIV. In *La Promenade de Versailles'* critique of absolutism, Scudéry shrewdly re-appropriates the notion of *préciosité* in its female and frivolous acceptation, sometimes including overly frilly poetic language and an exaggerated female perspective not to be taken seriously by the male reader. Novel stuff for women. Importantly, this playful backdrop hides the serious feminist politics of Scudéry that will be discussed in Chapter 4.

So the novel begins with an ekphrastic model of the playful and the serious exemplified in the same pictorial design of the frontispiece. The second beginning, the first line of the text, continues the game playing. "Je m'aquite avec plaisir de ma promesse, & de mon devoir, en écrivant l'agréable promenade que nous fîmes avant hier (1)." This coquettish introduction to the story offers a seemingly offhand suggestion of promises kept and duty fulfilled. The reader must ask what promises have been kept and what duties fulfilled, but the text does not delay for answers. Rather, it quickly turns to a description of a group of visitors on a promontory overlooking Versailles. The seemingly serious purposes of the novel from the onset are continuously underplayed by constant deferral.

The playlful nature of the odyssey of the novel has already been announced in the title, *La Promenade de Versailles*. The reader is about to

embark on a leisurely, episodic "*promenade*," such as the generic signature in the title prefigures.

La "Petite Maison"

The novel not only begins *in medias res*, that is, with an introduction to the story that already defers the reader from the narration. It also begins with the enigmatic declaration from the narratrice acquitting herself of her promise and her duty. Since this is the first line of the text, we do not yet know who is speaking. We do not know of what promise she is gladly acquitting herself. Nor do we know of what duty she has unburdened herself in the writing of the story. The novel begins with an enigma. Who is speaking and about what? In *La Promenade de Versailles*, the *ekphrasis* and the questions raised in the introductory sentence give the reader food for thought even as the story begins.

The characters in the novel soon discover Versailles. In the opening paragraph of *La Promenade de Versailles,* the beautiful and mysterious visitor from an unknown and therefore symbolically exotic land expresses her delight at her first sight of the palace.

> A peine fûmes nous arrivés sur cette hauteur, d'où l'on découvre tout d'un coup le magnifique Palais où nous allions, que la belle Etrangére s'écriant avec un ton de voix d'admiration, Que voi-je [...] couronner si magnifiquement cette éminence opposée, qui domine une si agréable étenduë de païs [...].(1-2)

La belle Etrangére marvels at the magnificent and crowning glory that is Versailles. Versailles, *par excellence*, represents the best example of

seventeenth-century French architecture and its beauty devoted to the glory of the king.

Even before la belle Etrangére finishes her sentence the grandeur of the palace disminishes, in this case, in order to be replaced by the great King Louis XIV. "[...E]st-ce là ce que vous appellez *la petite maison du plus grand Roi de la terre* (2, Emphasis mine.)?" The magnificent edifice is reduced to a "little house," but only to add to the stature of the greatest king of the land. The awesome expanse of Versailles is arguably one of the most impressive vistas in France, if not in Europe or in the world.

For la belle Etrangére, however, the great expanse of Versailles is diminished by comparison to the Grand Roi. As la belle Etrangére amusingly reduces the grandeur of Versailles, she does so only to underscore Louis XIV's greatness. For, in the promenade of the introductory chapter of the novel, Louis XIV and his magnificent palace of Versailles ostensibly reign supreme. His palace exemplifies architectural grandeur and metonymically the grandeur of the body of King Louis. However subtle la belle Etrangére's humorous depiction of Versailles as the little house of the greatest king may be, it is exactly this type of subtle negation of the exemplum that *La Promenade de Versailles* brilliantly plays out.

"La petite maison," seemingly a playful description, with the addition of the diminutive "petite," in fact, begins the subtle critique of *La Promenade de Versailles*. The choice of the word, *la maison*, proves to be value laden because

it refers to the palace of Versailles. By contrast, the diminutive "petite" increases the value of the superlative in the expression "du plus grand Roi de la terre."

The text establishes the king's stature. Hyperbolically, it has drawn attention to the word "house." Since hyperbole has been identified as a trait of *précieuse* prose, the comparison draws attention to a textual style. However, "house" may prove to be one of those necessarily "tricky" examples of which Lyons spoke. Lest the comparison between the King and his little house offend the monarchy, the impact of the comparison is cloaked in a *précieux* device. A text that suggested Louis XIV was in any way diminutive could get an author in serious trouble in seventeenth-century absolutist France. For, any words associated with le Grand Roi carry extra meaning simply by their association with Louis XIV.

How could the wordplay around "house," that draws attention to it by the contrast between the little house and the great king create difficulties for an author? We must turn to Louis Marin's *Portrait of the King* for the answer.

Reading through Kantorowicz's *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* and the logic of Port Royal, Marin explores the representation of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century. Building on the eucharistic incantation, "This is my body," Marin suggests that for Louis XIV "*L'état, c'est moi*," carries an equivalent "political-juridical" sense.[9]

In the context of *La Promenade de Versailles*, one might say further that Louis might utter the words, "Versailles, c'est moi." To Marin, a representation of Louis XIV is Louis XIV, in metaphor, in metonym, and in synecdoche. (11) The

close association of Louis XIV with Versailles renders commentary on Versailles as sensitive as commentary on the king himself.

Marin's work addresses the significance of Versailles in seventeenth-century France. Marin states that "The house [that is, Versailles...] will become the first palace of all the earth, that of the first and most powerful king of the world (181)." His discussion turns to a reading of a "celebrated remonstrance" of Colbert to the king on the subject of Versailles.[10] Significantly, Marin quotes, here in translation, a passage in which Versailles is compared to the Louvre:

> *The Louvre* is assuredly *the most superb palace* in the world...This *house of Versailles* has much more to do with Your Majesty's pleasure and diversion than with Your glory...*What a pity if the greatest King were to be judged by Versailles.*(182-183)

In Colbert's comparison, the Louvre represents a dignified royal palace suitable for stately decisions. Versailles, on the other hand, is merely a house designed for entertainment. La belle Etrangére's description of Versailles elicits Colbert's discourse. Her choice of words to describe Versailles was not fortuitous. The incursion of "la petite maison" into la belle Etrangére's description of Versailles clearly evokes Colbert's tract. It points to exactly the passage of Colbert's "remonstrance" that Marin finds significant. And, as we have seen, the text of *La Promenade de Versailles* quickly goes on to address the issues of Louis XIV's pleasure and diversion and glory as they are manifested by his time spent at Versailles. Scudéry's text, at least in the introduction to *La Promenade de Versailles*, answers Colbert's criticism.

In a period of seventeenth-century France when polemics and *querelles* proliferated, Scudéry's text subtly but powerfully engages Colbert's text and Saint-Simon's commentary in a dialogue.

Framing the Police:
Scudéry's Secret Critique of Louis XIV

"Si vous jugez sur les apparences en ce lieu-ci, répondit Mme de Chartres, vous serez souvent trompée: ce qui paraît n'est presque jamais la vérité (157)." Madame de Chartres' words to her daughter from Madame de Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* could serve as a precautionary warning for the reading of *La Promenade de Versailles*. A close reading of Scudéry's novel offers an exemplum of the difference between appearances and truth.[11]

La Promenade de Versailles appears to be a glorifying description of Louis XIV's palace, followed by a courtly romance. However, the mystification of Versailles and of Louis' court serves as a cloaking device for the political debate in the text, which raises daring questions about the concept of the hereditary monarchy and absolutism. The novel that ostensibly champions Louis XIV contains subversive passages hidden within the *romanesque* story, a secret critique designed to fool the police.

The difference between a hereditary monarchy and an absolute monarchy is important to this discussion. A hereditary monarchy is of course one in which the throne succedes from one generation to the next through the eldest legitimate son. This process comes with privileges. In France, the concept of the

divine rights of the king added to the king's power tremendously, since he was ordained by God and acted as his steward on earth.

Smith propvides a concise definition of an absolute monarchy. Although the terms are not strictly speaking interchangeable we see that our definition of a hereditary monarchy and Smith's definition of an absolute monarchy are very similar. That is, he gives the example of a hereditary monarchy as a form of absolutism. Smith claims:

> The world absolutism only became a political term in France after 1789...The phrase 'absolute monarchy' appeared in the seventeenth-century, but contemporaries differed dramatically in their use of it...No modern definition will be perfect, but perhaps we grasp the essentials if we apply it to a system of hereditary monarchy where the kings or queens are not answerable to any earthly authority because their right to rule is thought to derive from God alone, but where they nevertheless have a moral obligation to exercise power according to Christian principles rather than their own whim.(5)

The intent of Smith's short and highly informative primer on absolutism is to encourage the reader to determine for himself or herself if Louis XIV was truly an absolute monarch. On the basis of my reading of Smith's text, I would have to say that indeed the term absolutism describes the political situation in France under Louis' reign. The king's letters and other documents that Smith includes in his work clearly indicate that Louis' word, and his alone could determine policy. Smith concludes that "[i]nsofar as Louis achieved a degree of royal control which was unusual by standards of his time, he might still fairly be described as 'the great exemplar' of absolutism in practice[...] (5-6)."[12]

A dramatic step that Louis XIV took to assure his word would prevail in all policy decisions was the fact that he did not replace Mazarin when he died.

Technically, Louis ruled alone, although of course he still required advisors. Colbert, Louis' financial minister, worked closely with the king. Colbert did not always agree with the king's decisions.[13]

The reaction of the seventeenth-century French absolutist monarchy to political commentary mandated that Scudéry's critique be secret. By associating Louis XIV and his splendid court with the Sun, the most powerful source in the Galaxy, the spectacle of Versailles was brilliantly conceived to empower the Sun-King, absolutely. As Conley states in the foreword to the translation of Marin's *Portrait of the King:*

> Whoever institutes a collectively imaginary order monitors the desires and dreams of multitudes. Power is therefore enabled as much or more from control of ideas about life as from that of military forces or other visibly repressive agencies. Aesthetic displays bearing no ostensible relation with politics become instruments of force ensuring the strength of an order. (vii)

Further on Conley adds, "The king's means of control are not those of a repressive agency, but rather as multifariously autonomous but homologous styles of aura. [. . .] The king's effect produced it consciously [. . .] (xii)." The court of Versailles is, par excellence, a "collectively imaginary order," with its concomitant control of ideas and therefore its pervasive power. For Conley, *Portrait of the King* "demonstrates that the West since the seventeenth century has its beginning...in the 'hidden' persuasions of public medias (Conley, in Marin vii)." The spectacle of Versailles transfixed and controlled its spectators, and its power was awesome. The implications of Louis XIV's spectacular divertissements are explored in Chapter 4.

For now, however, understand that since the dazzling illusion of the King's divinely ordained grandeur could be dispelled by dissent, the absolutist monarchy policed the borders of political commentary to fend off dissenters and established limits of expression beyond which it was dangerous to venture.

Thus the "hidden persuaders" of Louis' court, the designers of this influential power display, did not rely solely on their media image to ward off criticism. During the Fronde, as Martin indicates, the monarchy reacted to what it considered subversive political commentary by limiting the number of publishing houses, printers, and apprenticeships (Martin, Pouvoir 678-685). The *Privilège* was used as a "censure préventive (690)." In Paris, Monsieur le Lieutenant de Police La Reynie led searches of publishing houses and foreign book importers (696-997) and seized texts (Sauvy 16, 197). In the early 1700's, dissenting pamphleteers were imprisoned (Klaits 52-53). Despite the fact that the Fronde was successfully suppressed by the mid-1650's, Martin contends that vigorous policing of the press did not lessen during Louis XIV's reign (689).

Particularly sensitive to the power of well-conceived texts--written, painted or staged--Louis XIV and his ministers invented several more subtle and ingenious ways of policing the arts and letters. For instance, the king and his aids would enlist potential enemies in their own ranks. According to Martin, Louis' ministers established royal pensions for writers who would celebrate the king, and used the Académie Française to put writers in his service (*Pouvoir* 668-669). Madeleine de Scudéry was given a royal pension and was the first writer to receive the Prize of Eloquence from the *Académie* in 1671.

The nature of Scudéry's relation to the monarchy's enemies during the Fronde is viewed differently by DeJean and Aronson. Scudéry remained friends with Mme de Longueville and dedicated *Le Grand Cyrus* to her. DeJean, as we know, reads *Cyrus* as a fictionalized version of the Fronde's activities and sees Scudéry as "the official novelist of the rebel camp (*New History* 297-303)." However, Aronson sees Scudéry as a devoted royalist. She notes that Scudéry dedicated *Cyrus* to Mme de Longueville, however, she dedicated Clélie to her daughter-in-law, Marie de Longueville. "Or Mlle de Longueville est une ennemie de la duchesse et de la Fronde. Dès l'arrestation des princes, elle a refusé de suivre sa belle-mère [...](Aronson 165) ." If true, Madeleine de Scudéry played both sides of the fence to her advantage.[14]

In contrast to *Le Grand Cyrus and Clélie, La Promenade de Versailles* appears to be safely within the borders of political decorum. The novel is dedicated to Louis XIV himself, bears the necessary "*Privilege du roi,*" and begins with a description of Versailles and, by metonymic association, of Louis XIV and his court. As we know, the arrival of la belle Etrangére prompts the description of the palace. We learn she comes from a far-off land and she dares not reveal her identity or her native country, because it could be dangerous. The text describes the palace mirrors, the reflecting ponds and vistas, returning the reader's gaze from the spectacle to the spectator, especially to and from the eyes of la belle Étrangère, as she strolls around Versailles.

The text, which is supposed to describe Versailles, turns into a discussion of the importance of description and centers on historic sovereigns--the Kings of

Egypt, Medea, and Spain, and the Emperor Caesar. Louis XIV is metonymically implicated in these discussions of mighty and powerful monarchs, and occasionally, is mentioned explicitly. Chapter 3 explained how extremely important these favorable comparisons to famous foreign dignitaries were to authors trying to stay abreast of Louis XIV's censors.

Even though the text of *La Promenade de Versailles* attempts to dodge blatant criticism of Louis XIV and his reign, Glicere gets away with potentially dangerous comments, by her flippant tone. For example, Glicere's seemingly offhand comment about Louis XIV propensity to go off to war. "Pour moi, dit Glicere, un de mes étonnements est, de voir qu'un Prince qui a tant de plaisirs à choisir pendant la paix, les puisse quitter facilement pour aller à la guerre."(81) The king might take offense at Glicere suggesting that Louis XIV went off to war too frequently. Her astonishment that Louis XIV could so easily leave the peaceful pleasures of Versailles to go to war could be interpreted as a mild indictment of the King's propensity for warfare.

Earlier in this chapter, the narratrice explained that:

> pendant qu'il [the king] ne semblait songer qu'à divertir toute sa Cour, & qu'à se divertir lui-même, formait ces grandes entreprises [...] c'est là encore qu'il conçut l'héroique dessein de faire la guerre en une saison destinée au respose[...]. (12-13)

The *narratrice's* words act as praise and suggest his actions are meritorious. When Louis had a choice--*plaire* or *guerre*--the king chose warfare, and this was admirable because he put his duty above his own pleasure. He had stepped out on a "promenade" to conquer the Franche-Comté! The same text can be re-interpreted as a criticism if one considers that Louis used his private

pleasure palace as the seat of his public, belligerent enterprises. And, that he would go off to war on a whim. Can a war plan in a season of rest be heroic?

Given Glicere's mild suggestion that peace may be preferable to warfare, one could read the narratrice's commentary in a less favorable light. Only a man driven by conquest and glory would leave Versailles to go to war. An ironic reading subverts the eulogistic praise, and an opposition between the idealizing mystification and the subversive demystification is created.

The interplay of the spectacle and the spectator in the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles* suggests that only a close inspection of Versailles will reveal its secrets, and by extension, those of Louis XIV himself. As la belle Etrangére indicates to her friend at the conclusion of the first half of the novel:

> Et pour moi [...] je ferai aujourd'hui ce que vous disiez tantôt que vous faites toujours; car bien qu'il n'y ait rien de plus charmant que Versailles, les louanges du Roi sont encore demeurées plus avant dans mon coeur que toutes les beautés de son magnifique Palais. (100-101)

La belle Etrangére insists she will remember the praises of the King more than the beauties of his palace, which suggests by analogy that reading behind the description of the palace in this text will reveal an assessment of the monarch.

After the introductory valorization of description, the narrative shifts to the secret and private machinations of an "imaginary" court beyond the borders of Versailles in the "Histoire de Celanire." The description, which has been central, becomes peripheral and the story appears to take center stage, only to become the frame for a hidden message. The stage is set for the frame-up. Scudéry's text debates the virtues and constraints of various forms of government, including a

hereditary monarchy, in the security of la belle Etrangére's distant, exotic, and secret homeland.

Glicere begins the story of la belle Etrangére, to whom she gives the pseudonym of Celanire, by insisting that all the names and places in her narrative are invented. This effort to distance the allegory from France and Louis XIV's police may be explained by the subtitle itself. The very words of the subtitle, "Histoire de Celanire" suggests that the story can be damaging. The name hints at a hidden semiological message. "C*ela* peut *nuire.*"

Richard Hodgson has written an analysis of *La Promenade de Versailles* wherein he contends that the novel presents an aesthetic and architectonic tribute to Louis's palace.[15] He also suggested that the "baroque" novel "présupposait l'évocation d'un cadre exotique, éloigné autant que possible de la réalité contemporaine et dans l'espace et dans le temps (336)."

But Scudéry's text draws attention to its play with the border between the real and the fictional, and thus signals that an exotic adventure can be the fiction for a political critique of Versailles. *La Promenade de Versailles* encourages the reader to extrapolate from the real and the fictional to the truth and the lie of the spectacle of Louis XIV, especially as it is manifested in Versailles.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, the reader is confronted with a rambling story line that leads in and out of *conversations.* Near the beginning of the "Histoire de Celanire," the characters engage in a *conversation* about the relative merits of secrets. All the characters reveal and keep secrets, the greatest being the mutual love of the heroine Celanire and the hero Cleandre. When the lovers

send secret messages of their love through poetic lines, the text discusses the ways that secret codes are to be deciphered.

> [I]ls marquaient non pas les mots dont ils voulaient se servir, mais ceux qui les précédaient, ou qui les suivaient, afin que si on prenait garde à ces mots marqués on n'y trouvait point de sens et qu'on ne découvrit point leur secret. (257)

The lovers can communicate their feelings without revealing them to anyone, especially to their enemies who would use knowledge of their love to harm them. By analogy, this passage suggests that *La Promenade de Versailles* may offer a secret message hidden between the lines, a message that could be harmful if it were overt.

The secret political critique begins as just one more of the many *conversations* in which the novel's characters indulge. In an apparent effort to avert the surveillance of Louis XIV's police, explicit political critique is "tucked" into the second half of the novel in a series of non-numbered pages, beginning after page 327 of the "Histoire de Celanire."[16]

Glicere, as narratrice, announced the subject of the conversation; "[L]es passions que les hommes ont inventées." Note that Madeleine de Scudéry re-published this conversation in *Les Conversations sur Divers Sujets* in 1682. It may be of some interest that the work was published in Amsterdam.

Before the sensitive discussion on different forms of government begins, the text insists on the playful nature of the *conversation*, as if to deny that anything too serious could come out of this friendly exchange. Celanire suggests that "le jeu, à proprement parler, n'est pas une passion naturelle, mais inventée & produite par l'esprit & par l'industrie des hommes (326,I)." She then subtly

emphasizes the nature of their *conversation*, a game. How serious can a game be?

Alcé, one of the participants in the *conversation*, adds: "Ce qui fait la passion du jeu en particulier, est la passion du plaisir en général[...]Tous les hommes ont une secrette passion de se divertir [...]& [it is] cette secrette passion qui porte au plaisir [...](326,I-327,II)." The conversation includes the theme of the secret that pervades the novel. Alcé's words connect the *conversation* that is about to begin with the overaching themes of the novel, the secret and *divertissement*. And glory also relates to passions. Chapter 4 will prove how important these concepts were to Louis XIV. The simple conversational gambit aligns itself with "diversions" close to Louis XIV's heart.

Indeed, as the *narratrice* Glicere declares: "les passions que les hommes semblent avoir inventées, ont leur origine dans le coeur des hommes mesmes, qui a naturellement un penchant au plaisir (327,II)." The text suggests that it is only human nature to love secrets, diversions, and glory.

Philocrite adds that some people "fuient le plaisir (326,III)." Such people "condamnent les plaisirs d'autrui [...] ils murmurent contre l'usage de leur païs & de leur siecle, ils se plaignent du Prince, du gouvernement, ils blâment également l'avarice & la liberalité, & ne trouvent rien qu'ils ne jugent digne de leur censure (326,III)."

How ingenious of Scudéry to condemn criticizing one's Prince, when her text, subtly, but surely is about to engage in that very same activity! Philocrite hedges against the critique to come as well. "[J]e donne sans peine aux Princes,

le respect, l'obéissance, & si vous voulez l'admiration, quand ils sont dignes de leur rang (326,V)." Cleandre calls this a "souveraine passion (326,V)." These words could only be golden to the ear of Louis XIV.

Colbert and Saint-Simon expressed their dissatisfaction with Louis XIV because of his penchant for dallying with his mistress LaVallière at Versailles, instead of attending to his affairs of state in the Louvre. Once again, it seems Scudéry's text engages in a dialogue with Louis' minister, Colbert, and his future opposition, Saint-Simon.

The end of the *conversation* whose purported subject is passion, but that interestingly turns to a discussion of forms of governement, is followed by a textual reference to a courtly satire passed from hand to hand in the "imaginary" court of Celanire's sovereign. Could the non-numbered pages of Scudéry's text secretly been passed from hand to hand in Louis XIV's court? Certainly, seditious pamphlets were passed from hand to hand in seventeenth-century France, especially during the Fronde.

A collation analysis done by Paul Gehl at the Newberry Library in Chicago on an original 1669 edition of the text indicates that there is indeed something suspicious about these non-numbered pages.[17] The message contained on these pages suggests that an effort may have been made to repress them. Did Louis' police try to suppress them, or was the publisher trying to hide them from the police?

In Glicere's introduction to the pages that contain the *conversation* that becomes a political critique of Louis XIV, speaking as the narratrice, she

explains that she could easily have left this part of the story out.[18] But she assures us that it serves to acquaint her listeners with Celanire and to judge better everything that follows. This *conversation*, which begins with a consideration of the pleasure of games, proposes that everyone has a secret passion , and that most people would dispense with their duty if no pleasure were attached to it (326,I-327,II).

This apparently playful passage raises the possibility of ignoring one's duty to the sovereign. Glicere daringly describes those who "murmurent contre l'usage de leur pays & de leur siècle, ils se plaignent du Prince, du gouvernement," in short, those who "ne trouvent rien qu'ils ne jugent digne de leur censure (326-III)." In the climate of Louis XIV's absolutist monarchy, such citizens could be accused of *lèse-majesté*. And Glicere herself, if she were a member of Louis XIV's court, might have found herself in jeopardy.

In a short, but politically charged passage during this parlor game, Scudéry's text outlines various forms of governments. First, Cleandre characterizes different forms of government. He alludes to a meritocracy when he suggests that a government may be ruled by the eldest and wisest, by the most illustrious families or by the meritorious. His description of a government ruled by the majority or by a variant, from a simple majority to a minority. He refers to an elected monarch, that is, a constitutional monarchy or a Republic with equal suffrage for all, and by a mixture of all of these (327,X-326, XI). He concludes that the grandeur, tranquility, and continuation of the state are best maintained by a form of government that resolves to:

> prendre leurs Rois d'vne seule race de pere en fils, tels qu'il plairait au ciel de les leur envoyer, tantôt belliqueux, tantôt pacifiques, tantôt excellents, tantôt médiocres en connaissance, avec des vertus & des vices, que toute la sagesse humaine ne pouvait prévoir de si loin. (326, XI)

Cleandre insists that the hereditary monarchy is best. Republics have come and gone but they should be replaced by monarchies, and the French monarchy "ne fut jamais si redoutable à tous les voisins, qu'elle l'est aujourd'hui aprés tant de siécles (327,XIV)."

Cleandre and Scudéry's text seem to avoid blatantly seditious commentary. *La Promenade de Versailles* was published during a period when the fortunes of Louis XIV's were very high.

Nonetheless, under Louis XIV's absolutist regime, even the enumeration of alternative forms of government could have been considered treasonous. Additionally, in what seems to be an apology for the divine right of succession, the text alludes to both positive and negative qualities of monarchs. The idea of a divinely ordained King who could be bellicose, mediocre and replete with vices might well be considered seditious in the court of Louis XIV.

In his work entitled *The Impact of Absolutism in France: National Experience under Richelieu, Mazarin, & Louis XIV*, William F. Church suggests that Richelieu had taught Louis XIV that due to the "reason of state," unlike "the actions of subjects [...] the concerns of kings as kings are immediate and practical and they should punish offenders from the standpoint of public necessity rather than Christian charity (8)." The king's morality was distinct from the people. And Church adds that according to Guez de Balzac, "the King might bypass ordinary judicial procedures and imprison or otherwise punish anyone

who was merely suspected of disloyalty (10)." And, *La Promenade de Versailles* contains politically sensitive material. It is a post-Fronde work. In *Clélie*, Scudéry had already skirted dangerous borderlines, since that novel can be read as a manifesto of the Frondeurs. *La Promenade de Versailles* was published a few years after the Frondeurs were repressed. One of Scudéry's best friends, Fouquet, was facing life imprisonment for charges of embezzelment. Her soulmate, Pellisson had recently been released from prison after he was incarcerated for defending Fouquet. Scudéry's text once again dares to challenge the rights of Louis XIV to absolute authority.

Surely, Louis XIV would not take kindly to being described as mediocre or replete. To be bellicose, that was another issue. The king was renowned for his military successes. His easy conquest of Franche-Comté occurred shortly before Scudéry's novel was released. The concept of bellicosity was charged with meaning in the seventeenth-century. Reiss' theory suggests that the Académie Française was founded on the premise that [t]he repair of language and letters would foster that of society and state.(70)

Earlier in the century, France had needed to recover from the disastrous wars of the sixteenth century. A discourse questioning the very nature of mankind grew out of this concern. Reiss explains.

> [I]n the mid-seventeenth-century some sort of almost subterranean feeling seems to have grown that because of the specific way in which men had participated in the historical development of societies, reason in them was inseparable from violence. On the other hand, however, because women had historically been excluded from the making of society and culture, reason in them (not female reason, but simply Reason as acting in women was free of that violence and could thus offer a solution to the dangerous decay of political and civil order.(98)

Salic law forbade women from succeeding to the throne in France. Ironically, the supposition that women, not by nature, but by environment, were less violent could mean that they were therefore *less* able to rule. Reiss gives an example. "Women, wrote Le Bret however, had to be excluded from the throne because monarchs need to be 'warlike and belligerent' [guerriers et belliqueux](108)." Clearly, it was difficult, if not dangerous, to formulate a pacifist argument in the ancien régime. As subtle as Scudéry's anti-war statement proves to be, undermining Louis XIV's authority in any way would have been considered seditious.

The political commentary embedded in the "Histoire de Celanire" is reminiscent of Jean François Senault's discussion of the monarchy in *Le Monarque ou Les Devoirs du Souverain (*1662). That Senault juxtaposes the advantages and disadvantages of the absolute monarchy allows him to include a veiled critique of the King. To be sure, in its *Dedicace* to Louis XIV, the Senault text begins with pure praise. It offers itself as:

> [U]n miroir fidèle dans lequel Elle [sa Majesté, Louis XIV] pourra voir non pas les traits de son visage, qui donne du respect et de l'amour et tous ceux qui le regardent, mais les vertus de son ame, & ces rares qualitez qui la font si glorieusement regner dans la France. En effet, il semble que Dieu ait voulu faire son chef-d'oeuvre de Votre Majesté. (Dédicace 2)

Rather than accuse the King of being a tyrant, *Le Monarque* proceeds by offering Louis XIV a positive role model, enumerating the ways in which previous "Great Princes" remained worthy monarchs and never abused their people. Senault's text also describes the behaviors of a monarch turned tyrant. Just as

Cleandre combines negative and positive descriptions of the monarchy, Senault proffers a critique of the tyrant in conjunction with praise of the King.

> [S]'il est vrai que toutes les choses du monde n'éclatent jamais davantage que quand elles sont opposées à leurs contraires, je ne saurais donner plus de lustre à la Monarchie qu'en lui opposant la tyrannie [...] .(14)

Anything other than a critique cloaked in praise would have been banned under Louis XIV. According to Senault, Seneca said that ancient monarchs' first mirrors were fountains and streams (Dédicace, 10). Senault hopes his text will serve as a "faithful mirror" for Louis XIV to look into his heart and to show him "le remède dans le mal."

In this way, the many mirrors and fountains of Versailles which Scudèry's text describes take on special significance. Both texts define themselves indirectly as mirrors of and for Louis XIV. And, while they serve as mirrors for the monarch, the texts also enable readers to view their respective portraits of Louis XIV--to see the monarch's abuses of his obligations and responsibilities.
In the critical passage from the "Histoire de Celanire," Philocrite, whose very name means lover of criticism, laughingly quips:

> [...J]e serai meilleure sujette, que je n'estois; car encore que le Prince, sous la domination duquel je suis née, soit tel qu'on le peut souhaiter, il m'a toûjours semblé que si j'avais esté des premiers siecles, & que j'eusse eu voix pour déliberer de pareilles choses, je ne me serais point avisée de faire des Rois, ni de vouloir estre Reine. (326,XV)

Philocrite seditiously undermines the very concept of a hereditary monarchy, but her laughter seems to suggest she is merely playing the role of devil's advocate. She adds spice to the conversation, by presenting a different point of view.

The problematics of this secret critique are revealed by Cleandre's predicament during the *conversation*. In the discussion about sovereigns, Cleandre overstates his love and is accused of being as amorous as he is politically ambitious. He does not want to reveal his love for Celanire, however. He faces a dilemma. "[C]omment il pourrait répondre sans découvrir ce qu'il voulait cacher [...] (326, XXXV)." Cleandre's dilemma mirrors the text's. Even as it praises the King, it must hide the criticisms it wishes to expose.

The seditious implications of this 38-page section are most forcibly presented by the "porte-parole" of the critique, Philocrite. Unwittingly, she forecasts one of the reasons for the overthrow of the monarchy in 1789--too much warring leaves the coffers empty and the poor hungry:

> Pour moi, dis-je alors, je me suis étonnée cent fois de voir les transports des peuples, lorsqu'on les oblige de faire des feux de joie pour quelque victoire: car il y a des millions d'hommes qui se réjouïssent en ces occasions tumultueuses, & qui n'ont pas de quoi vivre le lendemain. (326, XXI-327, XXII)

Her words evoke the menacing face in the engraving opposite the King's *Dédicace* on the title page. The movement of the figures depicts a mob scene. A hundred years after *La Promenade de Versailles* was published, the transports of the people during the Revolution would indeed lead them to overthrow the monarchy rather than to celebrate it victoriously.

Scudéry was not alone in evoking the image of the masses watching bonfire's to celebrate the crown's victories, when they watched open eyed, but on an empty stomach. We have already referred to William F. Church's text entitled *The Impact of Absolutism in France*. In it he compiled a series of texts, written in

the seventeenth century. In the introduction, Church raises a relevant issue. "[I]t is infrequently asked whether the gains that accrued to France during this period justified their cost in human suffering and more tangible losses (2)."

Church's book attempts to ask that difficult question. One of the excerpts is from a work entitled *Soupirs de la France esclave*. The presumed author is Pierre Jurieu, a French Calvinist pastor who "fled to Holland during the persecution of the Huguenots (2)." The plaintive image that Scudéry's text evokes of the starving masses looking on at the magnificent bonfires celebrating the king's victories is repeated in Jurieu's text.[19] Again, Scudéry's *Conversations sur divers sujet*, in which the *conversation* with this image can be found, was published in Amsterdam. Foreign publication would afford an escape from Louis XIV's censors and the *privilege du roi*, as it may have for Jurieu. Here is a relevant passage from this seditious text.

> Moreover, who does not realize that conquests, instead of increasing the grandeur of the state, are burdensome and cause its ruin? We are mad, and our folly preserves our bondage. Whenever the king wins a battle, takes a city, or subdues a province, we light bonfires, and every petty person feels elevated and associates the king's grandeur with himself. This compensates him for all of his losses and consoles him in all his misery. He does not realize that he loses as much as the king gains. First, the prince's grandeur always brings misery to his subjects, for the greater his power, the more he indulges his passions because he may more easily satisfy them. Now ambition, avarice, luxury and waste are always the passions of the great, etc. etc."(108)

Because of the powerful contrasting images of the privations of the poor and the grandeur of the king in this passage, one can understand why the author of this text may have needed to seek exile.

Exile was a minor theme of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Celanire escapes from her homeland because of familial oppression and a false presumption that Cleandre had forsaken his vow of silence. Circumstances then force Cleandre to seek exile himself. An epigraph to a chapter in Elizabeth Goldsmith's work "*Exclusive Conversations," The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-century France* conveys exactly the message that one would expect to describe the role of exile in this work and in the seventeenth-century. Goldsmith quotes Stendhal. "Le chef d'oeuvre de Louis XIV, ce fut de créer cet ennui de l'exil (77)."

The citation from Stendhal is doubly apropos, because it serves as the epitaph to the chapter of Goldsmith's book that we need to consult for information about censorhip during Louis XIV's reign.

Political dissent, even in a literary format was frowned upon in Louis XIV reign. The example of Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy will serve as a case in point. Goldsmith outlines the trouble Bussy got into with Louis XIV's censor cops.

> A collection of satirical anecdotes written to amuse a few friends at the expense of a few others, the manuscript of Histoire amoureuse des Gaules was eventually copied, without the author's permission. This was in 1665; by 1666 the book (or possiby an altered version of it) had been presented to the king. That year Bussy was imprisoned in the Bastille, and in 1667, he was exiled to his country estate.(78)

Today, accustomed to freedom of the press, it is difficult to comprehend that in seventeenth-century France someone could be arrested and exiled for distributing a satirical work. It is possible that being exiled to a country estate might have been the same as being incarcerated in a "country club" prison today. Nonetheless, Bussy's arrest serves as an example of the tyranny of the network

of publication censorship that Louis XIV set in place. Goldsmith explains that poor Bussy-Rabutin "could not know that Colbert's impressive machinery of censorship, which would remain in place until the end of the ancien régime, was being designed and set in motion the same year that he was confined in the Bastille (81)." One only needs to read Henri Martin's descriptions of Lieutenant La Reynie to appreciate the ruthless practices of Louis XIV's censor police. (*Pouvoir*)

And yet, the text of another author and contemporary of Scudéry's also attempts to prick the conscience of the king. In his discussion of Jean de La Bruyère, Michael S. Koppisch traces the "dissolution of character" during Louis XIV's reign as it is increasingly addressed in the later editions of *Les Caractères*. Koppisch confirms that criticizing Louis XIV's absolutism was a risky enterprise. "To criticize the concept of absolute monarchy, even indirectly, had since the days of Richelieu been a dangerous gesture. This was even more true for a writer like La Bruyère, who was popular and whose opinions were, therefore, likely to reach a comparatively large audience (110)." Scudéry, of course, was also popular and her text would also have likely reached a large readership.

Neither Scudéry nor La Bruyère were sounding a call to arms. As Koppisch explains, La Bruyère's "famous description of the French peasants, those 'animaux farouches...répandus par la campagne, noirs, livides et tout brûlés de soleil,' for example, is no revolutionary call to action on their account, although it does express some sympathy for the plight of the poor in a period of regular and serious deprivation (*De L'homme*, 128:4) (83)." Neither is Scudéry's

depiction of the starving peasants gazing at the fireworks. Both authors sought to remind the king of his souvereign duty to protect all of his subjects.[20]

In his conclusion, Koppisch returns to the same quotation and frames his discussion in more severe terms. He claims that La Bruyère's "portrait of those 'animaux farouches...répandues par la campagne' remains one of the most damning social statements in all of French literature (111)."

Although *La Promenade de Versailles* contains a sober critique of the plight of the peasants, her novel has a happy end. Celanire is reunited with Cleandre at Versailles and they plan to marry. Near the end of the long passage without page numbers, the tone is politically less explicit than the political critique just described. However, perhaps it is symbolically more suggestive.

Using the imagery of the "parfait amant," Cleandre compares the love of "un Amant à une Maîtresse" to that of a "courtesan attaché au Prince." Alcé agrees with the comparison and goes so far as to say that:

> [... d]es gens naturellement très-éclairés, & qu'une longue expérience a rendus tres-habiles, se laisser [sic] quelquefois tromper jusques à la fin de leur vie aux vaines espérances de la Cour, encore qu'ils sentent bien qu'elle les trompent; il me semble que je voi cét Amant du théâtre qui dit [...] . (326, XXXIII-327, XXXIV)

Ingeniously ambiguous, the text can mean that lovers are deceived by the vain hopes of courtly romances. Or, it may suggest that clearheaded thinkers can be duped by courtly politics.

Alcé goes on to quote a few lines of verse:

"Je la connois ingrate, & je l'ai-

me, & je meurs,

Et je me sens mourir, & n'y voi

nul reméde,

Et craindrois d'en trouver, tant

l'amour me possede.(327, XXXIV)."

Although these lines contain the traditional love/death topos, do these plaintive and eloquent lines also reveal Scudéry's love/death relationship to Louis XIV and to seventeenth-century absolutism? In the myth of "courtly love," the revelation of love heralds its end. Does the author risk death to love her king so well that her text dares to criticize him? Do the lines imply that in revealing the injustices of the ungrateful Court, and therefore of the sovereign Louis XIV, the text will die, that is, that it will be silenced by censorship?

In a move to recoup the grace of the king, in case the seditious remarks give offense to the police, particularly those on the non-numbered passages, the *conversation* seemingly ends on a lighter note, returning to the topic of love. However, Philocrite accuses Cleandre of being "presque aussi ambitieux qu'amoureux (326,XXXV)". This remark puts Cleandre on the spot. To deny his ambition discloses his "cover," but to reveal his love jeapodizes his vow of silence to Celanire. He resolves his dilemma. He tells Philocrite, "si j'avois quelque passion de cette nature, j'aimerois mieux qu'on en jugeait par mes actions, que par mes paroles (326,XXXV-327,XXXVI)." Glicere, the narratrice, agrees with Cleandre.

> Vous avez raison, luy dis-je, & les actions sont plus sincéres que les paroles. Mais aprés tout, Cleandre, il y a une grand distinction entre les Courtisans de bonne foy, qui aiment le Prince, ou les Courtisans sans interessez, qui ne cherchent que la fortune. Tout le monde en convint, &

l'heure de la promenade estant venuë, Celanire & moi sortïmes, & le reste de la compagnie se sépara.(327, XXXVI)

Scudéry's text constructs an opposition between a faithful courtisan and a feckless one. Ambition and love are two qualities of the king that *La Promenade de Versailles* critiques. The text has subtly suggested that Louis XIV should be less ambitious in war. The novel also subtly recognizes the presence of his mistress Louise La Vallière at Versailles. A sub-title even obliquely refers to her. It reads" La Feste de Versailles, *A Mme La* *** "(569)." Thus, the text attempts to salvage its good graces with the king, even as it undermines the principles of hereditary monarchy and absolutism. First, it suggests that with the words of *La Promenade de Versailles*, Madeleine de Scudéry seems to become an emblem of opposition, but then her text assures him that she still aligns herself with the monarchy. Her actions toward her king are more important than these mere words of wisdom.

Because of their enigma, the non-numbered pages in *La Promenade de Versailles* become a sign in their own right. Just as Celanire and her lover send messages through secret codes hidden in poetic lines, the text invites the reader to look for the hidden messages "tucked" within the spectacle of Louis XIV. If not blinded by the Sun King's court, his surroundings, rituals and entourage--the most spectacular of seventeenth-century texts--the reader will see the secret critique of absolutism hidden within its borders and discover covert strategies which frame the police.

Coda

Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles* sincerely eulogizes Louis XIV and his magnificent palace. The "Histoire de Celanire" contains the political critique aimed at sending a cautionary warning to the king concerning the high cost of his military exploits. Niderst notes a change in tone from the first part of the novel to the second and suggests that the characters act out a subtle allegory of Versailles that includes praise as well as protest.

> Allons-nous paradoxalement retrouver au fond de cette brillante apologie de Versailles les vieux rêves pastoraux de *Clélie* et de *Mathilde*? En fait, Celanire et Cleandre sont des étrangers; leur cour n'est pas la cour de France; leur prince n'est pas Louis XIV. Mais la jeune fille se promène, au prologue, dans le parc de Versailles, et y trouve son amant dans les dernières pages. C'est ainsi que le roi et la cour peuvent prendre deux visages différents. En France, les délices, l'ordre, la majesté, le repos et l'amour du peuple. A l'étranger, des courtisans parfaits, comme Cleandre, mais sacrifiés à d'injustes intrigues, une vaine agitation, un souverain moins parfait que le Louis XIV pompeux et charmant du prologue et de l'épilogue.(*Leur monde* 490)

Did Niderst realize the implication of his use of the words "deux visages" in English. Two faces, two-faced. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, Janus is a figure of Roman mythology. He is the "god who is guardian of portals and patron of beginning and endings: he is shown as having two faces, one in front; the other at the back of his head (722)." Thus Janus-faced means "two-faced, deceiving (722)." Scudéry's portrait of Versailles has two faces. A cloaked message deceptively undercuts the brilliant presentation of Versailles and Louis XIV in *La Promenade de Versailles* just as Louis himself subtly hid his duplicity. As suggested in the beginning of this section entitled "Framing the Police:

Scudéry's Secret Critique of Louis XIV, " it does indeed offer an example of the difference between appearances and truth.

Niderst also plaintively claims:

> Deux voix se mêlent donc dans Celanire. L'une droite, caressante, presque folle à la force de l'enthousiasme et de naiveté [...l]'autre plus réservée, parfois plus dure ou plus désolée, qui nous rappelle l'amertume de Malthilde et qui signifient, au fond, que la soumission au monarque n'est qu'une déshonorante humiliation. Nous oserions même retrouver dans la courtisanerie de cette nouvelle des traces de la souplesse gasconne de Pellisson, alors que la tristesse et la révolte qui s'y découvrent ressembleraient mieux à Sapho.(491)

Madeleine de Scudéry was a successful novelist. She was able to live off of career as a writer. Why would the story of Celanire offer a darker side? The events surrounding two of her dearest friends, Fouquet and Pellisson, provide a clue to the answer. It was Fouquet's and Pellisson's arrest that well may have, indeed should, have troubed the novelist. George Mongrédien's work *L'Affaire Fouquet* outlines the details of the incarceration. Although Fouquet dies in prison, Pellisson is released and actually, one might say, miraculously, becomes Louis XIV's historiographer. Louis Marin's fascinating explication of Pellisson's efforts to write the king's history is analyzed in Chapter 4. To conclude this chapter, consider again Alain Niderst's revealing critique of *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Chapter 1 traced the general reception of Scudéry's works and discussed the possibility of her novels being *romans à clef*. Niderst believes as ardently in the allegorical significance of Scudéry's works as Victor Cousin did. As an appendix to the conclusion of *Madeleine de Scudéry, Paul Pellisson et leur monde*, Niderst attaches his own key to the identity of characters in Scudery's works (525-532).

Niderst offers the most poignant interpretation of Cleandre's alter ego in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The citation begins with the passage quoted at the end of the section in this chapter entitled "Praise of Louis XIV." Here is Niderst's citation in its entirety.

> Celanire paraît donc nous présenter un édifice cohérent et majestueux. Les parfaits courtisans sont comme les cariatides de ce temple où le roi sacré, redoutable et charmant à la fois, réside au milieu de l'adoration de tous. Mais cette fadeur est parfois troublée. Cleandre est chassé de la cour à cause de son imprudence, mais à cause aussi de vilaines intrigues. Sa chute est comme celle de Foucquet: "suivant le coûtume des gens de la Cour, la disgrace de Cleandre luy ôta[sic], ou changea le cœur de tous ceux qu'il avoit obligez. Jamais homme n'avoit usé plus honnestement de sa faveur, il n'avoit nui à personne, il avoit usé plus honnestement de sa faveur, il n'avoit servi tout le monde, il estoit l'objet de l'admiration & de l'amité de tous les Courtisans, on ne songeoit qu'à luy plaire. Cependant, dés que le Prince parut irrité contre luy & qu'on sceut qu'il n'avoit point voulu lire la lettre qu'il luy avoit envoiée [...] cela fit un changement universel, & ce même Cleandre, qui quelques jours auparavant, avoit mille amis ne s'en trouve plus [*La Promenade de Versailles* 522-524]."(489)

Imagine today, if the lawyer defending his or her client was incarcerated along with the defendant if he or she was found guilty. Scudéry and Niderst together paint a most poignant picture of Cleandre and Pellisson's, not to mention Fouquet's personal loss. *La Promenade de Versailles*, though it offers an ornate set piece for a description of the Sun King's palace, also offers a *plaidoyer* for the changes in French society that would take place between the ancien régime and the French revolution of 1789.

La Promenade de Versailles offers the reader a vision of Louis XIV and his spectacular palace. Though Madeleine de Scudéry's novel offers a shining vision of her king and Versailles, it is through a mirror darkly.

Notes

[1] See DeJean *Tender* 45. DeJean precedes her bold pronouncement of *Artamène* as the origin of the modern French novel, with historical and publishing facts that reinforce her belief. "The privilège for the first two volumes of *Artamène* was granted in July 1648, when the principal actors in the Fronde-Longueville, Condé, Marsillac, and Gondi-were plotting the active phase of their rebellion, which was launched the following month. Since the intial volumes of *Aramène* were publsihed just six months later, they were composed precisely during the first day of the war against the monarchy. Throughout this time of political upheaval, volumes of *Artamène* continued to appear at regular intervals, and the final volumes (volume 10 was printed in mid-September 1653) were the unique novelistic production during the months that nearly marked the downfall of the absolute monarchy (45)."

[2] See Niderst, 434. "La nouvelle resemble parfois à une anthologie de la poésie du XVII[e]. On y retrouve non seulement des vers de Pellisson, Ménage, Montauzier et Sarasin, amis des poémes de Voiture [...]. " Niderst goes on to identify the poetic allusions in *La Promenade de Versailles*. See also 483-484 where Niderst identifies citations of Pellisson, Mme de la Suze, de Montplaisir, La Fontaine, La Rochefoucauld, and Montauzier.

[3] See Marin 42. His discussion of the power of the narrative and the narrative of power in his chapter "The King's Narrative, or How to Write History." In Chapter Four of this work Marin's notion is further explored. The implications of Telamon's insight prove extremely provocative.

[4] For an analysis of Godenne's impatience with Scudéry's narrative style, see the discussion in Appendix A, *The Stylistics of Scudérian Préciosité*.

[5]One may wonder how well acquainted Maignien was with *La Promenade de Versailles*, since he mistitles it *Promenade à Versailles*. That said, his comment is pertinent. Here, the contention remains, however, that the text is an *éloge*, but it is also more.

[6] See Niderst, *Les Trois Scudérys*.

[7] See Ziegler 35-49. The chapter entited "La Vallière: The Springtime of Versailles" provides an information background to *La Promenade de Versailles*, as does the entire work. For example, Chapter I, "The Décor and the Cast," begins with the very citation about the "little house of the greatest king on earth," that we will discuss shortly in the section entitled "La Petite Maison" (13). Fouquet's spectacular fête at Vaux-le-Vicomte made Louis XIV jealous. Ziegler's text offers another insight to the king's jealousy. "La Vallière had, in fact, attracted others in addition to the King. Soon after her entry into the Court she had been noticed by Superintendent Fouquet, who had sent her his regular procuress, Mme Duplessis-Bellière, with a proposition, but the rebuff she received resulted in a furious letter to her protector (42)." It seems Louis XIV had more personal reasons than his château to be jealous of Fouquet.

[8] See Appendix B for a photocopy of the frontispiece.

[9] See Marin 9.

[10] See Marin 181-182.

[11]See Lyons, "Marie de Lafayette: From Image to Act.", 196-236. He proposes that although Lafayette's novel is set in the court of Henri II in 1558 , it can be read as an allegory of Louis XIV's court. One must read it as a *roman à clef* in that case. Or, alternatively, according to Lyons, Lafayette "is saying something more important:: that the way one lives in the court is beyond the distinction in time and tense and is permanent, essential (197)." In this *La Princesse de Clèves* is an exemplary text. However, setting the novel in a different century does offer a cloak of anonymity. In contrast, *La Promenade de Versailles* places the characters in Louis's court at Versailles. Granted the "Histoire de Celanire" takes place in an unknown, far-off land. Still, Scudéry's text offers a more daring critique of abolustism than Lafayette's in this particular aspect of their novels.

[12] See J. H. Burns in John Miller's collection entitled *Absolutism in Seventeenth-century Europe*, to which Smith refers the reader.

[13] I refer the reader to Smith's work that offers an excellent primer on absolutism.

[14] See Aronson 152-166. In Chapter 14 entitled "Nous sommes dans un temps de confusion [...]" Aronson discusses Scudéry's supposed change of heart with regard to Condé.

[15] See Appendix A for a discussion of Hodgson's essay.

[16] There are 38 non-numbered pages followed by a second set of pages numbered 326 and 327 with different text from the first 326 and 327. In this dissertation a non-numbered page is indicated by 326 for the left hand page and 327 for a right hand page followed by a roman numeral to indicate to which of the non-numbered ages the text is referring, I-XXXVIII. Thus, the first non-numbered

page is indicated by " 326 I" and the second page of the non-numbered pages is indicated by " 327,II," etc.

[17] Paul Gehl, a collation expert at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois, kindly examined the Newberry's 1669 copy of *La Promenade de Versailles*. According to Gehl, eight leaves, that is two entire gatherings, to total 16 pages, were inserted in the book after it had been printed. The gatherings were carefully placed between folios x3 and x4 and the text could not be continuous wihout the insertion. To Gehl, this indicates that the pages were probably not added as a result of a computation error, which usually occurs at the beginning or end of a gathering. He ventures that the insertion could have replaced something else. In short, Gehl suggested that the pages pose a problem that the literary critic needs to interpret. An examination of other extant copies of the 1669 edition should be helpful in determining the extent of the mystery of these added pages.

[18] In light of the fact that this critique reveals itself on non-numbered pages, Glicère's comment takes on added meaning. Did Scudéry and her printer consider leaving these pages out, as they might prove to be too politically sensitive? It is a possible explanation for the missing pagination.

[19] See Shakespeare 598. A quotation from William Shakespeare's *Henry VI,* Part I, act one, scene one suggests that the practice of lighting bonfires to commemorate victories was a practice common all over Europe, in continental France as well as in England dating back at least to the fifteenth century. The Duke of Bedford intends to go to France to ransom or rescue Lord Talbot, the future Earl of Shrewsbury. "Farewell, my masters, to my task will I. Bonfires in

France forthwith I am to make, to keep our great Saint George's feast withal."

Bedford is going to France, but his statement implies that he would make such bonfires for Saint's George's feastday wherever he happened to be on that day.

Chapter Four

Secrets, Women's Rights, and the *Conversation*

The exposition of *La Promenade de Versailles* truly begins with the frontispiece featuring Cupidon. In *The True Story of the Novel*, Margaret Anne Doody tells us that "[a]n *ekphrasis* may sneak up on us in the middle of a novel, or it may declare itself boldly at the outset (388)." The *ekphrasis* of Eros does declare itself boldly at the outset of *La Promenade de Versailles.*

The inclusion of an *ekphrasis* was part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' "assimilation of the antique novel (251)." Doody, in fact, offers Madeleine de Scudéry as an example.

> Illustrations were not restricted to old novels; new books were illustrated, too, customarily with frontispieces to each indivdual book of a novel, as with the novels of Madeleine de Scudéry.(251)

Scudéry's frontispiece was not merely a serendipitous ornamentation. It was a purposeful addition to the text following an established novelistic tradition of the seventeenth century.

Doody also finds special significance in an *ekphrasis* of Eros. "Eros may appear to us in a novel in an *ekphrasis* [...] Eros so appearing teases us, for we know we are to attend to and interpret images (387)." Eros stands at the metaphorical gateway of *La Promenade de Versailles*, beckoning us to consider the significance of the design of the frontispiece and further to guess what it may have to tell us about the novel. Doody explains that an *ekphrasis* "reminds us of the visible world, and thus of the sensible universe, but it also speaks of stasis,

and artifice--of things out of nature. It transforms us into powerful gazers [...](387)."

La Promenade de Versailles is above all an ocular novel. The frontispiece includes Eros (Cupid). Then, the first part of the novel, entitled *La Promenade de Versailles*, presents a minute and detailed verbal picture of Louis XIV and his pleasure palace. In this discourse of praise or panegyric, the reader is a spectator, who "contemplates" the speech.[1] The frontispiece of Cupidon and the introductory description of Versailles invite the reader to observe through the novel's eye the court society of Louis XIV and all that that society evoked. Of course, with Doody's emphasis of the ocular, DeJean's construction of the reader-voyeur is evoked.

"The novel," according to Doody, "announces itself as subject to fashion, as product of its own era, even perhaps frivolously temporal. Its universality tends to be hidden. The Novel secretly offers [...] a marvelous means of incorporating and interpreting current culture (483)." *La Promenade de Versailles* lends the reader a fashionable look at seventeenth-century society, and may well offer an insight into the twenty-first century as well.[2]

The figure of Cupid in the frontispiece has his finger up to his lips as if he has a secret to tell us, the readers. I hypothesized that it was a signal to look for a secret, perhaps political, critique hidden in the novel. However, as one reads *La Promenade de Versailles*, one discovers that secrecy is an overarching theme of the novel. The word itself appears hundreds of time in the text.

The omnipresence of the secret in *La Promenade de Versailles* reflects seventeenth-century society's obsession with the notion of secrecy. In *La Promenade de Versailles* secrecy played a role in the private domain of the characters, especially Celanire and Cleandre, and in the critique of Louis XIV's excesses in war and in peace.

For, throughout his reign, Louis did wage war that imposed a great financial burden on the country. And, he also spent unimaginable riches on Versailles. Louis Marin brilliantly reveals the connection between Louis XIV's military campaigns and the spectacles he designed for Versailles. And, the notion of secrecy seems inevitably to be included in his explanation.

> The diversions, in this sense, represent war in the time of the peace that interrupts it, as war is the prince's fête in another field and on another stage. War is the fête continued by other means, as diversion is politics pursued on another register. Thus it could be said that the prince's *coup d'état* is represented in the miracle of the fête; political behavior is dramatized in the playful gesture; and the secrets of power, the *arcana imperii*, are repeated--reproduced and anticipated--according to the intentions of the aesthetic fantasy.(197)

La Promenade de Versailles celebrates the king's *divertissements* and his success in battle, but also subtly warns of the excesses of war, particularly the financial burden it placed on the country, and especially on the poor. In the enclosed space of the novel, Scudéry juxtaposes the fantasy fête and the ravages of war, just as Louis XIV orchestrates a magical representation of political power and play in his spectacular *divertissements*.

André Félibien was a seventeenth-century historiographer who penned several works describing Versailles and its fêtes. Marin explicates Félibien's *Divertissements de Versailles* in order to formulate his own comments on

Versailles and Louis XIV. Secrecy becomes a leitmotif of Marin's poetic and powerful commentary on the Sun King's spectacle of Versailles.

According to Marin, Versailles, including the château, the gardens and the spectacular entertainments staged there, garners its power of representation from the *secret machinations* of Louis XIV who orders them finished and enacted so quickly they appear magically to spring forth from nowhere, with no visible effort. In his chapter entitled "The Magician King," Marin writes:

> Félibien insists on the surprising promptness with which the royal fêtes are organized, the effect of magic consisting here in the disproportion between the magnificence of the realization and the brevity of the time needed to accomplish it.(196)

Preparations for the *divertissements* made in haste and in secret add to magical aura of the fêtes. The "conception has remained *secret*; only the king knows what he ordered the principal executors of his project to do [...](197)."[3] In short, a discourse of secrecy seems necessarily to impose itself on a discussion of Louis XIV and Versailles, as if the time of Louis' reign brought with it a preoccupation with the secret. Indeed, it may well have. To maintain his glory, Louis felt compelled to protect his privacy.

The spectacle of Versailles metonymically represents the personal and political grandeur of the king. In truth, the fire that feeds Louis XIV's personal absolutist reign was his addiction to glory. Mongrédien insists on Louis' insatiable thirst for glory. "[...L]es louanges les plus excessives et parfois les plus imméritées ne le gênaient pas; il les agréait toujours avec plaisir. Il acceptait sans lassitude les hommages d'une *littérature servile et ridiculement dithyrambique* [...](La Vie 175)." Mongrédien affirms the hypothesis that Louis

may well have read Scudéry's text dedicated to the king since it contained praise of the monarch.

Further, Mongrédien cites Louis XIV's own *Mémoires* as proof of the king's love of glory.

> "La gloire n'est pas une maîtresse qu'on puisse jamais négliger, ni être digne de ses premières faveurs, si l'on n'en souhaite incessamment de nouvelles [....] La chaleur que l'on a pour la gloire n'est point une de ces faibles passions qui se ralentissent par la possession."(175)

Glory was Louis XIV's self-avowed mistress and obtaining glory did not exhaust his passion. He wanted more. Mongrédien links Louis XIV's personal passion for glory to another of Louis' personality traits.

> Cet amour de la gloire et cette attitude vraiment royale dont il ne se départit jamais expliquent encore un autre trait de son caractère, qui est une étonnante maîtrise de soi-même et une aptitude extraordinaire à garder les secrets.(175)

According to his curé de Versailles, Hébert, Louis always wanted to appear "d'une égalité parfaite (176)." Mongrédien elaborates:

> Toujours cette attitude composée d'un souverain qui doit laisser ignorer aux courtisans le fond de ses pensées. Aussi est-il habitué à conserver scrupuleusement les secrets: Le secret du Roi pour les affaires d'État est incomparable, dit Primi Visconti. Et cette aptitude à garder les secrets va, sinon jusqu'au mensonge, du moins jusqu'à la dissimulation, dont l'abbé Choisy lui reconnaît le "talent royal." Cette discretion qu'il avait sans doute apprise à l'école politique de Mazarin, s'étend jusqu'aux affaires privées. Il est d'un secret à toute épreuve, écrit le curé Hébert, on peut tout lui confier sans la moindre crainte qu'on sache jamais de qui il a appris ce qu'on lui a dit à l'oreille. Louis XIV avait d'autant plus de mérite à garder les secrets qu'il en connut beaucoup, non seulement d'État, ce qui est tout naturel, mais des affaire personnelles de ses sujets.(176-177)

Mongrédien's contends that for reasons of state, Louis XIV believed he had to keep secrets from his courtisans and in this he was "incomparable." He

also kept secrets of a personal nature. Further, though he was somewhat of a gossipmonger, he was discreet. He could keep secrets admirably well.(176-177)

In *La Promenade de Versaillles*, the repetition of the semantic family of the secret and the weaving of a plot dependent on secrets on every level creates a perfect novelistic preoccupation to please the King and reinforce his obsession. The King's interest would be pricked by a novel whose *narratrice* suggests that it is "[l]e secret qui est inséparable de cette aventure (103)."

As *destinataire privilégié* of *La Promenade de Versailles*, Louis XIV would enjoy reading the *conversation* in *the* "Histoire de Celanire" that explores the importance of the secret in personal matters, amourous affairs as well affairs of state. It may seem presumptuous to assume that Louis XIV may have read *La Promenade de Versailles*. However, Mongrédien contends that he did read Mademoiselle de Scudéry's work.

In the mid-1650's, Louis fell in love with Marie Mancini, the niece of Mazarin. According to Mongrédien, "[c]e fut sa première passion et son plus bel amour."(34) "Marie lui avait révélé un monde inconnu, chimérique, cet univers irréel créé par les précieuses; ensemble ils lisaient les romans merveilleux de La Calprenède et de Mlle de Scudéry (36)."

Obviously, Mongrédien's depiction of Louis' literary interludes with Marie Mancini shows his *anti-précieux* bias. However, his knowledge of Louis XIV's reading habits, allows one to hypothesize that the king may well have read *La Promenade de Versailles*.

One can better appreciate Marin's insight into seventeenth-century French court society by juxtaposing Scudéry's allusion to a Versailles *divertissement* in *La Promenade de Versailles* and Marin's reading of Félibien's text. Marin intuits the cloak of secrecy that surrounded the preparations for the great *divertissements*. Keeping the preparations secret added to the dramatic illusion of the spectacle.

In the "Histoire de Celanire," the second part of *La Promenade de Versailles*, we learn that the prince of the far-off land of Celanire and Cleandre also loves *divertissements*. "Comme le Prince estoit amoureux, il y eut plusieurs festes galantes, plusieurs chasses & plusieurs promenades où Celanire surpassoit toutes les autres belles, quoiqu'elle affectât une certaine negligence propre, qui faisoit voir que'elle se confioit à sa beauté (111)." The reader may not be surprised that the fictional prince in a novel written in 1669 shares the same pastimes as le Roi Soleil.

Glicere, the *narratrice* of *Celanire* and the heroine's confidante, remembers that one day the entourage strolled to "une petite isle presque enchantée qui est au milieu d'un beau fleuve (111)." At first the *narratrice* confides that everyone thought the king had arranged the fête. Later it became known that Cleandre had given the party. "[T]out le monde dit que c'estoit une feste d'ambition plûtôt que d'amour (112)." If one were to judge Louis XIV's motivation for the divertissements he staged at Versailles on Louis Marin's reading, one could easily say that the Sun King's motivation was more ambition than love. The reader is in the privileged position of knowing Cleandre's true

heart. While the courtly world believes him to be ambitious, the reader knows he is not.

Even if everyone in seventeenth-century Parisian society did not know the reason behind Louis' extravagant *divertissements*, they would realize that the "petite isle presque enchantée" in *La Promenade de Versailles* was a reference to the *divertissement* staged at Versailles in 1664. The spectacle that took place over several days was given the name "Les Plaisirs de l'Ile Enchantée."

Obviously, Scudéry's novel alludes to Louis XIV's *divertissement*. More importantly, Marin's description of the *divertissements* and Scudéry's bare an uncanny resemblance. Her text as well as his evokes the notion of secrecy. *Celanire* implies the same secrecy of preparation Louis XIV demanded for his *divertissements*, since the participants were at first mistaken about who had arranged the fête. The preparations for the trip to the enchanted isle in the novel had also been cloaked in secrecy.

Cleandre's guests had every reason to believe that the prince had arranged the trip to the "petite isle enchantée." He loved promenades and the guests had taken a promenade to the enchanted isle. Again, "[i]l me souvient d'un jour, qu'ayant esté *nous promener* avec la Princesse Argelinde à une petite isle presque enchantéé (111)."

Note Scudéry's evocative choice for her title, *La Promenade de Versailles*. The *promenade* was a preferred pastime of the king and of his Parisian subjects. When Louis XIV and his entourage walked the grounds of Versailles, it was not

just a stroll. The *promenade* had a very specific meaning in seventeenth-century Parisian society.

The *promenade* evokes unequivocably the *conversation*. Just as the promenade means more than a walk, a *conversation* in seventeenth-century Parisian society meant more than just a chat. And the *conversation* plays a privileged role in Scudéry's innovative narrative strategy. The deliberative and egalitarian exchange of ideas in the *conversation* in novels shifts the emphasis from the exteriority of the masculine discourse of the action-hero to the interiority of dialogue that allows equal time for male and female points of view. Scudéry's *conversations* thus allow at least equal time for a feminine discourse in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The new narrative form leads to a feminization of the novel and points to the modern French novel.

Again, even Scudéry's worse critics find merit in her *conversations*. After writing her three shorter novels, *Célinte, Mathilde* and *La Promenade de Versailles*, she wrote several works that were collections of *conversations*. Some of the *conversations* were taken from her novels and some were penned for the first time to appear in these collections.

In their recent critical works on Scudéry's *conversations* Elizabeth Goldsmith and Delphone Denis both refer to Furetière's seventeenth-century dictionnary for the definition of *conversation* that frames their analyses. Furetière's entry for *conversation* reads as follows: "Conversation. s.f. Entretien familier qu'on a avec ses amis dans les visites, dans les promenades (Denis 18, note 4 and Goldsmith 14, note 3)." The French seventeenth-century *promenade*,

was par excellence, the site of *conversations*. Also, *la promenade* was a favorite pastime of seventeenth-century Parisians, including Louis XIV. Mongrédien attests to Louis' love of the promenade.

> La Majesté a fini de dîner [...] Louis XIV abandonne la grande perruque d'apparat, dite in-folio, pour en mettre une autre moins pesante et moins gênante pour la promenade [...] Le plus grand plaisir du Roi avec la promenade était la chasse [...]. (La Vie 150-151)

And then again, Mongrédien adds:"S'il n'occupait pas son après-midi à la promenade ou à la chasse, le Roi la passait en fêtes (153)." Victor Cousin extends the love of the *conversation* to the court society of seventeenth-century France. "Après la conversation, la promenade était une des passions de la société au XVIIe siècle [...] A Paris même, les agréables promenades ne manquaient pas (284-285)." And finally, in the painting reproduced in André Maurois' *Louis XIV à Versailles* by J.B. Martin entitled "Vue du bassin d'Apollon et du Grand Canal, Le Roi se promenant dans sa 'roulotte,' " depicts Louis surrounded by his entourage and evokes the feeling of a *conversation en promenade* (Facing 38).

The entourage in *Celanire* does in fact engage in a *conversation* when they arrive at the *petite isle enchantée*. And what more fitting topic of discussion than *le secret*? The story of Celanire which Glicere, the narratrice of the second part of the novel, had just begun, is interrupted by a lengthy *conversation*. That is, when the prince's entourage arrives at the enchanted island, the narrative also comes to a halt. The visitors to the island gather in a pavillion and partake of a magnificent collation and listen to charming music.(111-112) Then they enter a *cabinet*, a place par excellence of secrecy. Part of the entourage continues on

while Celanire and Cleandre's group stays in the room decorated with "cent petits amours, & au milieu d'eux le Dieu du silence representé, qui sembloit leur défendre de parler [...](112-113)." Only Celanire, *trois femmes de la Cour* (one named Philocrite), Cleandre, Alcinor, Iphicrate & the narratrice, Glicere, stay in the parlour of the god of Silence and his hundred mini-cupids. The characters will soon engage in a formal *conversation* about *le secret*.

Thus, the text introduces another *ekphrasis* of Eros to signal the importance of the *conversation* that is about to begin.

> Après la collation on passa dans un cabinet ouvert de trois faces, le haut estoit un dôme assez élevé, où l'on voioit cent petits amours, & au milieu d'eux le Dieu du silence représenté, qui sembloit leur défendre de parler: on en voioint quelques-uns, qui en effet paroissoint avoir peur de respirer trop fort; d'autres qui cachoient leur flambeau, & ployant les aîles se cachoient aussi les uns les autres, & d'autres petits éveillez, qui se mocquant du silence semblolient rire & chanter en dépit de luy.(112-113)

This time Eros is represented by a hundred-fold of capricious mini-cupids. They are guarded over by the god of Silence. The reader will eavesdrop on the *conversation* of Cleandre's guests. The importance of the subject of the *conversation*, secrecy, is reinforced by the presence of the *ekphrasis* of patron of the secret, the god of Silence. Love is here represented in coquettish defiance of the god of Silence. The truth will out, even a message carried by *précieux* nymphs. This time the *ekphrasis* offers a friendly warning that though the secret may be important to this text, and by extension, to its readers, even the *god of Silence* is not powerful enough to tame *Eros*, the truth will be revealed.

The reader will soon discover that the path of the argumentation in the conversation about secrecy takes many twists and turns. It is a labyrinthine

discourse, as is the whole of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Doody relates the Labyrinth to Eros.

> The Labyrinth can feel very gloomy. Eros--or Cupid/Amor/personified Love--can seem very cheering. Eros is warmth and light, activity and movement. He is usually winged--that is, he has freedom. Our contact with Eros is a kind of reward for undergoing the terrors of the labyrinth, and the burial in the tomb. Yet he is a reward which cannot be possessed.(359)

The material condition of *La Promenade de Versailles*, with its endless pages with no paragraph breaks or chapter markers, require the reader to remain engaged with the text for long stretches at a time. The story and the description take many turns as well. Reading *La Promenade de Versailles* is a labyrinthine task. In the *ekphrasis* under discussion, the text offers the reader Eros figures multiplied a hundred-fold to make the burden of the novelistic journey lighter. The Cupids in the passage hide their torches and therefore, by implication also let the light of their torches shine, as do their wings. The miniature *Amors* light up the text for the reader as well as for the characters in the novel. Seemingly incidental, they serve an important purpose.

> Eros (or Cupid) as a trope of fiction is a multiple and subtle signifier, even when introduced in apparently incidental embellishment. He stands, usually, outside the story proper, yet to come upon him is to encounter him, an experience always important for the reader, whether the character is conscious of Eros or not.(359)

The text of *La Promenade de Versailles* doubly reinforces the message of the *ekphrasis* by having a character of the novel comment on it.

> Alcinor qui estoit plein de vanité se mit à railler du dessein des peintures de ce cabinet, & à trouver que le Dieu du silence estoit bien mal placé parmi tant d'amours.(114)

Alcinor quips that the God of Silence seems misplaced among so many "petits amours." But he throws down the gauntlet, as it were, and the friendly argumentation of the *conversation* about secrecy begins shortly.

> Car enfin, dit-il assez plaisamment, soit que les amans soient heureux ou malheureux, il faut renoncer au silence; s'ils sont malheureux, il faut qu'ils soûpirent & qu'ils se plaignent; & s'ils sont heureux, il faut rire & chanter, & se louër des graces qu'on reçoit.(114)

Alcinor suggests that silence will inevitably be broken among lovers, whether they are happy or unhappy.

Celanire responds: "Je craindrois fort la reconnoissance d'un amant qui parleroit beaucoup; & je suis persuadée qu'il peut y avoir des reconnoissances muettes qui valent beaucoup mieux (114-115)." Celanire takes the position of the god of Silence from the *ekphrasis* as her *porte-parole*. The reader of Eros in an *ekphrasis* "should attend to and interpret the image (386)." The "experience is always important for the reader (396)." The text here offers the reader of *La Promenade de Versailles* a presentiment of impending doom for Celanire, because she believes the message of the god of Silence in the *ekphrasis*, instead of Eros, who should be closer to her heart.

"Ce n'est pas, ajoûta-t-elle, que de l'humeur dont je suis, je doive jamais craindre la reconnoissance de personne; mais c'est que naturellement j'aime le secret (115)." It is in Celanire's nature to love the secret. The text describes Cleandre as "naturellement secret," as well (143). In this, Cleandre and Celanire and the text of *La Promenade de Versailles*, place themselves in King Louis' corner. Cleandre and Celanire's natural inclination to love secrecy would touch Louis XIV's heart.

Philocrite adds that she agrees that the secret is a beautiful thing, but that it is difficult. The discussion continues for twenty full pages, without respite. Each *devisant*, to borrow the term from Marguerite de Navarre's *L'Héptaméron*, has a different point of view, but some arguments seem somewhat more substantial than others. The group does retain its equanimity, which, as we shall see, is a requisite of a formal *conversation*.

Goldsmith's "*Exclusive Conversations*," defines the history of the formal conversation and its parameters. She tells us that:

> [e]lite culture during the reign of Louis XIV was based, perhaps more than at any other moment in European history, on ritualized interaction, the art of social existence encompassed an elaborate repertoire of skills, the most important of these being conversation.(1)

Because of Scudéry's status as a well-known and well-read novelist and because of her famous *Samedi* salon, French seventeenth-century court society considered her one of the best conversationalists, if not the best. The historical evaluation of Madame de Rambouillet's *chambre bleue* was a meeting place for polite *conversation*.

By the time of *La Promenade de Versailles'* publication in 1669, the heyday of the *chambre bleue* had long passed. And, Scudéry's reputation as novelist and conversationalist was renowned. Reading *La Promenade de Versailles*, whose narrative story line is interrupted by several lengthy *conversations,* must have allowed the seventeenth-century reader a nostalgic remembrance of the days when Scudéry's salon was at its zenith. A more in depth discussion of the phenomenon known as the *conversation* in seventeenth-century France will follow.

Louis XIV would have admired the *conversation* on the secret for several reasons, foremost, because of his own preoccupation with secrecy in personal as well as in matters of state. Louis could identify with Cleandre, the hero of *La Promenade de Versailles*, when he proclaims the importance of secrecy in "important matters."

> [D]ans les grandes affaires le secret est de grande importance...je dis que nulle qualité n'est plus nécessaire dans la société que celle d'estre secret,& quand on ne l'est pas, on n'est bon à rien sans exception, soit qu'on soit de la Cour ou de la ville, qu'on ait un maistre ou une maistresse; & j'ajoûte mesme hardiment, que quelques bonnes qualitez qu'on puisse avoir d'ailleurs, quand on n'a pas celle-là on devient suspect à tout le monde & inutile à autruy & à soi-même.(117-118)

Louis himself being imbued with the spirit of the secret would have found Cleandre's point of view laudable. Louis XIV would agree that someone who could not keep a secret was worth "nothing." In addition, Louis would concur with the guests in the *conversation* that secrets of war should be guarded at all costs.

> En mon particulier, dit Alcinor, je crois que le secret dont on parle tant, excepté à la guerre & en affaires d'Etat, n'est pas aussi nécessaire qu'on se figure: mais pour l'amour, [...] je l'y tiens presque inutile; qu'on on aime il le faut dire [...] .(116-117)

Cleandre proves himself a courtier worthy of Louis XIV's loyalty, when it is revealed that "il gardait un grand Secret inviolable, en ces sortes de choses [affairs of his prince] (non-numbered 109,III)[4] More problematic, is the fact that Cleandre is more discreet than his prince! "[L]e Prince seul le savoit[that a secret was an inviolate trust for Cleandre], qui quelquefois ne pouvoit s'empécher de les publier luy-mesme, charmé de sa générosité (109,III-108,IV)". Could Louis XIV have reacted positively to that characterization of a King?

The pages about Cleandre's ability to keep secrets and his prince's inability to keep them, appear on non-numbered pages (as did the "secret" critique of absolutism). The text thus subtly draws attention to them. And, the pages lacking numbers allows the author and the printer an alibi in case the pages, and therefore Scudéry and the printer Barbin as well, were found to be too seditious.

Most likely, King Louis would find Celanire's insistence on privacy in amourous affairs appealing. However, besides appealing directly to Louis XIV, the *conversation* about secrecy that occurs between pages 112 and 133 is important to the novel in several ways.

The dénouement of the *conversation* is important to the plot of *La Promenade de Versailles*. The formal *conversation* on the secret in *La Promenade de Versailles* introduces the complication from which the entire novel unfolds. Celanire's insistence on secrecy provides the linchpin that, when dislodged, causes the series of events that become the "Histoire de Celanire" to unravel.

As the *conversation* draws to a close, Cleandre reads a passage from "un livre de maximes ou de reflexions d'un homme de grande qualité & de grand merite, qu'on peut dire avoir fait l'anatomie du coeur de tous les hommes (132)." Cleandre believes that the maxim "revient assez au sentiment de la belle Celanire (133)." Cleandre cites the maxim: "La voicy: S'il y a un amour pur & exempt du mélange de nos autres passions, c'est celuy qui est caché au fond de

nostre cœur, & que nous ne connoissons pas nous mesmes (133)." Celanire approves.

> Voilà precisément, dit Celanire en soûriant, une amour propre au secret; car estant cachée pour celuy mesme qui l'a au fond de son cœur, il n'a garde de la montrer indiscretement aux autres."(133)

With these words, "le jeu [est] fini (133)."

Thus, at the conclusion of the *conversation* on secrecy, though she is smiling, Celanire accepts Cleandre's definition of a perfectly discreet love, one that is unknown even to oneself. Living up to the challenge of the maxim becomes the conflict that separates Cleandre from Celanire as she eventually flees to Versailles and the court of Louis XIV.

Serendipitously, Celanire and Cleandre are left alone after the *conversation* concludes. Cleandre declares himself "le plus heureux homme du monde (134)." His happiness derives from the fact that Cleandre possesses a quality that Celanire admires, namely, the ability to keep secrets. "Car il est vrai que je fais une profession si particuliere d'estre capable de secret, que je ne pense pas que personne ne puisse égaler en cela (135)." Cleandre's manner of professing his love for Celanire shows his ingenuity in that he tells her he loves her, but not directly. That was the requirement of Celanire.

> N'est-il pas vrai, Madame, que depuis que j'ai l'honneur d'estre connu de vous, il ne vous est point entré dans l'esprit que je fusse capable d'amour, & que vous m'avez regardé & me regardez encore, comme un ambitieux qui cherche la fortune: vous m'avez mesme peut-estre pas crû que j'ai une espece de zèle pour le Prince, qui est une nouvelle sorte de passion que je croi avoir inventée car je n'en ai point vû d'exemple, & vous pensez seulement que je suis assez bon courtisan. (137)

Cleandre's speech sends a double message. He professes his love by indirection when he suggests that Celanire has not considered him capable of love. Importantly, he also addresses an implied reader, Louis XIV, as he boasts of having created a new type of passion for his prince.

As clever as Cleandre's speech was, his words still offended Celanire.

> [...D]e voix irrité, je vous declare qu'encore que je continuë de vivre tres civilement avec vous devant le monde, je n'oublierai jamais l'injure que vous m'avez faite aujourd'hui.(140)

Through many conversational twists and turns, Celanire and Cleandre finally agree that they love each other, but of course, Celanire requires that their love be secret from the world. Because necessity is the mother of invention, the lovers invent several novel ways to show their love in public without anyone knowing and to send secret messages to one another. Even Godenne finds their means of communication inventive, he qualifies them as examples of *galanterie* (préface, VI). One involves sending anemones if a rendez-vous is possible and sending daffodils if an impediment to the meeting has arisen (258). In another example, the lovers borrow an invention of two lovers in *Clélie*. If Celanire and Cleandre are forced to be apart, they designate a time when they will both gaze at the moon and think of each other (348-349).

The need for secrecy in Celanire and Cleandre's love affair is heightened by a feud between their families. Euribiade, Celanire's uncle forbids her to love Cleandre. "Il n'y en a qu'un seul vers qui vous ne devez jamais tourner les yeux (225). " Celanire laments her bad fortune. "Il faut, dis-je, que je sois la victime d'une haine de deux cent ans, qu'on me défende de regarder le plus honneste

homme de toute la Cour [...] (230)." Argelinde, who loves the prince, is jealous of a suspected relationship between Celanire and the prince, and encourages her uncle to marry Celanire off. He tries to force Celanire to accept other suitors, in particular Cleonte, a wealthy but morally and physically unattractive choice. "[L]e plus riche homme de toute la Cour, le plus mal fait de corps & esprit [...] (281)." Needless to say, Celanire rejects Cleonte as a suitor.

Celanire flees to a convent, where she is virtually a hostage. Then she arranges her own exile to France. Meanwhile, Cleandre has his own difficulties. Ambushed by Alcinor, he kills him in a dual and is sent into exile by the prince.

While in the convent, Celanire gazes out the window and sees her name emblazoned in the sky. Her name figures in a royal fireworks display, which lives up to its French appellation, *un feu d'artifice*. This artificial fire has sent an erroneous message. The fireworks display of her name in the heavens could have been the most dramatic avowal of Cleandre's love for Celanire. But, Celanire believes that Cleandre has broken his vow of silence concerning their love and cannot forgive him. And, in fact, he was not responsible for the fireworks display. So, the display proves to misrepresent the truth twice over in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

The misfortune surrounding the *feu d'artifice* in *La Promenade de Versailles* is reminiscent of Marin's analysis of the King's spectacular fireworks displays at Versailles. Once again the discourse of Scudéry and Marin intersect. The fireworks in *La Promenade de Versailles* and those that are part of Louis XIV's *divertissements* hide the truth behind their brilliance.

In the diegesis of the novel, the firework displays represent misunderstandings. To Celanire, they represent a betrayal of Cleandre's vow of silence regarding their love. In Marin's piece, at Versailles, the brilliance of the display hides the political machinations of the king. According to Marin, the firework displays arranged by Louis XIV represent his political and absolute power. In the novel, the fireworks take place in the far-off land of Celanire, but the association of the novel's fireworks to the spectacular firework displays of Versailles is inevitable.

Scudéry's novel, in the seventeenth century, not secure with the protective safety of several generations of time, subtly but accurately implies the same critique that Marin sets forth. The message in the sky can be read as *Cela nuire*, a play on Celanire's name. The fireworks are thus a foreboding sign.

In his *Portrait of the King*, Marin's brilliant description of the firework display evokes a palpable feeling for the megalomaniac obsession of Louis XIV. He represents himself in the ultimate dramatic spectacle of the Sun King.

> In the upheaval of the luminous appearance under the king's eyes a new element is created. It is at once *other* than fire, air, and water and the mix that reduces them to unity. He destroys the elements and totalized them through an astonishing *transmutation* in which the dust of the fire of a thousand sparks (fire, air, and water) becomes an *infinity* of atoms of *gold* shining in a great *light*: a light that is metal, and a metal that is light. The king gives himself here the figure of the great cosmic alchemist, but even more so and inversely, the universal alchemist is the *figure* of the infinite potential power of the king, an infinite potential power or, rather, an infinite desire for absolute power.(203. Emphasis Marin.)

Marin teases out the visual and visceral impact of the fireworks of Versailles. The golden sky lit up over Versailles becomes the Sun King. The

fireworks are a metaphor of his greatness but also of his desire for transcendance.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Celanire's insistence on secrecy allows an interpretation of her as a character consistent with the medieval *topos* of *la belle dame sans merci*. From the moment of the fireworks, an original plot line unfolds. It is a feminist reconstitution of a *romanesque* tale. Celanire does not play the role of the *demoiselle* in a tower, or the *demoiselle* in distress. She escapes using her own intelligence, cognition, and resources.

In a reversal of the Cupid and Pscyhe legend rather than Celanire-Psyche wandering the earth in search of Cleandre-Cupid, the reverse is true. Celanire seeks exile in Paris, affording her the opportunity to visit Versailles. Cleandre, wanders the earth, and he arrives in Versailles to discover Celanire.

The novel does have a happy end. Celanire and Cleandre are able to wed. The uncle has been won over by Cleandre's valour. The *femme forte* that escapes patriarchal institutions by escaping from the convent and creating a self-imposed exile at Versailles, in the end returns to the fold. But she does so on her own terms.

Scudéry's other novels are read as anti-marriage tracts. For example, in *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*, Sapho, the autobiographical character representing Scudéry herself, rejects marriage. As we remember from chapter Two, the *précieuses* were made out to be prudes. Celanire cannot be described as a prude. DeJean attributes the concept of *inclination* to Scudéry.

> In Clélie, *inclination* is defined as a force of attraction that works against prearranged marriages and encourages women to rebel against the

> authority and the values of the patriarchal system. (Unlike love at first sight, which strikes both partners simultaneously, *inclination* is consistently described from the woman's perspective as the force that makes her lean in the direction of one suitor over all others.)(88)

Where exactly does *La Promenade de Versailles* fit into the feminist politics of Madeleine de Scudéry? First, the association of prudery with Scudéry is part of the phantasmagorical fear of female writers on the part of men that Domna Stanton illustrated. If a woman refuses to engage in a male-female sexual relationship, the consequences are too threatening. The woman's behavior can only be explained as deviant.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Celanire does not refuse to engage in a relationship with Cleandre. She does insist that her standards of propriety prevail, to wit, that their relationship remain secret to the rest of the world until such time that she deems appropriate to reveal it.

Scudéry's critics might condemn her for creating a character so fixated on secrecy. They might do so at their own risk, since their king, Louis XIV, shared Celanire's obsession. As applied to the king, one might indeed call it a magnificent obsession. As we have seen, Louis did everything on a grand scale.

The economy of the secret is important to both Celanire and Louis XIV. They both want to keep secrets for power and self-assertion, Louis for political power and his role in the governing of France and indirectly of Europe, Celanire for personal power, to assure her own agency in her relationships.

When the correct elements align themselves in the text, Celanire is happy to marry Cleandre. With regards to Celanire and Cleandre's relationship, it is a matter of coming to terms agreable to both parties.

Although the language of contractual law does not play a part in *La Promenade de Versailles*, the romantic economy of the novel corresponds to that of the *Carte de Tendre* as it was codified in *Clélie*.

Both the important *conversation* about the secret and Celanire and Cleandre's private tête à tête after the debate reflect the logic and semantics of the *Carte de Tendre*. Celanire insists on the importance of *la reconnaisance*, for example.

This allusion to *Clélie* and the *Carte de Tendre* is neither incidental nor coincidental. Rather, Scudéry purposefully alludes to an intertext that had become a national pastime in France. Any reference to her *Carte de Tendre* would be recognized immediately by a literate person of seventeenth-century France.

In a chapter entitled "The Politics of Tenderness," in *Tender Geographies*, Joan DeJean presents two revisionist readings of *La Carte de Tendre* that "stress Scudéry's originality and her subversiveness."(88) One is Alain-Marie Bassy's article "Supplément au voyage de Tendre" and the other is Claude Filteau's "Le Pays de Tendre: L'Enjeu d'une carte."

DeJean explains Bassy's position thus.

> Bassy emphasizes in particular her radical departure from a tradition with which the *Carte de Tendre* has often been compared, that of courtly love speculation: for the courtly notion of a unique, predestined, irresversible passion, Scudéry substitutes the idea of choice, of multiple amorous trajectories, in *Clélie*, courtly love's fatality is replaced by codes of behavior that an indivdual can be taught to master [...] (88-89).

Choice. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, choice has become a politically charged feminist icon. Scudéry's novels demanded a choice for women three hundred years ago.

Celanire could not make her case any clearer. She wants to decide when a relationship will be established and even more importantly, when it will be announced to the world. In legal terms, it may be compared to posting the bans of marriage. Celanire wants to control when the bans will be posted and to whom. In the economy of the *Carte de Tendre*, *reconnaisance* holds a lion's share of the stock. Celanire wants to hold the certificates and decide when they will go on the market.

Acccording to DeJean, "Filteau emphasizes the practicality of Scudéry's goals 'All speculations about tenderness [...] aim at the formulation of a contract' [...] (89)." DeJean concludes her reading of Bassy and Filteau with a reference to the icon that hasa become symbolic of Scudéry, the *Carte de Tendre*.

> The *Carte de Tendre* is the most visible sign of Scudéry's social project, a demonstration that aims at nothing less than the justification of private contracts as a legitimate counterforce to the officially sanctioned legal and political order.(89)

DeJean states: "*Clélie* must be seen as the first salvo in the post-Fronde women's war, a literary war that sought to win for women new status within marriage and outside it, ultimately to redefine marriage as an institution in France (90) ." Finally, DeJean concludes her chapter on Scudéry by claiming that "Scudéry's salon writing was the first indication of the new politics of marriage and married life that would be the dominant concern of French women's fiction until the 1820's (93)."

DeJean makes a convincing case for Madeleine de Scudéry's privileged place in the history of feminist writing in France. Scudéry's legacy as a feminist writer lies somewhere in the intersection between her life and her works.

The *Conversation*

La Promenade de Versailles is a pivotal work in the development of Scudéry's writing style. Obviously, it is dramatically shorter then the voluminous *Cyrus* and *Clélie*. It is the last novel that she wrote. All her subsequent publications were books containing the formal convention called *conversations*. Further, the innovation of the formal *conversation* that she included in *La Promenade de Versailles*, becomes the form of choice in her last works: *Conversation sur divers sujets, Conversations nouvelles sur diver sujets,* etc.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, perhaps more than in any of her other works, the voice of the writer comes through the prose to the reader's mind. Is Scudéry the narrator of the first part of the novel? Though Godenne does not put much stock in the notion of *romans à clef*, even he hints that the voice of the first narratrice in *La Promenade de Versailles* may be Scudéry. "Au cours d'une visite à Versailles, la narratrice (Mlle de Scudéry?) et un groupe d'amis font la connaissance d'une étrangère qu'ils promènent à travers les galeries et les jardins du château royal (pp.1-102) (Godenne, *Etudes 55*)." While there has been much critical discussion about her brother, Georges de Scudéry's contribution to her other novels, there is no critical debate about the authorship of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Perhaps because *La Promenade de Versailles* was

published in 1669 and her brother Georges died in 1667. Or, perhaps, it is because the voice of *La Promenade de Versailles* is uniform and clearly Madeleine de Scudéry's.

Scudéry's relationship with her brother was problematic at times. For one thing, he squandered money she had earned from her novels. But, perhaps the passing of her brother liberated her mind. For, though neither Scudéry nor Celanire are radical feminists, both the author through her voice in *La Promenade de Versailles,* and Celanire in her role in the novel, present a coherent case for a woman's right to choose her own destiny, especially with regard to love and marriage.

Celanire states her case for her right to choose the moment of disclosure of a love affair in the *conversation* about secrets and in her discussion with Cleandre after the others guests have departed. The structure of the *conversation* allows Scudéry's voice to ring through as clear as a bell.

In *Exclusive Conversations*, Goldsmith explains the invention of the *conversation* in seventeenth-century French society and the unique composition of a formal *conversation*. "Conversation created its own social space with carefully marked bounderies; to 'be somebody' one had to be 'in the best conversations. (2)." A Scudérian *conversation* was the best. "Scudéry, Sévigné and Bussy-Rabutin were as famous in their own day for their mastery of the art of conversation as they were for their writing (2)."

According to Goldsmith, "[w]hile most of the habitués of both court and salon preferred to pass freely between both places, the social milieu of the salon

was increasingly viewed as the more hospitable environment for perfect sociability (7)." No wonder Scudéry writes a novel praising Louis XIV and Versailles. Her novels and *le samedi*, at the height of its popularity, were in competition with Versailles. She needed to reassure him that his palace was still "the place" to be.

In the salon, a formal *conversation* was not a spontaneous exchange of ideas. "Conduct literature offered a growing number of readers a system of rules, methods and techniques for making social interaction more agreeable and lasting."(4) Goldsmith entitles her book "*Exclusive Conversations*," because exclusivity was an element in this spoken genre. However, the notion of exclusivity did not dominate the scene of the *conversation*.

> Exclusive groups counterbalance their collective sense of superiority with the conviction that they themselves are a community of equals. Communication among the members of the group must be based on the *principle of reciprocity*, with each speaker contributing to the equanimity of the circle as a whole [...] . When we look at seventeenth-century discussions about proper social conduct, we see that an important requirement is that individual partipants present themselves in balanced relation to others, and that it is only the group support provided by this ambiance of mutual generosity that gives value to the contribution of any single member. (9-10)

La Rochefoucauld's contribution to the discourse of the *conversation* confirms Goldsmith's contention. "The pleasure of conversation, writes La Rochefoucauld, is often destroyed by one individual demanding gratification at another's expense."(10) La Rochefoucauld understood the economy of the *conversation*. What is important in conversation is that all participants allow the form and flow of talk to continue without paying too much attention to what is being said or weighing too carefully the value of each contribution: "on doit entrer

indifféremment sur tous les sujets agréables qui se présentent, et ne faire jamais voir qu'on veut entrainer la conversation sur ce qu'on a envie de dire.(p.193)"(12)

Surely, La Rochfoucould understood that a speaker in a *conversation* might have a point of view he or she wanted to get across, but the rules of the *conversation* required that one's own point of view not be allowed to dominate.

> Neither the individual participants nor the specific content of their speech can be given more weight than the play of conversation as form [...] Members of the group must be careful to exclude rhetorical expressions which draw attention to, rather than disguise, relations of power within the social group.(12)

For La Rochefoucauld, "Too much expressed difference destroys the necessary illusion of unanimity (12)."

So, it is not to say that a member of the group is so in harmony with his fellow conversants that he or she unconsciously suppresses one's point of view. One may well have a different point of view, but for the sake of the group and for the sake of the conversational *play*, one must underplay it. The power relations of a group are there, but they are disguised.

Thus, the formal *conversation* is a safe haven. One is not expected to convey information, let alone seditious information. But, if one gets caught, one can always claim that one was just playing the game.

If Scudéry came of age, literally and figuratively with the *conversation*, the lack of cognitive dissonance due to the cooperative attitude of the participants, must have freed her creative talents. The conversation, rather than being exclusive, actually by its nature and by its formal rules of organization, made it inclusive. The unique rules of the *conversation* empowered the Scudérian

discourse. "Scudéry's speakers live out an interactive fantasy, where embarrassment and other forms of what Goffman calls 'alienation from interaction' do not exist (68)."

It seems that if one remains within the rules and boundaries of the formal *conversation*, that one can engage in ideal, utopian discourse.

In the late 1660's, Scudéry was able to maximize her creative forces. The composition and content of *La Promenade de Versailles* benefits from Scudéry's new found freedom. Free of her brother's domination and enabled by a literary and verbal construction that at least ostensibly eliminates alienation, such an environment allowed Scudéry to create her most ingenious novel, *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Notes

[1] See Marin 49. Marin explains that for Aristotle, in the genre of the panegyric or eulogy, "the auditor [in this analysis the reader] is spectator, he 'contemplates' the speech being given 'theoretically, and when he judges, he does not pronounce himself on what is said but on the potential (the talent) of the person speaking, not on the content of the speech but on the way in which it is given. 'theoreticallly,' and, when he judges he does not pronounce himself on the content of the speech but on the way in which it is given (49)." Additionally, the context of Marin's discussion of the panegyric is of interest to this thesis. First, the critics of *La Promenade de Versailles* have universally agreed that the text praises Louis XIV. Secondly, Marin's discussion of the panegyric is found in the chapter entitled "The King's Narrative, or How to Write History," in which Marin discusses Paul Pellisson's letter of 1670 to Colbert suggesting a format for a history of Louis XIV. Marin skillfully uses the text of Pellisson's letter to elaborate a theory of the power of narrative and the narrative of power. Madeleine de Scudéry is Paul Pellisson's best friend. Her novel may have served as a test case for Pellisson's proposed history of Louis XIV. In an era of power politics, where the master of powerful persuasion was Louis XIV himself, Scudéry's novel may prove as powerful a narrative as Pellisson's proposal for a history of the king.

[2] See Marin 42. Referring to Pellisson's letter to Colbert, Marin states that "[t]here is neither excess nor lack, and no smudging, at least in Pellisson's project. Hence also, on these two three-centuries-old pages, it is possible to make some

reflections that have practical value today on the relationships between the writer and political power, between the intellectual and the state (42). Scudéry's novel can also serve as such a model for twenty-first centuries readers.

[3] See Marin 193-205. In the chapter "The Magician King or the King's Portrait," Marin theorizes the importance of secrecy in Louis XIV's deployement of his divertissements. Marin contends that Félibien's use of the expression "royal miracle," "is not an expression that turns toward the panegyric or hyperbole of flattery, but rather, one that describes quite exactly the effect of belief that is brought about by its secrecy in the decision and the omnipotence of the realization [...](196)." Marin in turn deploys a *réseau sémantique* that reiterates the secrecy as key to the magic of the *divertissements* of Versailles. "[T]he secrecy in the decision and the omnipotence in the realization [...](196). "[T]he conception has remained secret: only the king knows what he ordered the principal executors of his project to do [...] (197)." "[T]he royal gaze [...] its secrecy (200)." "[T]he secret moment of intention and design [...] the first act of the narrative, the secret order of the king (200)."

[4] There are several series of non-numbered pages in *La Promenade de Versailles.* A case can be made for each set of non-numbered pages appearing as such because of the potentially sensitive nature of the passages.

Conclusion

Every discriminating individual has a perspective from which he or she views the world. Parisians of seventeenth-century France certainly had their own political views. The Fronde had divided Paris.

By the time Scudéry publishes *La Promenade de Versailles*, in 1669, the political turmoil of the Fronde had subsided for the most part. Nonetheless, having been frightened at his regent mother's knee when forced to evacuate Paris during the uprisings of his youth, Louis XIV had sufficient reason to want to assure he alone controlled his reign. Absolutism may have grown out of his childhood fears of resurgency. By 1669, the Sun King was in control. Versailles had become the tangible symbol of his sole sovereign rule.

Literary critics' interpretation of the Scudérian corpus change with respect to their *parti pris.* While few French citizens might openly declare themselves royalists today, although some do indeed, there definitely exists a conservative critical attitude reminiscent of Victor Cousin's, whose nostalgia for the ancien régime frames the evaluation of Scudéry's literary works. Contemporary feminist critics believing in full emancipation for all beings construct an oppositional, idealized democratic critical stance with regard to her work.

Participants in Niderst's 1991 colloquium express opinions informed by various critical and political backgrounds. The scholars aligned themselves from the radical feminist left of Joan DeJean to the conservative critical contingency that regrets the demise of seventeenth-century aristocracy and laments the "demolition of the hero" that Bénichou outlined in his *Morales du grand siècle.*

Trying to make the socio-political stance of Madeleine de Scudéry's novels fit into one party or the other results in divergent interpretations of her works, or at best, critics' dissatisfaction with interpretations that fall on the side opposite their own. Scholars disagree as to whether Scudéry was an ardent royalist or not. Scudéry had ties to both sides of the conflict during the Fronde. Therefore, both conversative and liberal interpretations can be derived form *Cyrus* and *Clélie*, as they can from *La Promenade de Versailles*.

Aronson contends that Scudéry had only adoration for her king (*Mademoiselle de Scudéry* 357). She cites two madrigals written by Scudéry as proof of her approval of Louis XIV's actions in war or at peace.

"Sixtain sur la conquête de la Franche-Comté

Les héros de l'Antiquité
N'étaient que des héros d'été:
Ils suivaient le printemps comme les hirondelles,
La victoire en hiver pour eux n'avait pas d'ailes.
Mais malgré les frimas, la neige et les glaçons,
Louis est un héros de toutes les saison (357)."

"Madrigal sur la Paix

Jamais on n'avait tant vanté
Ni Campagne d'hiver, ni campagne d'été,
Quand Louis revenait suivit de la Victoire.
Quelle est cette nouvelle gloire?
Sur ses propres exploits a-t-il pu renchérir,
Après tant de succès sur la terre et sur l'onde?
Oui, car donner la paix au monde
C'est plus que de le conquérir (358)."

The madrigals that Aronson selected to bolster her argument, actually show Scudéry's stance to be more nuanced. Surely, she was proud of Louis' victory in Franche-Comté and Flandres. Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles*

reads as a eulogy evoked by those victories. However, in Part 2, the "Histoire de Celanaire," the *conversation* that points to the suffering of the peasantry as a result of costly warfare demonstrates Scudéry's displeasure with Louis XIV's belligerent activities. The second madrigal implies that peace is more important than conquests as ultimately *La Promenade de Versailles* does. The two madrigals selected by Aronson could be epigraphs to the two parts of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Happy for his victories, Scudéry still defines world peace as a preferred goal.

That Scudéry loved her monarch is clear. She believed in the hereditary monarchy as the best form of government for France. However, the task of running a nation-state, even a nation-state in its early inception, proves too complicated to manage alone. All good rulers, even absolutist King Louis XIV, need advisers. In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Scudéry attempts to praise the king while subtly, but seriously criticizing Louis XIV's fiscal and foreign policies.

Scudérian scholarship seems divided on the interpretation of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Several points of view emerge. Grimm, a participant in Niderst's 1991 colloquium, defines Scudéry's novel strictly as a eulogy.

> [D]isons que notre texte [*La Promenade de Versailles*] est un éloge inconditionnel et sans restrictions de la personne d'un jeune roi et d'une monarchie héréditaire, roi bien concret dans le cadre réel de "La promenade" et "La feste", roi fictif dans l'"Histoire de Celanire". Nul doute que le modèle de ces deux rois est le jeune Louis XIV lui-même à qui d'ailleurs La promenade [...][sic] est dédiée. Tout concourt, dans ce texte, à son éloge: Car physiquement, moralement, intellectuellement, ce rois dépasse infiniment l'humain."(448-449)

Th sure and unequivocal stance of Grimm is reflected in many other readings of *La Promenade de Versailles*, Aronson and Godenne's for example. However the author of this thesis does not agree. *La Promenade de Versailles* supports a reading that admires Louis XIV and Versailles. But the novel also suggests a subtle critique of the opulence of the palace and an equally subtle and nuanced critic of Louis XIV's excessive spending on Versailles and on the frequent military campaigns aimed at the expansion of France's borders. Near the end of the novel, Glicere explains to Celanire, in plaintif words that recall the anti-war sentiments considered in Chapter 3, that we are none of us masters of our own fate.

> Il faut, dis-je, avoir pris garde que la pluspart du temps les evenemens de la vie dépendent de l'amour, de la haine, de l'ambition, de l'intérest de personnes que vous ne connoissez pas, la paix ou la guerre font mille changements en la fortune des gens qui n'ont nulle part au gouvernement.(564)

Glicere's words could be directed to a twenty-first century audience given the chain of events in the world that began in September of 2001.

A second question about which literary scholars disagree is whether Scudéry was a reluctant spinster or an emancipated feminist. A radical feminist interpretation of Scudéry's works runs into difficulties. If Scudéry's texts, for example in the later chapters of *Cyrus* and *Clélie*, support a radical feminist point of view, one that is anti-marriage, why do some works also end with the hero and heroine looking forward to wedded bliss, such as Celanire and Cleandre in *La Promenade de Versailles?* Dalla Valle points out:

> En particulier, Madeleine a conçu le mariage comme un choix douloureux, qui décrète pour la femme la perte absolue de son autonomie et où même

> l'amour--quand il existe--risque de s'avilir. Elle a opposé, par contre, à ce choix, un autre type de vie, qui n'exclut pas l'amour ou, plutôt, en élimine seulement une partie, mais laisse le champ libre à l'amour tendre, qui se développe selon un itinéraire complex--illustré par la *Carte de Tendre*--et qui se fonde sur une affinité de sentiments et d'esprit. Malgré tout cela, il faut quand même reconnaître que dans la réalité de ses romans Madeleine accepte que les protagonistes se marient à la fin; de plus elle a souvent mêlé dans ses intrigues compliquées des histoires favorables au mariage à des histoires contraires; Mme Aronson, en particulier, a souligné cette sorte de contradiction à l'intérieur de la production romanesque de Madeleine.((513-514)

The answer to Aronson and Dalla Valle's question is simply that there is no contradiction because Scudéry is not a radical. Different options for her characters signal the importance of choice, not an internal inconsistency. She was an innovator but not a radical.

As Celanire, Madeleine was herself orphaned in infancy. Her uncle who raised her saw to her education. But he also died leaving her in the care of her brother. Georges and Madeleine may well have worked together, even as a writing couple, as DeJean suggests, working in partnership, to create a novel by committee.(23)

By the time Scudéry writes *La Promenade de Versailles*, her brother has died and she is on her own. She lives by the royal *pensions* she receives and her writing. However, as in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, with literary patronage comes the necessity to compromise.

Scudéry could and did compromise. She found a way to support herself that allowed her to write and publish her entire life! Scudéry was self-emancipated. Celanire is too. To ask why some of Scudéry's heroines marry in

the end is to pose the wrong question. Scudéry is not anti-marriage. She is pro-self-determination.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Celanire's actions always turn on her maintaining control of her own destiny. A clever cartoon on television many years ago featured a princess and her father, the king. In a story line that goes back as far as the beginning of fairy tales, the princess loves someone her father has not chosen for her. This princess tries to explain to her father, the king, that she wants to have a say in her choice of suitors. Her father quickly replies: "You can have any say you want, girl, just not the last say!"

Obviously, having the last say defines self-determination. Celanire, as many of Scudéry's other heroines, is neither against suitors nor marriage. However, she is determined to keep control over her own life. To do so she sets parameters. Her insistence that an amorous affair be secret provides her first tool in maintaining her self-sufficiency. The world need not know her heart. It suffices that she knows it. And, eventually, that her suitor knows it. Celanire and Cleandre's love can grow best if no one else knows of its existence. It is their affair after all.

The overarching theme of secrecy in *La Promenade de Versailles* proves central and reinforcing of both the political and the feminist critique of the novel. Neither the *écriture politique* nor the *écriture féministe* suggest a radical attack of the polis or of patriarchy. Scudéry did not live to a ripe old age of 93 without making appropriate adjustments and compromises during her life. Grimm almost suggests she was blatantly opportunistic (449-450).

There may be a fine line between doing what one must do to survive on one's own terms and depending on others for one's survival. I choose to believe that Madeleine de Scudéry took both a prudent and critical path.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

A Reader's Guide to *La Promenade de Versailles*

A Story of Love and Politics

The novel entitled *La Promenade de Versailles* has two major divisions: the shorter introductory chapter also entitled "La Promenade de Versailles," referred to in this dissertation as Part 1, followed by another lengthy chapter entitled "Histoire de Celanire," herein called Part 2. The overarching romantic plot follows the peripatetic path of the novel's love interest, the romance of Celanire and Cleandre. However, the story unfolds in anything but a linear fashion.

"La Promenade de Versailles", Part 1

La Promenade de Versailles begins *in medias res* with the enigmatic declaration from the narratrice acquitting herself of her promise and her duty. Beginning the novel *in medias res* acknowledges the traditional opening of historical novels of the Ancients.[1] A complex narrative scheme unfolds. As the characters are being introduced, they become engaged in a formal Scudérian innovation known as a *conversation*. The *conversation* is a *précieux* ornament inserted into the meticulously woven description of Versailles. The assembled characters discuss historical political figures and historians themselves, the contemporary seventeenth-century debate of the Ancients and the Moderns, and the primacy of Art over Nature. And then, most importantly, the characters discuss the grandeur of Louis XIV.

After many pages of discussion, the text allows for a minor plot development. The arrival of friends of the *narratrice* requires the briefest

explanation of her obligation to look after the foreign visitors. But the story scarcely advances because the characters participate in a second *conversation.* The topic of the *conversation* is how best to take leave of a love. "Il s'agit de savoir s'il y a plus ou moins de tendresse à dire adieu à ce qu'on aime, ou à ne le dire pas (52)." The debate provides a fifteen page poetic interlude. Respondants in the debate quote verses to support their arguments. Though not central to the theme of this dissertation, a panoply of poetics is found woven between the description and the story of *La Promenade de Versailles.*[2] The conclusion of the *conversation* proves less important than the exchange of ideas and opinions expressed in it.

At the end of the set piece *conversation*, the characters begin their tour of Versailles requiring more description and commentary. The action that had become less central in Scudéry's previous voluminous novels has been reduced to almost zero in *La Promenade de Versailles.*

In short, not a lot happens in the introductory pages of the novel. The narrative overview just outlined gives a scarce impression of the first chapter of *La Promenade de Versailles.* The text itself however presents a tightly woven verbal mosaic, without paragraph breaks or sectional divisions. The descriptions and *conversations* present a seamless and continuous discourse.

The *narratrice* introduces her guests from a far-off land. She welcomes the heroine, at first known only as la belle Etrangére, and her companions, Telamon and Glicere. The narratrice and her guests view the public and private spaces of the king's court. Through their eyes, the reader envisions Versailles in every

minute detail and every aspect of architecture and ornamentation. Vistas and visions from balustrades to fountains, gardens to ornithological collections, tapestry to *objets d'art*. The reader-voyeur is privy to all the public and private spaces of Versailles, including the queen's chamber.

La Promenade de Versailles focuses on the role of the ocular in fiction. Scudéry's description of Versailles serves as a pretext for an elaborate and extended *éloge* of "Louïs Quatorziéme, tel qu'il étoit avant les conquestes de Flandres & de la Franche-Comté"(41) and his court. La belle Etrangére and Telamon praise Louis as a great warrior and the text describes his exploits in battle. The textual juxtaposition of Louis XIV and the site of his latest conquests prove not to be coincidental. While Part 1 of *La Promenade de Versailles* clearly serves as a pretext to praise the king, subtle indications point to a secret political critique which could undermine the glory that the king values above all else.

Glicere avows that she prefers heroes to their palaces. "[C]omme j'aime toûjours mieux les Héros que leur Palais; je croi qu'avant que de voir celuy-ci, vous devriez nous bien representer quel en est le maistre."(35) Glicere subtly pays the king a compliment by suggesting that the man, Louis XIV, is more important than his palace, Versailles. Telamon's answer trumps Glicere's compliment by suggesting that Louis XIV is known the world over. He replies: "Pouvons-nous donc ignorer ce qu'est un Roi que toute la terre connoist & admire?"(37) He goes on at length to praise the king's renown in battle. Significantly, he adds, "[J']ajouterai, si vous me le permettez, a cet éloge ce que

toute la terre ne sais pas moins desormais: Un esprit amoureux de la gloire, & qui en fait sa premiére passion (37)."

Love of glory drives Louis XIV. He believed that glory derived from foreign conquests.[3] Although *La Promenade de Versailles* has been viewed by most literary critics as an unabashed *éloge* of Louis XIV, the text subtly critiques Louis' ambitious wartime enterprises, particularly, as they were accomplished at the expense of his less fortunate subjects. The *écriture politique* of *La Promenade de Versailles* both praises and criticizes Louis XIV.

Scudéry's juxtaposition of Louis Quatorzième with Flandres and the Franche-Comté links his great name with the War of Devolution that had most recently taken place. Scudéry's novel was published in 1669, just after the end of Louis XIV's latest conflict and conquest in a series of wars spanning from 1661 to 1715.[4]

Having associated Louis XIV with the conquests of Flandres and Franche-Comté, the narratrice of *La Promenade de Versailles* adds a somewhat cryptic comment.

> Il [Telamon] nous a fait voir admirablement en fort peu d'espace un grand roi fort honneste homme, mais si la fantaisie m'en prend en quelque endroit de la promenade, je vous le montrerai encore aussi grand Captaine que vaillant soldat, & nous verrons alors, s'il ne me reste rien à dire. (41)

Admittedly, the hedge of the narratrice can only be described as faint. But, why does she defer her appraisal of Louis' valour? The reader must wonder what more the narratrice has to say about Louis XIV.

And as the novel advances, a subtle political critique of the second part of the novel,"Histoire de Celanire," counter balances the ostentatious eulogy in the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles*. A more open and forceful critic of Louis XIV's political and military policies would certainly have landed Scudéry in prison for *lèse-majesté*. Her closest companions Nicolas Fouquet and Paul Pellisson had already been arrested for political reasons.

A biographical link between Scudéry, Pellisson and Fouquet exists in *La Promenade de Versailles*. Louis XIV unquestionably represents a stellar (solar) exemplar in "La Promenade de Versailles," Part 1. However, the subtle subversion of the exemplar in "Histoire de Celanire" convinces the reader that Scudéry's text conveys a certain reserve with regard to the relationship of Louis to his courtiers and the expenses of his foreign campaigns. Political jealousy led to Fouquet and Pellisson's arrest. The vast expenditures of money on Versailles and in war led to the deprivation of the masses and eventually to the bankruptcy of France at Louis XIV's death.

These issues lie at the crux of the evaluation given Louis XIV as an absolute monarch even today. And, the king's singular verve to conquer for the greater glory of France and, of course, for himself, provides the background for the inner most secret critique of absolutism in *La Promenade de Versailles*. Scudéry desires to praise her monarch and she does. But, she also bares the scars of her best friend Pellisson's arrest and her friend Fouquet's death as he languished in the Bastille for years. The novel seems to honor Louis XIV, as

indeed it does. It also offers a veiled critique, the only kind of critique that could succeed in the absolutist France of Louis XIV.

Within the pages of the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles*, a foreshadowing of a major political critique can be found. Scudéry's *écriture politique* describes the results of extravagant spending in warfare through the feminized, that is, interiorized discourse of the *conversation*. The legendary king of seventeenth-century France, Louis XIV as well as the fictional warrior hero Cleandre from the faraway homeland of Celanire, evoke images of valiant kings and courtiers.

Louis XIV's strong desire to wage war is already alluded to by Glicere in the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles*, when she questions the king's willingness to leave the most pleasant palace of Versailles to go off to war. The results of his avid desire to wage war are again expounded in the politically senstive non-numbered pages of the "Histoire de Celanire."

"Histoire de Celanire", Part 2

The distant land of Celanire's birth portrays a parallel universe to Versailles, a court society ruled by an equally belligerent king and his most respected courtier, Cleandre. Public sacrifice for the state appears to be praised in both parts of the novel, the description of Versailles, as well as in the *romanesque* story of the "Histoire de Celanire." The text also reveals the cost of waging war. Public deeds for the state, such as European conquests, have repercussions for France and for the poor masses, even as they view the bonfires lit to celebrate the King's costly military exploits.

In Part 2, "Histoire de Celanire," another critique reveals itself, in the form of an *écriture précieuse*. The public deeds for the state and the public exploits of warrior kings are contrasted to the private lives and rights of women and the disenfranchised poor. In *La Promenade de Versailles*, both patriotism and patriarchy are critiqued. Patriots and patriarchs, praised and reviled. Margaret Doody speaks to the issue of the public and private realms as they are delineated in Scudéry's works.

> Novels of the period [seventeenth-century novels] deal with what the eighteenth century was going to define as 'happiness' at the nexus of the public and the private. Life is understood to be a political affair [...] Scudéry's *Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus* [...is] politically conscious and analytical [...] The *Précieuses* had a strong view of the importance of women and were visibly bringing about a social revolution. They disturbed the dynastic proprieties in their announced insistence on the right of a woman not to marry if she chose not to, and her right to judge her suitor by her own standards of what is pleasing or intelligent.(235-265)

Further, Doody contends that Scudéry's novels contain an "implicit critique of absolute rule."(265) Celanire could be the prototype of Doody's *Précieuse*. Celanire's declaration of her personal rights implicitly defies absolutism. She textually declares her right to choose. At the death of her parents, she is sent to live with her ambitious uncle. She became the object of "tous ceux qui pouvoient, ou par amour ou par ambition pretendre de l'épouser (107)." Here, at the very beginning of her story, the text declares her desire for independence.

> Mais comme son inclination ne la portoit pas à s'engager si promptement, & qu'elle vouloit avoir le temps de faire un choix digne d'elle, elle éloigne sagement & avec beaucoup d'adresse cette foule de pretendans; & l'année de deuïl se passa avec le plus de solitude qu'il luy fut possible.(107-108)

Celanire declares her right to choose her suitor. Then, in the ongoing dialogue between Celanire and Cleandre about keeping their relationship secret, Celanire's declares her right to judge her suitor on her own terms, namely, a strictly enforced code of silence. Utmost privacy in her love affair is what pleases her. The discourse of secrecy revealed in the rhetoric of Celanire and Cleandre's amorous debates demonstrates Scudéry's intelligence and her ability to argue well.

In the meantime, Celanire refuses to accept the suitor that her uncle and the king have chosen for her. Celanire is first forced to take refuge in a convent because of her uncle's demands. Then she escapes and flees. She goes into a self-enforced exile that leads her to France and Versailles.

There are several subsections in the "Histoire de Celanire." Both of "relations"of the celebrations at Versailles in 1668 are introduced by subtitles: "La Feste de Versailles, A Madame La ***" and "La Feste de Versailles, A M.***(569,574)." The concluding pages of the "Histoire de Celanire" are entitled "Suite de l'Histoire de Celanire (611)."

After the accounts of the "Feste de Versailles," the novel crowns the success of Louis XIV's celebration with the joyous arrival of Clenadre to Versailles The concluding pages of "Histoire de Celanire are entitled "Suite de l'Histoire de Celanire (611)." Cleandre recounts his last days in their homeland after Celanire's departure. Celanire who had gone into exile to escape her uncle's demands that she marry Cleonte, who she considered an unworthy suitor.

Cleandre is forced into exile because he kills Alcinor, one of Celanire's would-be suitors, in a dual. Cleandre then recounts his adventures on the high seas. He was kidnapped by pirates. But Cleandre gains his freedom as he leads a revolt of slaves against the Turks. Upon his return to France, in another chance encounter Cleandre serendipitously saves Celanire's uncle's life. All is reconciled. Cleandre returns to the good graces of his king. Celanire's uncle embraces Cleandre. Thus, the stage is set for Cleandre's triumphant arrival at Versailles.

When Cleandre finds her in France, she coyly but happily welcomes him. She does eventually marry Cleandre, but only on her own terms. He is the suitor she has chosen for herself. Celanire's *plaidoirie* of women's rights outlined in the "Histoire de Celanire" aptly follows the definition of Doody's emancipated *Précieuse*. Celanire becomes Doody's *Précieuse*.

Neither the political nor the feminist critiques of *La Promenade de Versailles* imply a genre change. *La Promenade de Versailles* is neither a political tract nor a feminist manifesto. The works stands as an avatar of what DeJean calls the "great French tradition of the novel (*Tender* 55)." The political and social discourses are revealed through a literary discourse, *par excellence*. The radical feminization of the novelistic form that Scudéry's novel demonstrates does not thereby turn the novel into the discourse of a radical feminist. In fact, the redefinition of the genre creates a space for equality of the sexes rather than superiority of one over the other.

The Stylistics of Scudérian *Préciosité*

in *La Promenade de Versailles*

The material presentation of Scudéry's novels and her style are critically important to an interpretation of their content and worth. René Godenne and Nicole Aronson, two eminent Scudérian scholars, discuss the stylistic characteristics of Scudéry's novels. Godenne has read and analysed in minute detail the entire corpus of Scudéry's works. He undertook this monumental task, only to agree with the wornout cliché that Scudéry's novels are unreadable.

> Que les faiblesses occultent finalement les aspects positifs ne fait hélas! pas de doute: séparant toujours le plan de l'action du plan de la réflexion, sacrifiant de plus en plus le premier au profit du second, Mlle de Scudéry démissionne de sa fonction de romancière. Là est l'erreur fondamental, car, en éliminant l'action au profit de la réflexion, elle vide l'œuvre romanesque de sa substance première, elle en rend la lecture impossible.(*Romans* 342)

Godenne wrote the preface for the 1979 Slatkine Reprint of *La Promenade de Versailles*. However, he again subtly signals his displeasure with Scudéry's style, wherein reflection supercedes action.

First he indicates his approval of the "unité anecdotique" in *La Promenade de Versailles*, since Scudéry limits "des récits de personnages secondaires qui exigent dans ses romans [as oppossed to in her nouvelles] de longs développements et qui détournent souvent pour rien--notre attention du sujet principal [...](Preface III-IV)."

Godenne finds Scudéry's dialogism an unnecessary distraction from the action.

> Il y a une prédilection évidente chez Mlle de Scudéry pour ce genre de réunions [characters of the novel engaging in *conversations*] puisque

> chacune de ses nouvelles [*Célinte*, *Mathilde*, and *La Promenade de Versailles*] s'ouvre sur l'évocation des divertissements d'une société de gens d'esprit, et une évocation sur laquelle s'attarde tellement l'auteur qu'il faut attendre la page...103 dans *La Promenade* pour que commence l'action. (Preface VII)

Godenne clearly reveals his predilection for action over description. The action lingers because of the author's frequent descriptions of courtly *divertissements*. Godenne fails to appreciate Scudéry's subtle textual play. The novel interrupts the storyline to describe the diversions of seventeenth-century court society.

Godenne is anxious for the story to advance, but the novel disappoints his expectations.

> Dans ces conditions,[the delayed beginning of the story] il n'est pas étonnant que *le récit* proprement dit de *La Promenade* avance très lentement, car des pages entières sont consacrées à la transcription des vers, à la relation des divertissements ou au détail des discussions. L'intérêt anecdotique passe au second plan.(VII)

The narrative style of *La Promenade de Versailles* frustrates Godenne as did Scudéry's narration in her longer novels.

Nicole Aronson begins her work *Mademoiselle de Scudéry et le voyage au Pays de Tendre* by addressing the perennial issue of Scudéry's readability. She also recognizes the difficult that the material condition of seventeenth-century texts has posed for readers.

> 'Aucune patience même résignée ne résiste à Clélie ou à Cyrus. Or les contemporains s'y amusaient infiniment.' Cette remarque d'un éminent dix-septiémiste à propos des deux romans les plus célèbres de Mlle de Scudéry nous aide à prendre conscience du fait que, malgré notre compréhension de la langue du Grand Siècle, nous n'apprécions pas vraiment le contenu de ce que nous lisons, puisque ce qui était censé distraire nous ennuie. Cette cassure, entre les lecteurs du XVIIe siècle et nous, peut se percevoir de façon évidente simple en feuilletant un roman

> de l'époque; nous trouvons des centaines et des centaines de pages, sans paragraphe, sans alinéa, sans que le dialogue aère le texte, pour ne rien dire de l'orthographe ou des caractères d'imprimerie. On a, dès le premier abord, le sentiment qu'il s'agit d'un travail bien indigeste, mais les gens du XVIIe siècle trouveraient probablement que nos romans ne valent pas la peine qu'on se lance dans leur lecture qui peut être finie en une heure ou deux.(13)

This dissertation presents a reading of *La Promenade de Versailles* that dispels the myth of Scudéry's unreadability. Scudéry's novels are not replete with fast-action story-lines. Godenne's preference for action over reflection, and therefore analysis, seems outdated. Anyone even modestly knowledgeable about twentieth-century theories of narratology understands and appreciates that the merit of a novel may not and usually does lie in the plot line alone.

Aronson identified the potential difficulty of reading a seventeenth-century novel in the original. The material condition of the texts prohibits them from offering an "easy read." Protracted attention must be paid since line follows line and page follows page without paragraph breaks. The text of a seventeenth-century novel provides no ideal place to set it down! Few breaks that we consider normal in a twentieth-century novel exist in the texts of the seventeenth century.

If one begins to read a seventeenth-century novel in an original version without preconceived prejudices, the aesthetic experience can be very powerful. *La Promenade de Versailles* is aesthetically pleasing. It begins with an intriguing frontispiece and the work is printed in a beautiful baroque, scrolled type-set. Even though the continuous text presents no obvious stopping points, the pages of *La Promenade de Versailles* are rather small. One can take a break, as it were, at the end of a series of pages. Also, if one is privileged to hold an original

text in one's hands, such as the original copy of *La Promenade de Versailles* in the Newberry Library in Chicago, one feels transformed by the beauty of the material text of the seventeenth century.

While many critics of the nineteenth and twentieth century found Scudéry's works unreadable, some twenty-first century reader's sensibilities have changed. Not all readers, even of seventeenth-century France, appreciated Scudéry's work. Irrefutably, the reading and buying public was amused by Scudéry's novel. Scudéry brought about the radical feminization of the novelistic form that to this day troubles readers expecting a novel to contain a masculine discourse of desire.

Godenne, though he has devoted much of his career to the reading and analysis of the Scudérian corpus, is clearly troubled by the style of her novels. In his critique of *La Promenade de Versailles*, he is so intent on proving the disruptive nature of the lengthy *conversations* in Scudéry's work that he fails to mention that the novel contains a brilliant description of Versailles. Scudéry's description of Versailles in additon to being a tribute to the palace and Louis XIV provides an outstanding example of her talent as a descriptive writer. This fact seems to escape Godenne. Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* presents an exemplary description of an exemplary king.

Much of the description of Versailles in Part 1 takes place in the *tête à têtes* of the characters as they stroll through the palace and admire its many treasures. Even Gustave Lanson, who declared Scudéry's works "illisible,"

admired her *conversations*. The conversations were the one aspect of her work that he appreciated.

Godenne, on the other hand, reveals himself as a reader similar to the one described in the first part of *La Promenade de Versailles*. When Glicere comes across a description in a novel, "[elle] les passe sans les lire, et court après les Héros, comme si elle avoit part à leurs aventures, et qu'elle fût la rivale des Héroines (6)." Godenne's commentaries on Scudéry's novels reveal his bias toward action-packed novels. He also would like to run after the Heros' adventures and skip over the long descriptions.

If one were to assume that a man might enjoy reading about the adventures of the heroes more than a woman, Glicere shows she readily identifies with what might be considered a masculine preoccupation with heroic deeds. Glicere's predelication for what is sterotypically considered to be a male's preferred mode of discouse, precociously undermines the notion of such gender specific generalizations.

In addition to the potential gender reversal in her reading habits in the diegesis, Glicere's name elicits her gender bending quality on the narrative level, as she becomes a female narrator-agent in Part 2 of the "Histoire de Celanire." Obviously Glicere, being a character of the novel, is not an omniscient *narratrice*. Importantly, however, as in Part 1, narrated by an unnamed woman at the court of Versailles, Part 2 also has a *narratrice*. The narrative voice is that of a female for most of the novel. When Cleandre arrives at Versailles, he takes over the narration to recount the adventures that lead him from the land of Celanire to

Versailles. As if to stand in stark contrast to the rest of the novel, Cleandre's narration recalls the earlier Scudérian style of *Ibrahim*.

To return to Glicere and Godenne's reading preference, namely, running after the heros, another twentieth-century reader of La *Promenade de Versailles* found the same passage as Godenne significant.

Richard G. Hodgson, in his article entitled "Problème d'esthétique du roman à l'époque classique: *La Promenade de Versailles* de Madeleine de Scudéry" quotes the passage concerning readers running after the Heros. However, Hodgson's article does not find the merit of *La Promenade de Versailles* to rest in either the action or the *conversations* per se. He reads the novel, as his title implies, with an eye to its intrinsic beauty.

In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Versailles first presents itself in the title of the work and then becomes the ostensible subject of the first part of the novel. The lengthy, intricate description of the first part of the novel implies that Scudéry appreciates the beauty of Versailles and the merit of Louis XIV who metonymically stands in for the palace. *La Promenade de Versailles* does praise Louis XIV.

Scudéry would appreciate Hodgson's architectonic analysis of her novel. Hodgson cites Apostolidès: "Le jardin se déchiffre comme une œuvre d'art: texte littéraire et texte 'naturel' sont deux façons différentes de tenir un même discours (338)."

Then, with a slightly humourous wink to his reader, Hodgson adds that "même si Madeleine de Scudéry n'avait sans doute jamais songé à appeler un jardin un texte [As Foucault would say,"Ceci n'est pas un jardin!"], elle était certainement convaincue que le romancier a beaucoup de choses en commun avec l'architecte et le jardinier (338)." Certainly, if a reader of *La Promenade de Versailles* found it to be as harmonious and coherent as the palace and gardens of Versailles, Scudéry would appreciate the compliment. But Hodgson's contention that Scudéry sought to create such harmony and coherency proves problematic.

Hodgson concludes his essay with an intriguing proposition. "Aux yeux de Madeleine de Scudéry, le roman doit avant tout répondre aux mêmes besoins d'ordre, de stabilité et d'harmonie qui sont à l'origine de l'architecture classique française et du jardin à la française (361)."

There can be no question that the symmetry in the architecture and gardens of Versailles evoke classical order, stability, and harmony. Scudéry may well have wanted to appropriate those timeless ideals in her novel.

Hodgson quotes Ferrier-Caverivière's depiction of Louis XIV.

> [...I] est l'Ordre incarné, immuable colosse qu'aucune tempête ne saurait faire trembler. Au début de son règne en particulier, il est le modèle de l'équilibre tant désiré, le maître incomparable qui a chassé tous les désordres et fait de son royaume un harmonieux et magnifique édifice.(341)

Clearly Hodgson believes the gardens and the architecture of Versailles reflect the "immuable colossus" that was Louis XIV. At least Ferrier-Caverivière

qualifies his eulogy of Louis XIV. He speaks here only of the beginning of Louis' reign. If one reads its history one knows that in the end, he left France in financial ruin. The chaos that ensues eventually leads Louis XVI to the guillotine and France to the revolution. A good Republican might say all the better that he left things in disarray, since it eventually led to the end of the monarchy. A good royalist might say, après lui (Louis), le déluge![5]

Madeleine de Scudéry appears to be a loyal royalist. Her novel truly praises Louis XIV and his palace. Her text points to the efficacy of a true hereditary monarchy. However, another voice of the text, Glicere's, makes light of the notion of a hereditary monarchy. And while her characters admire Versailles, the text warns Louis XIV of the danger of excess. *La Promenade de Versailles* subtly offers Louis XIV a warning about fiscal overexpenditure on wars and overly opulent spending on his pleasure palace. Even a virtuous monarch must guard against abusing his sovereign rights and royal coffers.

While Hodgson's thesis purports that an inviting classical allure adorns *La Promenade de Versailles*, the overarching goal of the *novel* cannot be seen as searching to create the same harmonious and cohesive effects to imitate the palace and gardens of Versailles.

On the contrary, Scudéry's novel disrupts the harmony and cohesion of the description of Versailles. In so doing it also aims to shake out the novelistic tradition. *La Promenade de Versailles* looks to create textual disorder and an apparent incoherence.

DeJean traces the changes in narrative style in Scudéry's novels. We will quote DeJean extensively and follow her argument closely, because, as we will see, it points to a critical interpretation of *La Promenade de Versailles* that helps to unlock its meaning.

DeJean claims that *Ibrahim*, Scudéry's first novel "closely resembles the production of the leading contemporary male novelists, La Calprenède and Martin le Roy de Gomberville. It is action-oriented, centered on the exploits of its hero and his doubles, the only major departure from this active focus is Scudéry's more extensive use of intercalated stories (81-82)."

By contrast, in Scudéry's second novel, *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*, DeJean suggests that Scudéry "develops her model for historical fiction (81)." She gives two reasons. First Scudéry's "extensive historical research" and the fact that it is a *roman à clef*.(81) DeJean explains the importance of the keys very carefully.

> The parallels with contemporary history guaranteed that, in the highly charged atmosphere of a period of civil war,[the Fronde] the work would be read as a political allegory on history in the making. In the wake of *Artamène*, until well into the eighteenth century, the decision to write historical fiction almost invariably was accompanied by the desire to have the fictional setting decoded as a reference to contemporary political event. (81)

La Promenade de Versailles definitely offers a message to be decoded about Louis XIV and the Parisian society of the seventeenth-century France. The eulogy of Part 1 of the novel gives way to a *romanesque* story in Part 2 of the novel that depicts a less perfect monarchy and society. DeJean further claims

that with *Artaméne ou le Grand Cyrus* "[t]he bond forged between prose fiction and political subversion marks the origin of the modern French novel [...] (45)."

With DeJean's powerful suppositions in mind, let us explain why *La Promenade de Versailles* intentionally offers textual disorder and an apparent incoherence. The development that DeJean characterizes in *Artamène* begins to explain why an author might consciously choose to be out of order.

DeJean contends that Scudéry was intially content with her "successful formula for *Artamène* (82)." She adds:

> In the course of the novel's unfolding, however, she introduces with increasing frequency two new forms, the portrait and the conversation, intended to produce a radical disruption of the narrative flow. As we have seen, these forms no longer equate character development with the recital of exploits and achievements: they replace the pure exteriority of the traditional heroic format with an increased emphasis on interiority-certainly not in the fullness to which more recent fiction has accustomed us, but to a then unprecedented degree. Rather than simply moving from one adventure to the next, characters begin to reveal their thoughts on various subjects, what they value in other human beings, their codes and rules of personal conduct.(82)

DeJean attributes the invention of the *conversation* and the *portrait* to Madeleine de Scudéry. *La Promenade de Versailles* offers an exemplary portrait of Louis XIV in Part 1 of the novel and then in Part 2, the "Histoire de Celanire," it offers a romantic story whose *conversations* offer revelations concerning issues ranging from personal integrity and freedom to political efficacy.

DeJean enunciates Scudéry's invention of these two innovative novelistic devices, the *conversation* and the portrait. I would amend DeJean's description in one detail, which is her contention that Scudéry's interiority does not "have the

fullness to which more recent fiction has accustomed us." Her longer novels may not, but *La Promenade de Versailles* does. It is as rich in interiority as many twentieth-century novels.

And, this dissertation adds a twist to DeJean's narrative formulation. Scudéry's overt movement toward interiority and away from exteriority, that is preferring reflective dialogue over heroic action, becomes a *précieuse* invention, in fact, an *écriture précieuse*. Scudéry's insertion of the *conversation* in *La Promenade de Versailles* gives her text the latitude it needs to put forth a daring political critique of Louis XIV and absolutism, reflecting both the politics of the polis, *écriture politique,* and feminist politics, *écriture féminine.*

The turn from narrative exteriority that describes the hero's adventures to the narrative interiority becomes the heroes' *and* heroines' discourse in *La Promenade de Versailles*. The shift in gender identification of the narrative produces a radical feminization of narration. Chapter 3 of this dissertation traces the bold political critique embedded in *La Promenade de Versailles*. Chapter 4 describes Scudéry's feminization of the narration through the technique of the *conversation*. The *conversation* provides the narrative frame to explore sensitive gender issues such as the secret. The novel's focus on the secret allows *La Promenade de Versailles* to point discretely to Louis XIV obsession with secrets and court intrique. The power of the secret drove the most powerful warrior king of seventeenth-century Europe. Does the appropriation of the secret in La Promenade de Versailles weaken or empower the king? Does *La Promenade de Versailles* subtly attempt to teach the king to embrace his

feminine side? Surely, in an absolutist regime, the art of discretion could save one's life.

The pertinent question remains. How does one read a text? An impatient reader may be eager to skip the intricate *conversations* of the text. To follow the argumentation of a *conversation* requires a thoughtful reader willing to accept the challenge. Even Lanson conceded the merit of Scudéry's *conversations*. "Il y a beaucoup de sens et d'esprit dans ces conversations un peu longues, qui publiées à part, devinrent comme le manuel de la bonne société (388)." Lanson's evaluation inadvertently reveals the great importance of *La Promenade de Versailles*. Replete with *conversations*, it does indeed offer a manual for the study of the elite society of seventeenth-century France and of its singular ruler, Louis XIV.

How *La Promenade de Versailles* achieves this feat proves as important as the counsel it provides. The fact that the novel describes Louis XIV's world through narrative disruption (as opposed to the narrative coherence and continuity that Godenne seeks) makes it an exemplar of the emerging modern novel.

DeJean has recognized the novelty and genius of Scudéry's shorter novels.

> In Scudéry's new model for prose fiction, as in the courts in exile like Montpensier's, the making of history is eclipsed by the writing of history. This deferred, deflected perspective on action is a vision that, while fatal to romance, generated what can be seen as the great French tradition of the novel, the novel as saga of voyeurism and oblique action, progressing inexorably toward the *livre sur rien*.(55)

By the "making of history," DeJean refers to the role of Scudéry and other novelists directly or indirectly in the cause of the Fronde. DeJean contends that with the defeat of the Frondeurs and Frondeuses, the only viable outlet for feminists was in the writing of history. In *La Promenade de Versailles*, the novelistic voyeur eyes the king and the oblique action progressing inexorably toward the "*rien*" provides the background for the description of none other than court of the grandest ruler of seventeenth-century Europe, Louis XIV.

"La Promenade de Versailles," Part 1, offers a pre-text to the 'Histoire de Celanire" Part 2, literally a text before the text. And, Part 1 of *La Promenade de Verailles* provides a pretext, that is, an excuse for an elaborate and extremely voyeuristic promenade around Versailles.

Notes

[1]See Prince 44 and Baldick 108. They present definitions of *in medias res*.

[2] See Niderst, *Leur Monde* 483-486. "La nouvelle ressemble parfois à une anthologie de la poésie du XVII[e] siècle (484). ' Niderst identifies the poets and their poetry that Scudéry includes in *La Promenade de Versailles*.

[3] In *La Promenade de Versailles*, Scudéry confirms Louis XIV's glory even as she subtly remembers the price his people paid for it. In his work entitled *Louis XIV*, David L. Smith affirms Louis' "pursuit of glory." "The prestige of seventeenth-century states was so closely linked to the personal reputations of their rulers that Louis's own pursuit of 'glory' was almost bound to affect France's standing within Europe (4). 'Further, Smith's text contends that: "One very influential line of argument places 'glory' at the heart of Louis XIV's concerns."(6) Smith cites Roger Lockyer's *Habsburg and Bourbon Europe 1470-1720*, wherein Lockyer states that with regard to foreign expansion: " [...] Louis's achievement was considerable. He gave France much stronger frontiers in the north and east; and he secured part of the great Spanish inheritance for his own Bourbon family [...]. The price paid for this was high, perhaps too high, but Louis shared the prevailing assumption that money must serve the demands of policy, not dictate it. Oblivious to the sufferings of his subjects, he made *La Gloire* his object and pursued it with such determination that he dazzed his contemporaries and established at least a claim to greatness (123)." Three centuries after Madeleine de Scudéry, Lockyer has repeated her conception of Louis XIV's glory and the price his people paid for it.

[4] See Smith 79.

[5]Of course, the famous quotation comes from Louis XV, not Louis XIV. Louis XIV's military campaigns left the country in difficult straits financially. Under the successful financial direction of Orly, Louis XV's reign sees economic expansion. The financial crisis of 1787 adds to the unpopularity of Louis XVI and his ultimate demise. He was condemned and guillotined in 1793.

APPENDIX B

The following photocopy represents the frontispiece and the title page of the Slatkine Reprints 1979 publication of Claude Barbin's original 1669 edition of Madeleine de Scudéry's *La Promenade de Versailles* used in this work.

The frontispiece and the title page of the 1669 edition of
La Promenade de Versailles



LA PROMENADE DE VERSAILLES

DEDIEE

AV ROI.

A PARIS,
Chez CLAVDE BARBIN, au Palais,
sur le Perron de la Sainte Chapelle.

M. DC. LXIX.
Avec Privilege du Roi.

Appendix C

The Mysterious Origins of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*

Emile Magne, in the introduction to his critical edition of Michel de Pure's *La Prétieuse ou le mystère des ruelles,* offers an interesting insight. Magne cites Somaize as accusing Molière of having stolen the idea for the *Précieuses ridicules* from Pure.

> De janvier à mars 1660, Somaise fait jouer et publier deux comédies: *Les Véritables Prétieuses et les Prétieuses ridicules mises en vers.* Dans la préface et dans le texte (scène VII) de la première, dans la préface de la seconde, il accuse violemment Molière d'avoir volé à l'abbé [de Puré] la farce que celui-ce confia jadis aux Comédiens italiens, lesquels entirèrent, de leur côté, deux mille écus sonnants. (Introduction LXIV)

Magne claims that Pure:

> a vu représenter les Précieuses ridicules [...] Il a découvert entre le thème de cette farce and le canevas de celle qu'il donna lui-même, trois ans auparavant, aux Comédiens italiens, des similitudes singulièrs; or, il sait, d'une part que le nouveau venu [Molière] n'a guère trouvé, depuis son installation à Paris,le loisir de fréquenter des ruelles d'ailleurs fermées aux gens de sa sorte et que, d'autre part, il vit en étroite amitié avec ces comédiens italiens."(Introduction LXII)

Magne identifies both the title of Michel de Pure's comedy (that which he supposedly presented in 1656 at the Théâtre italien as *La Pretieuse*) and the text of the canevas of the play in Part III of the novel *La Prétieuse*. In a footnote, Magne adds:

> Ce canevas offre beaucoup de rapport avec le thème des *Précieuses ridicules* de Molière, pièce représentée trois ans plus tard. Nous avons dit dans notre notice que le comédien avait été accusé, non sans raison, par divers contemporains, d'avoir dérobé ce thème à l'oeuvre antérieure de notre abbé."(Part Three 172-173)

Magne's research unveils several important facts. First, Michel de Pure seems to have written the canevas and produced his play *La Pretieuse* three years before Molière's *Précieuses ridicules* was produced. Secondly, the supposed "*larcin*" (Introduction LXIII), Molière, did not have the time nor was he of the right "sort" to actually attend any salons gatherings. Pure, on the other hand, did have access to salons.

> Tout en siégeant fort souvent dans le 'sénat' de Mmes les Précieuses, Michel de Pure ne néglige pas d'entretenir ses amitiés et d'un chercher de nouvelles à la ville comme à la cour. Il est de nature sociable; il est devenue davantage depuis que les belles dames de ruelles lui ont communiqué de l'assurance en estimant ses propos dignes de considérations."(Introduction XLIII)

The actual text of Pure's play *La Pretieuse* has apparently been lost. However, Magne tries to make it clear that Michel de Pure had the occasion to actually interact with *habitué(e)s* of the salons of mid-seventeenth-century Paris. One of de Pure's salon acquaintances actually adressed his letters to "M. l'abbé de la Pretieuse (Introduction LXIII)."

According to Magne's account, Molière did not frequent any salon and therefore, he would not have known any salon women personally. So why would Molière make Madeleine de Scudéry the target of his satire and the model of the bad précieuse in *Les Précieuses ridicules?* Several centuries of scholarship have linked Scudéry to the notion of the bad *précieuse*, the *précieuse non-vraie* of Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*. Given her reknown as a novelist in the seventeenth-century France, certainly Molière knew of Scudéry by reputation and possibly even read her works.

In his article written in 1994, "Une Comédie imaginarie: La Pretieuse de l'abbé de Pure," Roger Duchêne speculates in turn that Michel de Pure never wrote a play called *La Pretieuse*, let alone staged a production of it.(213-220) However, by continuing the theatrical tradition of the sixteenth-century of the staging of impromptu repertory plays based on the *canevas du jour*, it is entirely possible that Molière borrowed the *canevas* of Pure and/or of his Italian actor colleagues. It seems less likely that Italian players would have Madeleine de Scudéry as the object of their satire.

Works Cited

Works Cited

Abel, Elizabeth. *Writing and Sexual Difference*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Aragonnès, Claude. *Madeleine de Scudéry, Reine du Tendre*. Paris: Librairie Arman Colin, 1934.

Aronson, Nicole. *Mademoiselle de Scudéry ou le voyage au Pays de Tendre*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1986.

Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Barthes, Roland. *The Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Backer, Dorothy Anne Liot. *Precious Women*. New York: Basic Books, 197.

Bénichou, Paul. *Morales du grand siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948.

Blanchard, Joel. *La pastorale en France aux XIVe et XVe siècles, Recherches sur les structures de l'imaginaire médiéval*. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1983.

---. Ed. *Le Pastoralet*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983.

Boileau, *Oeuvres de Boileau*. Ed. M. Amar. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, 1851.

Borowitz, Helen O. "The Unconfessed *Précieuse*: Madame de Staël's Debt to Mademoiselle de Scudéry." Nineteenth-Century French Studies 11.1-2 (1982) :32-59.

Bray, René. *La Préciosité et les précieux, de Thibaut de Champagne à Jean Giraudoux*. Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1948.

Brunetière, Ferdinand. *Études critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature français*. 2 vols. Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1993.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, Routledge, 1990.

Church, William F., ed. *The Impact of Absolutism in France: National Experience under Richelieu, Mazarin, & Louis XIV*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969.

Cixous, Hélène and Catherine Clément. *The Newly Born Woman*, Trans. Betsy Wing. Intro. Sandra M. Gilbert Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1(4) (1976): 874-93.

Compagnon, Antoine. "1895, Gustave Lanson Publishes His *Histoire de la littérature française." A New History of French Literature*. 810-824.

Cousin, Victor. *La Société française au XVIIe siècle d'après le Grand Cyrus de Mlle de Scudéry*. 2 vols. Paris: Didier, 1858.

---. *La Société français au XVIIe siècle d'après le Grand Cyrus de Mlle de Scudéry*. 2 vols. 6th ed. Paris: 1886.

Cuddon, J. A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary theory*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1991.

Dalla Valle, Daniela. "Mathilde, Laure et Pétraque, un nouveau roman, un amour précieux, un aspect de l'italianism." Niderst, *Les Trois Scudéry* 511-520.

DeJean, Joan. *Fictions of Sappho, 1546-1937*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1989.

---. "The Salons, 'Préciosité,' and the Sphere of Womens' Influence." *A New History of French Literature*. 297-303.

---. "Scudéry, Madeleine de." *The New Oxford Companion to French Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

---. *Tender Geographies, Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Denis, Delphine. *La Muse galante, Poétique de la conversation dans l'œuvre de Madeleine de Scudéry*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998.

---. *"De l'air galant" et autres Conversations (1653-1684), Pour une étude de l'archive galante*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998.

Doig, Kathleen Hardesty. "Madeleine de Scudéry in the *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* and the *Encyclopédie méthodique*." *Cahiers Du Dix-septième, An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5.1 (1991): 153-168.

Doody, Margaret Anne. *The True Story of the Novel*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996.

Duchêne, Roger. "Une Comédie imaginaire: *La Pretieuse* de l'abbé de Pure." *Le Nouveau Moliériste* n°1 (1994) 213-220.

Dupriez, Bernard. *A Dictionary of Literary Devices, Gradus, A-Z*. Trans. Albert W. Halsall. Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

"Euphuism." Cuddon. 314-331.

Fidao-Justiniani, J.-E. *L'Esprit classique et la précioisté au XVIIe siècle*. Paris: Librairie des Archives Nationales et de la Société de L'École des Chartres, 1914.

Folkenflik, Vivian. Ed. & Trans. *An Extraordinary Woman, Selected writings of Germaine de Staël*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1987.

Foucault, Michel. *Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

François, Carlo. *Précieuses et autres indociles, Aspects du féminisme dans la littérature française du XVIIe siècle*. Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications, Inc., 1987.

Freud, Sigmund. "Medusa's Head," *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*. Ed. Philip Rieff. New York: Collier Books, 1963.

Fukui, Y. *Raffinement Précieux dans la poésie française du XVIIe siècle*. Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1964.

Glenn, Cheryl. *Rhetoric Retold, Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997.

Godenne, René. *Études sur la nouvelle française*. Paris: Editions Slatkin, 1985.

---. *Les Romans de Mademoiselle de Scudéry*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1983.

Goldsmith, Elizabeth. *"Exclusive Conversations," The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-Century France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 988.

Grimm, Jürgen. "Les Idées politiques dans les romans de Mlle de Scudéry." Niderst, *Les Trois Scudéry* 443-456.

Gutwirth, Marcel. *Laughing Matter, An Essay on the Comic.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Habermas, Jürgen. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992.

Harth, Erica. *Cartesian Women, Version and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Regime.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Hepp, Noémi. "La notion d'Héroïne." *Onze études sur l'image de la femme dans la littérature française du dix-septième siècle*. Comp. Wolfgang Leiner. Paris: Édition Jean-Michel Place,1978. 9-27.

Hodgson, Richard G. "Problèmes d'esthétique du roman à l'époque classique: *La Promenade de Versailles* de Madeleine de Scudéry." *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature*. Biblio 17 (1986): 331-342.

Huet, Pierre-Daniel. *Traité de l'origine des romans.* Ed. Arend Kok. Amsterdam: N. V. Swets & Zeitlinger, 1942.

Kent, J. Leonard and Elizabeth C. Knight. Introduction. *Tales of E. T. A. Hoffman.* By E.T.A. Hoffman. Trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Klaits, Joseph. *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Koppisch, Michael S. *The Dissolution of Character, Changing Perspectives in La Bruyère's Caractères.* Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 1981.

Krajewska, Barbara. *Du Cœur à l'esprit.* Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1993.

La Fayette, Madame de. *La Princesse de Clèves et autres romans.* Paris: Gallimard, 1972.

Lalande, Roxanne Decker. *Intruders in the Play World, The Dynamics of Gender in Molière's Comedies.* Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.

Lanson, Gustave. *Histoire de la littérature française.* Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1894.

Lathuillière, Roger. *La Préciosité, Étude historique et linguistique.* Genève: Droz, 1966.

Livet, Ch.-L. *Précieux et précieuses, caractères et mœurs littérarie du XVIIe siècle.* Paris: Dider, 1859.

Lougee, Carolyn C. *Le Paradis des Femmes, Women, Salons, and Social Stratification in Seventeenth-Century France.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Lyons, John D. *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Maignien, Claude. Preface. *Les Femmes Illustres.* By Madeleine de Scudéry. Paris: Côté-femmes éditions, 1991.

Maître, Myriam. *Les Précieuses: Naissance des femmes de lettres de France.* Paris: Champion, 1999.

Marin, Louis. *Portrait of the King.* Foreward. Tom Conley. Trans. Martha Houle. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

Martin, Henri-Jean. Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris aux XVIIième siècle (1598-1701). Genève: Librairie Droz, 1969.

---."The Reading Public." Classicism and Absolutism in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth- Century French Book. NEH Workshop in Bibliography and Interdisciplinary Research. The Newberry Library Center for Renaissance Studies, Chicago. 22-23 Oct. 1993.

Maurois, André. *Louis XIV à Versailles.* Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1955.

Mesnard, Jean. "Pour une clef de *Clélie.*" Niderst, *Les Trois Scudéry* 371-408.

Miller, Nancy K. *Subject to Change, Reading Feminist History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Molière [Jean-Baptiste Poquelin]. *Oeuvres complètes.* Paris: Flammarion, 1964.

---. Oeuvres Complètes. Paris: Seuil, 1962.

Mongrédien, Georges. Introduction and comp. *Les Précieux et les Précieuses.* Paris: Mercure de France, 1963.

---.*Madeleine de Scudéry et son salon.* Paris: Éditions Tallandrier, 1946.

---. *La Vie Privée de Louis XIV.* Paris: Hachette, 1938.

Morel, Jacques. *De Montaigne à Corneille. Litérature française 3.* Paris: Arthaud, 1991.

A New History of French Literature. ed. Denis Holier. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Niderst, Alain. *Madeleine de Scudéry, Paul Pellisson et leur monde*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976.

---. Comp. *Les Trois Scudéry*. Actes du Colloque du Havre. Oct. 1991. Paris: Klincksieck, 1993.

Picard, Raymond. *Two Centuries of French Literature, 1600*. Trans. John Cairncross. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1970.

"Préciosité." Cuddon 739.

"Précieux, euse." "Préciosité." *Le Robert, Dictionnaire des Synonymes*. 1993.

Prince, Gerald. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln:University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Pure, Abbé Michel de. *La Prétieuse ou le mystère des ruelles*. 4 vols. Ed. Emile Magne. Paris: Dros, 1938-1939.

Rathery and Boutron. M*ademoiselle de Scudéry. Sa vie et sa correspondance, avec un choix de ses poésies*. (Paris: Téchener, 1873).

Reid, Joyce M. H. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Reiss, Timothy J. *The Meaning of Literature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Sauvy, Anne. *Livres saisis à Paris entre 1678 et 1700*. La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972.

"Scudéry, Madeleine de." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of French Literature*. 1976.

Scudéry, Madeleine de. *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*. Vol. X, Book II, 554. Paris: Augustin Courbé. 1649-1653.

---. *Les Conversations sur divers sujets*. Amsterdam, Chez Daniel du Fresne, 1682.

---. *La Promenade de Versailles*. Genève:Slatkine Reprints, 1979.

Sellier, Philippe. "La Névrose précieuse: une nouvelle pléiade?" *Présences féminines, Littérature et société au XVIIe siècle français*, Actes de London, Paris/Seattle/Tubingin, 1987, pp. 95-125.

---. "'Se tirer du commun des femmes': La Constellation précieuse." *L'autre au XVIIème siècle*. Actes du 4e colloque du Centre Inernational de Rencontres sur le XVIIe siècle. University of Miami. April 23-25, 1995.

Senault, Jean-François. *Le Monarque ou les devoirs du Souverain*. Paris: Pierre le Petit, 1662.

Shakespeare, William. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974.

Showalter, English Jr. *The Evolution of the French Novel, 1641-1782*. Boston: Princeton University Press, 1972.

Smith, David L. *Louis XIV*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995.

Staël, Mme La Baronne de. *Oeuvres complètes*. ed. Madame Necker de Saussure. Vol.3. Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1820.

Stanton, Domna C. "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva." Ed. Nancy K. Miller. *The Poetics of Gender*. Ed. Nancy K. Miller. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

—. "The Fiction of *Préciosité* and the Fear of Women." *Yale French Studies* 62 (1981) : 107-135.

Tallemant des Réaux. [Gedéon]. *Historiettes*. Ed. Antoine Adam. 2 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1961.

Trotzke, Margaret Anne. "Framing the Police: Scudéry's Secret Critique of Louis XIV." *Cahiers du Dix-septième:An Interdisciplinary Journal* (1991) : Spring, 5 no. 1:169-82.

Vincent, Leon H. *Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Précieuses*. Cambridge: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1900.

Webster's New World Dictionary of American English. 3rd College ed. 1988.

Ziegler, Gilette. *At the Court of Versailles, Eye-Witness Reports from the Reign of Louis XIV*. Trans. Simon Watson Taylor. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.1966.