

TRANSPPOSITIONS OF SPECTACLE AND TIME: THE ENTR'ACTE IN THE *TRAGÉDIE EN MUSIQUE*

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ABSTRACT

The entr'acte in the tragédie en musique is the site of compelling yet often overlooked musical and dramaturgical activity. The term refers to both spatial and musical categories: the space between acts in which rapid and potentially astonishing set changes occur and the instrumental music that accompanies these transformations. Practices in French classical tragedy established a precedent for opera; largely observing the 'unity of place' after 1640, spoken tragedy included brief instrumental interludes between acts while the stage remained unoccupied. These intervals punctuated the action and created suspensions in mimesis, allowing off-stage events to occur in unfixed temporal and spatial dimensions. Characterized by Mikhail Bakhtin as a 'chronotope' of theatrical time and space, the entr'acte exposes foundational issues concerning representation in opera and drama, including questions of illusion and the status of fictional actions and worlds. This article examines the role played by the spectator's reflection and rumination during operatic entr'actes and the use of narrative reference to shape the awareness of unseen actions presumed to transpire within them. These modes of representation and spectatorship are illustrated by Simon-Joseph Pellegrin's livrets for Jephté (1732) and Hippolyte et Aricie (1733). Parodies of Hippolyte et Aricie further demonstrate that the possibilities of unseen action had a vital effect on the reception of the tragédie en musique.

A recurring complaint in French operatic criticism of the eighteenth century concerned the absence of 'rules' comparable to those established in dramatic theory to guide the composition and aesthetic judgement of opera. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in an early unpublished letter on French and Italian opera written before he turned against the French form, argued that had Aristotle or Horace established such rules, modern critics such as Boileau, Jean de La Bruyère and André Dacier might have revised or altogether abandoned their attacks on opera.¹ Rousseau's engagement with opera, particularly as advanced through the articles on vocal forms and operatic aesthetics in the *Dictionnaire de musique*, may be seen in part as a search for such rules, although the models he held up for emulation shifted radically in the early 1750s from operas in the French tradition to works by Italian composers such as Pergolesi and Galuppi.

The absence of a poetics of opera was also signalled in the *Avertissement de l'éditeur* to Gabriel Bonnot de Mably's *Lettres à Madame La Marquise de P*** sur l'opéra*. This Preface suggests that without the guidance of poetic theory, Jean-Baptiste Lully's librettist, Philippe Quinault, must have worked from 'genius' – and by implication, instinct – rather than by 'meditations on his art'.² Given that 'we lack neither reflections nor even poetic treatises on the rules [Poétiques dans les règles] for much less important poems', it is all

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- 1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre sur l'opéra italien et français*, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), volume 5, 249. Sources documenting the concern with poetic rules are collected in Caroline Wood and Graham Sadler, *French Baroque Opera: A Reader* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 73–92.
- 2 Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, *Lettres à Madame La Marquise de P*** sur l'opéra* (Paris: Didot, 1741; facsimile edition, New York: American Musicological Society, 1978), xv.



the more surprising that such a theory for opera had yet to be produced.³ Operas in consequence appeared to have been made merely by chance rather than according to rules of dramatic composition, leaving Boileau's condemnation of the *tragédie en musique* unchallenged. A comprehensive poetics, which the *Avertissement* observes will not be found in the letters that follow, would stimulate poets and composers to perfect opera rather than continuing to copy, without distinction, the techniques of Quinault.⁴

Mably's principal 'poetic' argument in the *Lettres sur l'opéra* is that the three unities of time, space and action – among the central rules shaping the practice of spoken theatre – could usefully inform opera as well. Strikingly, Mably advocates a conception of spatial unity in the *tragédie en musique*: his proposal of a single dramatic space charged with the arrivals of gods and demons at once fulfils the requirements of 'spectacle' and preserves spatial unity.⁵ By contrast, scenic transformations in the *tragédie en musique* generally occurred during the entr'actes, with typically one change of setting for each act. Musical continuity was achieved through the use of instrumental music from the previous act, while off-stage events were understood to transpire in an unfixed temporality distinct from objective time. To support the argument for spatial unity, Mably's text partly appropriates Pierre Corneille's theories by citing excerpts from his third discourse on dramaturgy and poetics, the *Discours des trois unités, d'action, de jour, et de lieu* of 1660. The *Avertissement* frames these references as appeals to authority; they highlight 'rules' or techniques that opera shares with theatre, though Mably does not discuss their dramaturgical basis in detail.

Mably's extension of dramaturgical theory into operatic aesthetics includes a consideration of the entr'acte in spoken tragedy. The topic emerges through a critique of the chorus in Greek tragedy, which prompts a brief discussion of the entr'acte in modern theatre. Striking out against N***, who serves as a defender of the ancients and an implacable critic of opera, Madame de C*** finds fault with the use of the chorus in ancient tragedy: by 'moralizing on what has passed before the eyes of the spectator', choral singing in the entr'actes 'steals from me the pleasure of thinking for myself'.⁶ These choruses 'tire' the spectator and fail to 'advance the action'.⁷ A note cites Corneille's comparison of Greek choral interludes with entr'actes in spoken theatre of his time. The principal concern in the cited passage is to establish the importance of the spectator's experience of reflection and mental repose while the action is suspended. The choral entr'actes of Greek tragedy fail to offer the spectator the necessary mental relaxation during intervals, argues Corneille; alternatively, spectators' minds may wander because of the length of an entr'acte, and this then requires the force of memory in order to re-enter the drama once the action begins again.⁸ Corneille argues that the modern treatment of the entr'acte, which he metonymically refers to as 'our violins' (the instrumental pieces that filled the temporal gaps in the absence of stage action), enables both relaxation of mind and reflective thought linked to the action itself; significantly, the audience member is referred to as a listener rather than spectator.⁹ The aspects of experience invoked by Corneille reveal the nuanced implications of the entr'acte: they include mental tension and relaxation, imagination, reflection and recollection.¹⁰ Mably does not develop these issues further or pivot to examine the operatic entr'acte in turn, yet this digression on Corneille's theory of the entr'acte, placed in the context of an essay on opera, introduces the critical notion of 'reflection' as a potential mode of spectatorship. The citation

3 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, xv.

4 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, xvii.

5 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, 21.

6 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, 102.

7 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, 102–103.

8 See Pierre Corneille, *Discours des trois unités, d'action, de jour, et de lieu*, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Georges Couton (Paris: Gallimard, 1980–1987), volume 3, 180–181; the citation in the *Lettres sur l'opéra* includes several cuts to the original.

9 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, 103, Corneille, *Discours des trois unités*, 181.

10 Mably, *Lettres sur l'opéra*, 102–103, Corneille, *Discours des trois unités*, 181.



suggests that a framework from spoken theatre is relevant to the *tragédie en musique*, opening a path to consider whether the function of entr'actes in opera may include the spectator's ruminative or imaginative experience.

Alfred Richard Oliver counted the entr'acte as one of the 'minutest details of opera' treated among the musical articles of the *Encyclopédie*.¹¹ Viewed in theoretical terms, the entr'acte in fact involves far-reaching issues of spectatorship, illusion, and the representation of fictional actions and worlds. As a dramaturgical device, it operates as a powerful instrument of temporal and spatial activity. Accounts of the operatic entr'acte by Rousseau in his *Dictionnaire de musique* and Louis de Cahusac in the *Encyclopédie* place its operations of temporality and representation within a perspective shaped by classical poetics. In what follows, I seek to define the dramaturgical operations of the entr'acte, extending Lois Rosow's insight that in the operas of Quinault and Lully it was 'an essential part of the drama' and maintained the 'general symbolic effect' of implying unseen action.¹² I locate a conceptual model to describe these operations in Mikhail Bakhtin's essay of 1937–1938, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel'.¹³ Bakhtin characterized the entr'acte, with its fusion of time and space, as a 'chronotope of theatrical space', the only element from theatre thus distinguished in an essay otherwise centred on narrative fiction. I extend Bakhtin's theory in arguing that for spectators of spoken and lyric tragedy, the chronotopes of both act and entr'acte helped to construct fictional time and space. Spectators' awareness of these spatiotemporal dynamics is implied by poetic and musical texts, through entrance and exit discourses, embedded narrative reports and instrumental music that alludes to off-stage action. These dramaturgical features emerge in readings of two *livrets* by the abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin: *Jephté*, his 1732 collaboration with Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, and *Hippolyte et Aricie*, produced with Jean-Philippe Rameau the following year. Two parodies of *Hippolyte et Aricie* not only targeted Pellegrin's use of off-stage space but reveal how revisions of the opera renegotiated the equilibrium of presence and concealment in its original version.

MUSICAL INTERLUDES AND OFF-STAGE SPACE

Before examining these issues, I will consider two accounts of the entr'acte and off-stage space in the *tragédie en musique* that present a challenge to any attempt at drawing connections between theatrical and operatic entr'actes. The work of Catherine Kintzler, notably her *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau* and *Théâtre et opéra à l'âge classique: une familière étrangeté*, has offered the most sustained and systematic picture of the *tragédie en musique* within the contexts of French classical poetics, dramaturgy and aesthetic thought.¹⁴ Kintzler's distinctive analysis of representation and theatrical space denies the constructive use of off-stage space in the *tragédie en musique*. For Kintzler, lyric tragedy functions as both the 'double' and 'inverse' of spoken tragedy; it inverts the mimetic constraints of tragedy and shows what is 'forbidden' in it, particularly violence and manifestations of the *merveilleux*.¹⁵ Opera is distinguished from

11 Alfred Richard Oliver, *The Encyclopedists as Critics of Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 55.

12 Lois Rosow, 'Making Connections: Thoughts on Lully's Entr'actes', *Early Music* 21/ 2 (1993), 231 and 237. Additional studies examining the role of entr'actes in the *tragédie en musique* include Geoffrey Burgess, 'Ritual in the *Tragédie en musique* from Lully's *Cadmus et Hermione* (1673) to Rameau's *Zoroastre* (1749)' (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1998), volume 1, 90 and 190–199, and Laura Naudeix, *Dramaturgie de la tragédie en musique (1673–1764)* (Paris: Champion, 2004), 158–177, 186–193 and 455–461.

13 M. M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

14 Catherine Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français de Corneille à Rousseau*, second edition (Paris: Minerve, 2006), and *Théâtre et opéra à l'âge classique: une familière étrangeté* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

15 Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français*, 158 and 198, and more broadly, 147–243 and 275–278. Kintzler introduced this thesis in her *Jean-Philippe Rameau: splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1983), 71–97, recently reissued in a third edition (Paris: Minerve, 2011).



tragedy by the necessary ‘passage into action’ (*passage à l’acte*) of its central events: the ‘tragic moment’, for instance, must be presented ‘within the order of the visible and representable’.¹⁶ This inexorable appeal to spectacle renders the entr’acte superfluous as a means of implicating off-stage action or temporal flux. Whereas in spoken tragedy each act is ‘inscribed within the series of hidden time’ fashioned by entr’actes, in lyric tragedy ‘entr’actes almost always bind together [soudent] the acts, or else one restarts at zero’.¹⁷

Kintzler has more recently sharpened her distinction between spoken and lyric tragedy in terms of opera’s dependency on spectacle. She argues for ‘the distinction between an aesthetic of the event that works in the voids and avails itself of absence [in spoken theatre] and an aesthetic of showing [monstration] that is linked to presence and plenitude [in opera]’, thus conceiving lyric tragedy as a form that immediately enacts events that in spoken tragedy transpire off stage.¹⁸ Opera’s ‘fierce imperative of presence’ is one of a series of inversions between the dramatic forms: ‘Lyric tragedy shows what dramatic tragedy does not (marvellous actions and agents, the representation of violence, dreams and hallucinations). It shows it by other means (music and dance in a poetic situation, machines, changes of place). It produces another effect, that of enchantment and poeticized horror.’¹⁹ For Kintzler, the types of actions necessarily mediated through discourse in spoken tragedy are invariably drawn into opera’s mimetic space. The result is a theatrical form wholly given over to spectacle, incapable of the ‘exteriorization’ of events: ‘Because one must change place and because one must show that which in theatre is hidden, exteriority becomes impossible, and because there is no exterior there cannot be any temporal breath [respiration].’²⁰ The *merveilleux*, which for eighteenth-century theorists such as Charles Batteux and Cahusac grounded the autonomy and logic of the *tragédie en musique* within classical poetics, in Kintzler’s account saturates the stage space and eliminates any intimations of a spatiotemporal field transcending it.

Kintzler’s thesis draws upon ideas voiced by the stage director Jean-Marie Villégier.²¹ In his paper ‘*Atys, une tragédie sans extérieur*’, Villégier rejects any equivalence in the treatment of space in spoken and lyric tragedy, with particular reference to the entr’acte. He proposes a syntax for each act of a *tragédie en musique* that leads from dramatic scenes toward a spectacular manifestation or other significant event at its end, after which the process of accumulating energy begins anew. The entr’acte does not posit an imaginary space beyond the limitations of the stage: ‘Each act charges itself little by little to lead to a final “boom”, which is an apparition, glory, etc., and then one begins again, one recharges. The entr’acte is significant only as the end of the explosion and not as an interval of time during which exterior events may have

16 Kintzler, *Poétique de l’opéra français*, 232.

17 Catherine Kintzler, ‘L’opéra français, hyper-théâtre et hypo-théâtre’, in *Penser l’opéra français de l’âge classique*, ed. Catherine Kintzler (Paris: Collège International de Philosophie, 1993), 27.

18 Kintzler, *Théâtre et opéra à l’âge classique*, 147.

19 Kintzler, *Théâtre et opéra à l’âge classique*, 12 and 9. This analysis extends an earlier characterization of the ‘inversions’ between forms in *Poétique de l’opéra français*, 229–230.

20 Kintzler, *Théâtre et opéra à l’âge classique*, 153. Support from the mid-eighteenth century for this argument is found in Pierre-Mathieu Martin de Chassiron’s *Dissertation sur les tragédies-opéra, Lue par Monsieur de Chassiron, dans une Séance de l’Académie, Recueil de pieces en prose et en vers, lues dans les assemblées publiques de l’Académie Royale des Belles-Lettres de La Rochelle* (Paris: Thiboust, 1752), 72–73: ‘Lyric tragedy cannot suffer a void, perhaps by a principle of method [politique]: the mind finds so little to occupy itself with, that [opera] puts everything in use to prevent it from reflecting.’ Kintzler cites another passage in this section (from a different version of Chassiron’s text) comparing the construction of acts in opera and tragedy, in *Poétique de l’opéra français*, 228–229. She judges that Chassiron advances ‘falsities, blinded as he is by searching for differences and resemblances between dramatic tragedy and lyric tragedy graspable in a descriptive fashion’. For further comments on Chassiron see *Poétique de l’opéra français*, 212 and 280.

21 See in particular chapter 6 of *Théâtre et opéra à l’âge classique*, ‘La réduction du théâtre et le spectaculaire: la subversion du spectaculaire et la réassomption du théâtre’ (147–164), where Kintzler cites Villégier (152–153).



accumulated and modified the situation.²² This picture of the entr'acte underpins a broader account of opera's reliance on visible actions at the expense of the off-stage actions communicated through narratives, or *récits*, that are so critical to representation in classical tragedy. Opera is a "tragedy without an *off*", filled up, without an exterior' ('ce que j'appellerai "la tragédie sans *off*", la tragédie pleine, la tragédie sans extérieur').²³ For Villégier, this unavailability of off-stage space renders the *tragédie en musique* 'a contradiction in terms', with 'tragedy' defined by such works as Jean Racine's *Bérénice*.²⁴ According to the Racinian model, 'tragedy' is necessarily characterized by spatial unity, which entails at once the temporal restriction of stage space in individual acts and the compensatory proliferation of concealed actions and indeterminate time in the off-stage space.

This denial of spatiotemporal depth to the *tragédie en musique* by Kintzler and Villégier invites a re-examination of the entr'acte within a broader interrogation of how poets and composers dealt with representation and spectacle. Two issues in particular merit closer scrutiny than they have received in studies of the *tragédie en musique*: the spectator's imaginative reflection as an available mode of experience and the unfolding of events in the off-stage space of individual works through musical and discursive references. It is precisely the frequent saturation of spectacle as emphasized by Kintzler – the exhibition of gods, allegorical beings, dancers, machines and dazzling, noisy meteorological phenomena and catastrophes – that lends particular significance to the suspension of spectacle and the displacement of action to imaginary spaces in operatic dramaturgy.

CHRONOTOPES OF FRENCH CLASSICISM

Conceptions of theatrical space in French classical poetics were linked to imperatives of illusion and dramatic plausibility (*vraisemblance*). The unities of action, time and place, which formed a regulative paradigm for French tragedy in the wake of the *Querelle du Cid* in the late 1630s and early 1640s, were interrelated through assumptions about illusion, mimesis, agency and spectatorship.²⁵ Even when strict spatial unity was not observed, characters were assumed to circulate within a larger continuous space extending beyond the stage and delimited by a plausible timeframe. Changes of stage properties, when required, generally occurred in entr'actes to maintain the continuity of action within the act, while instrumental music filled

22 Jean-Marie Villégier, 'Atys, une tragédie sans extérieur', in *Penser l'opéra français de l'âge classique*, ed. Kintzler, 18. Villégier's discussion of *Atys* and the *tragédie en musique* more broadly is of compelling interest in light of his prominent work as a director, which includes the widely acclaimed 1987 production of *Atys* with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants, reprised at the Opéra-Comique in 2011.

23 Villégier, 'Atys, une tragédie sans extérieur', 18. For Rémond de Saint-Mard as well, there was no equivalent in opera of the entr'acte in spoken tragedy, yet he based his argument on a conflation of the entr'acte with the *divertissement*. While in spoken tragedy the action continues 'outside the theatre', in opera the librettist must 'fill these voids'; the technique by which these gaps are filled is the *divertissement*, which renders the action of opera 'perceptible' and 'continuous' and in this way is superior to entr'actes in spoken theatre. This account does not, however, eliminate the possibility that agents in the plot, absent from the stage during the *divertissement*, continue to 'act' off-stage; it merely asserts the sustained presence of some form of on-stage action, here achieved through the mode of dance. [Toussaint] Rémond de Saint-Mard, *Réflexions sur l'opéra* (La Haye: Jean Neaulme, 1741; facsimile edition, Geneva: Minkoff, 1972), 22–26. See also Cuthbert Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: His Life and Work*, second edition (New York: Dover, 1969), 139–140.

24 Villégier, 'Atys, une tragédie sans extérieur', 18–19.

25 Accounts of the role of the unities in classical dramaturgy of particular relevance here include René Bray, *La formation de la doctrine classique en France* (Paris: Nizet, 1963), Jacques Scherer, *La dramaturgie classique en France*, second edition (Saint-Genouph: Nizet, 2001), John D. Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder: The Theory of Tragedy in Classical France* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), and Emmanuelle Hélin, *Ut pictura theatrum: théâtre et peinture de la Renaissance italienne au classicisme français* (Geneva: Droz, 2003).



the time and off-stage events were understood to transpire in an unfixed temporal modality.²⁶ Although theorists offered competing interpretations of the rules and unities, undermining any notion of a single ‘classical doctrine’, as John D. Lyons has noted, dramatic theory beginning with Jean Chapelain and the abbé d’Aubignac in the first half of the seventeenth century was marked by a pervasive recognition that space and time were mutually dependent on the stage.²⁷

Bakhtin’s dramaturgical application of the ‘chronotope’ offers a theoretical model to express this mutual dependency. In his formulation, the ‘chronotope’ describes ‘the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature’.²⁸ The *content* of chronotopes, ultimately rooted in specific historical conditions and revealed in distinct, evolving literary forms, is the spatiotemporal aspect of human experience. As Bakhtin’s object of study is narrative prose, questions of dramatic enactment and embodiment are less relevant to his analysis than the depiction of character through plot and incident. These concerns led him to privilege the representation of time over space in the novelistic chronotope.²⁹ Yet the terms of Bakhtin’s characterization of narrative point to related structures or dynamics in theatre: ‘In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.’³⁰

Bakhtin fleetingly invokes the ‘chronotope of the entr’acte, the chronotope of theatrical space’, yet his references to theatre are laconic and suggestive of a range of possible applications.³¹ The brief account of the entr’acte in the essay takes as an implicit model the comic *intermède* of clowns and fools. This conception mirrors Bakhtin’s analysis of the ‘carnavalesque’: the entr’acte offers a ludic opening or liberating pause in the drama of social relations. If applied to theatre in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, the term may seem more suited to describe the *intermèdes* of Molière’s *comédies-ballets* than the entr’actes of French classical tragedy and the *tragédie en musique*. The comic intermezzos in the Italian operatic tradition likewise enact a ludic breach within a serious or tragic framework.³²

Dissociating the concept of the theatrical chronotope from comedy and the carnivalesque, however, leaves it intact as a means of formulating with a single term characteristic strategies of temporal and spatial representation. With their foregrounding of embodiment and space, theatre and opera are ideal mediums for the depiction and analysis of chronotopes. Patrice Pavis, for instance, has described theatrical chronotopes as ‘spatiotemporal wholes that correspond with specific types of corporeality’.³³ Extending this characterization, we may note how invocations of place such as forests, gardens and grottos in the *tragédie en musique* feature present-oriented and somatic engagements of characters within specific settings. The

26 On these conventions in the theatre see Rosow, ‘Making Connections’, 231–233, and Bénédicte Louvat-Molozay, *Théâtre et musique: dramaturgie de l’insertion musicale dans le théâtre français (1550–1680)* (Paris: Champion, 2002), 122–126.

27 Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder*, x–xi. Lyons is sceptical regarding Bray’s attempt to establish a uniform ‘doctrine’ in *La formation de la doctrine classique en France*.

28 Bakhtin, ‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope’, 84.

29 ‘In literature the primary category in the chronotope is time.’ Bakhtin, ‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope’, 85. He later affirms this priority by referring parenthetically to time as ‘the dominant principle in the chronotope’ (86).

30 Bakhtin, ‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope’, 84.

31 Bakhtin, ‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope’, 166 and 163.

32 As Rousseau characterized it, the function of the Italian *intermède* or *intermezzo* was to ‘amuse and rest, as it were, the mind of the spectator saddened by the tragedy and strained by profound matters [tendu sur les grand intérêts]’. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, ‘Intermède’, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 5, 864.

33 Patrice Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theater, Dance, and Film*, trans. David Williams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 154. A survey of the term’s uses and a collection of representative papers in literary and film studies are given in *Bakhtin’s Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, ed. Nele Bemong and others (Ghent: Academia, 2010).



entr'acte, defined through temporal dilation and the mutability of imagined spaces, is in turn a powerful 'time-space' gesture through its retraction of such modes of embodiment. By structuring plots within 'virtual spaces', it is comparable to chronotopic narrative techniques as analysed by Bakhtin.³⁴ Furthermore, the operatic entr'acte implicates the spectator's presence – as these narrative techniques imply situated readers – by the simultaneous assertion of stage mechanics and the withdrawal of dramatic agents, transposed at this point into a notional or imaginary existence. This interaction of presence and absence is essential to the operation of entr'actes and reflects the dialogic nature of chronotopes. Bakhtin stressed this aspect of the chronotope in a later addition to his essay, where he introduces the distinction between 'minor' and 'major' chronotopes that enter into dialogic relations within the same work.³⁵

The spatiotemporal field of action in lyric tragedy is realized through the interplay of both the act and the entr'acte. The typically fixed fictional space of the act maintains the illusion of the correspondence of visible action and objective time, widely understood as a condition for *vraisemblance* in classical poetics.³⁶ The mobile space of the entr'acte is marked by two distinct yet related functions: on the one hand, it allows for the implication of a deeper spatiotemporal field than is available to the act, and on the other hand, it foregrounds music as the medium through which spectators experience mental repose, reflection or imaginative projection. These chronotopes operate within the generic chronotope of what may be characterized as 'tragic time', by analogy with Bakhtin's conception of the 'adventure chronotope' and 'adventure-time' of the Greek romance.³⁷ The act and entr'acte are 'minor' or 'local' chronotopes whose dialogical relationship establishes a higher-level structure of 'tragic time'. The entr'acte is only one means of fabricating off-stage action – on-stage diegetic reference may situate it at any point before or during dramatic time, including the suspensions between acts – that belongs to the *fabula* (story), whose unity is abstracted from the immediately enacted as well as narrated constituents of the *sjuzet* (plot).³⁸

In his *Dictionnaire de musique*, Rousseau outlines a conception of the 'acte' and 'entr'acte' based on the interlocking relationship of these chronotopes. This relationship operates at a basic level in formal terms, as the act is 'the part of opera separated from another in performance by a space called the entr'acte'.³⁹ Beyond this structural articulation, the act and entr'acte shape temporal experience in distinctive ways. For Rousseau, unity of time and place must be maintained within acts, just as in spoken tragedy. In stating that the 'hypothetical duration' of the fiction should equal actual time, Rousseau applies to opera the 'literalization' of represented and dramatic time deliberated over in classical poetics.⁴⁰ The accomplishment of this temporal levelling is the task of the poet, whereas the composer may use music to 'precipitate or

34 On the 'virtual space of the text' or 'imaginary space' see Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre II: l'école du spectateur* (Paris: Belin, 1996), 54–55.

35 Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope', 252–254.

36 Certain theorists gestured toward the exact coordination of represented and fictional time as an ideal, a kind of 'literalization' of temporalities in which the time of performance as it unfolds objectively in the theatre would coincide exactly with the fictional action. Fontenelle outlined the principle in his *Réflexions sur la poétique*: 'The rule of twenty-four hours is not at all a rule but is rather the opportune extension of the true rule, which accords to the duration of the action only the duration of its representation'. Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Réflexions sur la poétique*, in *Œuvres* (Paris: Michel Brunet, 1742), 197. The rule of 'twenty-four hours' originated in a reading of Aristotle's statement in the *Poetics* that 'tragedy tends so far as possible to stay within a single revolution of the sun, or close to it'. Aristotle, *Poetics* 5, 1449b; trans. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 47. The passage was variously interpreted to mean either a 'natural' day (thus the rule of 'twenty-four hours') or an 'artificial' day comprising twelve or fewer hours. See Bray, *La formation de la doctrine classique en France*, 262–285.

37 Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope', 100 and 87.

38 On the narratological distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet* as applied to theatre see Keir Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2002), 107.

39 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Acte', 635.

40 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Acte', 635.



slow down' the action in order to achieve greater 'vraisemblance or interest', guided by the depiction of passions and the sustained engagement of the spectator.⁴¹ Musical time is therefore flexible in ways that discursive time or objective action is not: by arguing that music may transform the experience of temporality, Rousseau suggests that it is separable from the unfolding of dramatic action and involves what may be characterized as the 'psychological' time of interiority.

This temporal expansion is intensified between acts. Rousseau confirms that off-stage action was assumed to occur in the operatic entr'acte in describing it as the 'space of time which passes between an act of an opera and the beginning of the following act, and during which the representation is suspended, while the action is imagined to continue elsewhere'.⁴² The first imperative of entr'acte music is functional in nature, as continuous music supports the enduring fiction of dramatic space:

Although the stage remains empty during the entr'acte, this is not to say that the music must be interrupted: because at the opera, where music forms a part of the existence of things, the sense of hearing must have a connection with the sense of sight such that as long as one sees the place of the scene, one hears the harmony that is imagined to be inseparable from it, so that their combination does not appear strange or new with the singing of the actors that follows.⁴³

This passage proposes a kind of spatial music that covers the notional temporal and spatial expansion created by the entr'acte. Rousseau here carries over a model of 'continuity' from Louis de Cahusac's *Encyclopédie* entry on the 'entr'acte'. Cahusac had asserted that uninterrupted music was necessary to maintain illusion in the spectator's mind: the 'continuity of the spectacle is favourable to the illusion, and without illusion there is no longer any charm in a musical spectacle'.⁴⁴ To a certain extent Cahusac's notion of continuity simply raised the practical function of music as a means of covering stage noise into a mode of reception (the experience of illusion), a feature that links the *tragédie en musique* to the *pièce à machines*.⁴⁵ The implication in Cahusac is that instrumental music, more than simply fulfilling a technical requirement, reinforces the autonomy of a continuous fictional world distinct from actual theatre space. It effects a *liaison de présence* of sonority while fictional space is recast through changes of set and decor.

Rousseau moves beyond Cahusac in attributing greater significance to the role of instrumental music and by more closely examining the relationship between musical representation and spectatorship. Although the entr'acte 'is made to suspend the attention and rest the mind of the spectator', Rousseau argues that it must also sustain the affective state of the spectator.⁴⁶ He examines the question of the spectator's experience in musical terms. Theorists of tragedy, of course, tasked the poet with guiding the spectator's experience through dramatic speech placed before and after entr'actes. Although such poetic activity marks the *tragédie en musique* as well, Rousseau's concern is with the shaping of this experience by the composer. The complication, however, is that music between acts no longer appears with an immediate verbal text or

41 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Acte', 635–636.

42 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Entr'acte', 810. Excerpts from the entry are translated in Wood and Sadler, *French Baroque Opera*, 54.

43 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Entr'acte', 811. Rousseau contrasts the French practice of the brief instrumental entr'acte with the extended intermezzos of Italian opera, advancing the French practice as a model.

44 [Louis de Cahusac,] 'Entr'acte', in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (Paris: Briasson, David, Le Breton and Durand, 1751–1757; Neufchâtel: Samuel Faulche, 1765–1772), volume 5, 727. See Oliver, *The Encyclopedists as Critics of Music*, 55, and Rosow, 'Making Connections', 233.

45 Corneille outlined this function in the prefatory material to his machine play *Andromède*, where he noted that music was used to fill the interval of time and cover the noise of machines during scenic transformations. See Corneille, *Argument to Andromède*, in *Œuvres complètes*, volume 2, 447; the passage is duplicated in the *Examen* to the play (452).

46 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 'Entr'acte', 810.



action to give it referential significance. As Rousseau presents the problem: ‘What must [the orchestra] do when no one is speaking? What must it do when there is no action?’⁴⁷ In the absence of simultaneous objects of imitation, the composer must either evoke prior emotional states or prepare for new states that will emerge in the action that follows:

Although the stage may be empty, the heart of the spectators is not; a strong impression of that which they have seen and heard must remain with them. It is for the orchestra to nourish and sustain this impression during the *entr’acte*, so that the spectator does not find himself as cold at the beginning of the following act as he was at the beginning of the work, and so that interest may be, so to speak, connected in his soul as the events are connected in the represented action.⁴⁸

Rousseau’s account of this process, expressed in terms that recall Corneille’s conception of uninterrupted dramatic involvement during the *entr’acte*, is remarkable in shifting action from plot and visible incident to the spectator’s mind and affective state as sustained by instrumental music.⁴⁹ The *entr’acte*’s length is limited only by the spectator’s attention and the presumed fictional action, itself relative to the ‘imagined limits [bornes de supposition] of the hypothetical duration of the complete action, and the real limits relative to the duration of the performance’.⁵⁰

Although accounts of opera attendance often describe the astonishment and pleasure taken in stage transformations, Rousseau establishes that the *entr’acte* was an important site of musical activity and audience reflection.⁵¹ He describes the transformation of the *entr’acte*’s music from conventional continuity and illusion, as in Cahusac, into an active poetic element – in Kintzler’s terms, a ‘poetic occurrence’ or a part of the ‘morphology itself of the poetic text’, as opposed to a mere expedient of musical continuity.⁵² Rousseau may also have been engaging with recent developments in *opéra comique* that grounded the music of *entr’actes* more directly within the dramatic action. David Charlton has described the development of the ‘functional *entr’acte*’ in this period with reference to André Grétry’s operas of the 1770s.⁵³ Rousseau’s view that music is not merely a complement or an accessory but that it ‘forms part

47 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, ‘Entr’acte’, 811.

48 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, ‘Entr’acte’, 811.

49 Rosow has suggested that unlike spectators in the spoken theatre, who probably spent the *entr’actes* talking amongst themselves, ‘presumably the opera audience spent this very brief intermission not chatting but watching the scenery change – and unless their murmurs of astonishment and delight were too loud, they heard the *entr’acte*’. Rosow, ‘Making Connections’, 233. Rousseau’s comments on the importance of instrumental music suggest the possibility of close audition of *entr’acte* music.

50 Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique*, ‘Entr’acte’, 812. As for the question of ‘dramatic time’, Rousseau advocates a twelve-hour interpretation of the ‘unity of time’ based on the alteration of stage space by natural diurnal cycles that are presumed to operate within the fictional world.

51 Casanova’s account in his *Mémoires* of set changes during a performance at the Académie Royale de Musique in 1750 is well known and often cited; see Wood and Sadler, *French Baroque Opera*, 29. Casanova’s remark concerning the ‘silence of the audience’ throughout the performance calls into question James H. Johnson’s argument that audiences were always unruly and noisy at the Opéra in the mid-eighteenth century, made in his *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), 9–34. Johnson’s portrayal of audience behaviour would certainly minimize potential moments of reflection or even absorption in spectacle, although the royal decree of 1769 concerning *entr’actes* (see below) suggests that disruptive behaviour on the part of at least some spectators had become a problem by that time. David Charlton has questioned the accuracy of Johnson’s account for mid-century opera audiences in *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 187–190.

52 Kintzler, *Poétique de l’opéra français*, 40–41 and 143.

53 David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 128–131 and 308–310. Charlton cites a royal decree of 1769 that included proscriptions regarding distracting behaviour during *entr’actes*, which attests to an increased awareness of their importance (129). Also pointing to a change in awareness



of the existence of things' extends as well into the *tragédie en musique* with the functional entr'actes of Rameau, and it is to works of the 1730s that I will turn in considering the role of the entr'acte in operatic dramaturgy.⁵⁴ Rousseau's writings on opera, particularly those appearing as late as the *Dictionnaire de musique* (1767–1768), should not, of course, be assumed to offer a neutral description of the *tragédie en musique*, given his open hostility toward French operatic practices by this date. His comments on the entr'acte, however, point to techniques already present in the *tragédie en musique*; indeed, where Rousseau offers censure, it is directed toward the insertion of *intermèdes* between the acts of Italian tragic opera. Rousseau's discussion of musical representation must, however, be augmented with a consideration of how the *livret* interpolates unseen events within the entr'acte. Whether musical interludes attain a semantic value through newly composed music or the strategic recollection of previously heard music, or whether they merely repeat an earlier dance air without any allusions, dramatic discourse on either side of this absence must disclose hidden action if it is to enter into the spectator's awareness of the *fabula*.

CONCEALMENT AND RECUPERATION IN *JEPHTÉ* AND *HIPPOLYTE ET ARICIE*

The constructive use of off-stage activity is demonstrated by the work of Simon-Joseph Pellegrin, who exploited the entr'acte to significant dramatic effect in *Jephté* (1732) and *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733). Each opera emerged from a distinct process of adaptation that transformed narrative (*Jephté*) and spoken tragedy (*Hippolyte et Aricie*) into opera. Pellegrin supplied each text with a Preface that offers insight into his strategies of operatic representation, with the Preface to *Jephté* specifically addressing the entr'acte.

In his *livret* for *Jephté* (1732), Pellegrin placed the first encounter between Jephté and his daughter, Iphise, in the off-stage space during the entr'acte between Acts 2 and 3. Jephté, who has made a vow to God to sacrifice whatever being first greets him at his homecoming, should he achieve victory in battle, encounters his own daughter upon his return.⁵⁵ Pellegrin sought to create more than a single, tragic encounter, instead preparing for a recognition scene that is twice delayed. The initial meeting is placed off-stage and is one-sided, for although Iphise recognizes her father, the years of his exile have rendered her unrecognizable to him. Once Jephté returns to the stage space at the opening of Act 3, he dismisses his guards – an action evoked through the imitative shuttling of motives in the divided orchestra – and broods over the fate of his victim. His monologue informs the spectator of this encounter and his emotional response to it (Example 1):

Ciel! j'ay vû ma victime; et ma bouche timide	Heavens! I saw my victim, and my timid mouth
N'a pû luy prononcer l'arrest de son trepas.	Was not able to pronounce her death sentence.
Détestable Serment où tant d'horreur préside!	Detestable vow that carries such horror! ⁵⁶

is Noverre's call for entr'actes to maintain the 'sentiment' established in the preceding action and to prepare for the following act, which may well have influenced Rousseau's account in the *Dictionnaire*. Jean-Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse et sur les ballets* (Stuttgart: Aimé Delaroché, 1760; facsimile edition, New York: Broude Brothers, 1967), 152–157.

54 Rameau added a 'Bruit de guerre' as an entr'acte to the second version of *Dardanus* (1744), implying off-stage combat. He extended the technique in depicting a large-scale storm and earthquake between Acts 3 and 4 in his final opera, *Abaris, ou Les Boréades* (c1763), in this way bridging the entr'acte with mimetic music. See Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Les Boréades*, ed. Philippe Lescat (Paris: Stil, 2001), 187–192. This entr'acte of fifty-five bars is marked 'suinte des vents', indicating the continuation of the storm ('orage, tonnerre et tremblement de terre'). On the musical and dramaturgical techniques of this storm see Sylvie Bouissou, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Les Boréades, ou la tragédie oubliée* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1992), 173–186, and Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau*, 319. The most complete survey of the music of Rameau's entr'actes is Paul-Marie Masson, *L'opéra de Rameau* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1930), 337–340, which also includes discussion of trends toward the greater dramatic significance of the entr'acte in the 1760s.

55 The source narrative is the *Book of Judges*, chapter 11.

56 [Simon-Joseph Pellegrin,] *Jephté, Tragédie tirée de l'écriture Sainte* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, 1732), 23.



Basses et Bassons du côté droit.

Basses et accompagnement du côté gauche.

2 6

8

7 6 # 6 7 7 # 7 7

15

7 # 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 3

Jephté à ses Gardes.

22

Al - lez; re - ti - rez vous, ne sui - vez point mes pas. Ciel!

6 6 5 3

26

j'ay vü ma vi - cti - me, et ma bou - che ti - mi - de n'a pü luy pro - non - cer l'ar - rest de son tre - pas.

#4 6 #6 6 5 4 #3

Example 1 Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, *Jephté*, Act 3 Scene 1, bars 1–28 (Paris: Boivin, 1732), pages 121–122. Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, M1500.M773 J4 1732a. Used by permission

The off-stage space figures vividly in his mind, as he imagines what his torment would have been like had he encountered his wife or daughter instead of this unknown victim. He reassures himself with his conviction that both Almasie and Iphise are at the temple and directs the final section of his monologue to his absent victim, unwittingly counselling his daughter to flee from him.

In her following dialogue with Jephté (Scene 2), Almasie informs him that Iphise is at the temple in worship. He sees his unknown victim enter the stage and expresses his dread (Scene 3); it is only when Almasie announces this arrival of their ‘daughter’ that we witness the moment of Jephté’s recognition. Whereas Iphise’s joyful recognition of her father was concealed from the spectator in the entr’acte, Jephté’s anguish is presented immediately on stage in a ‘situation’ that according to the notice in the *Mercure de*



France ‘drew tears’ from the audience.⁵⁷ Pellegrin selected for representation not the single encounter described in the biblical narrative but rather a newly imagined and carefully prepared recognition scene that directly involves Almasie. The role of Jephthé’s wife is not present in the original narrative, yet it had regularly appeared in modern adaptations of the subject beginning with George Buchanan’s Latin college play of 1554, *Jephthes, sive Votum* (Jephthah, or the Vow).⁵⁸

Pellegrin justified his handling of the recognition scene in his Preface to the *livret*, a discussion that illustrates the importance of the entr’acte as a site of concealed action. The critical issue concerns this first encounter between Jephthé and his daughter. Pellegrin explains that Jephthé has not seen his daughter from an early age and thus cannot recognize her, information that Jephthé communicates to his confidant, Abdon, in Act 1 Scene 2. Pellegrin relates that an objection was made that the daughter should have announced herself to her father instead of allowing her identity to remain unknown. The first reason for this momentary dissimulation, according to Pellegrin, was one of propriety (*bienséance*). Iphise was required by the rule of decorum to be announced to her father by Almasie, who at the moment of Iphise’s encounter with Jephthé is in the temple. Pellegrin shaped her exit discourse to reflect this fact: in an aside, Iphise expresses her impatience to see her father before running off stage to greet him:

Je ne puis résister à mon impatience.	I cannot resist my impatience.
Seigneur, un seul moment, je ne veux que le voir,	Lord, a single moment, I only wish to see him,
Et je vole où m’appelle un plus sacré devoir.	and then I will hurry to where a more sacred duty calls me. ⁵⁹

Pellegrin’s second response to the objection is that once Jephthé sees his victim and is overcome with remorse, he commands those around him to leave him alone, and his daughter would necessarily follow this order through her obedience. Pellegrin concedes that he could have presented the encounter on stage at the end of the second act, but his sense of an act’s proper length prevented him from expanding it. The stage directions at the close of the act indicate that Iphise is followed by the celebrating Israelites and rushes ahead of them to greet Jephthé: ‘Iphise, followed by the people, goes before Jephthé to the sound of the tambourins.’⁶⁰ This movement accompanies a set change from Jephthé’s palace to the front court of the palace in which a throne is visible.⁶¹ The music of the entr’acte is the ‘Air des Tambourins’, a lively dance in A major with flutes and bassoons that had served as the framework for the air and chorus ‘Tout rit à nos vœux’, sung by the inhabitants of Maspha in the Act 2 *divertissement*. In his Preface Pellegrin justifies the inclusion of dance, required by the *tragédie en musique* as a theatrical form, by reference to the biblical description of the daughter meeting her father ‘with timbrels and with dances’, as the action is described in the Authorized (King James) Version. Montéclair’s use of the ‘Air des Tambourins’ within the *divertissement* – and then to close it and project the action through the entr’acte – thus realizes in musical terms the daughter’s action in the source narrative and evokes her impatience, shared by the chorus, at Jephthé’s approach. Iphise’s exit discourse guides the audience into an imaginative or speculative construction of the off-stage encounter. Spectators may anticipate that Jephthé will not recognize her, based on his dialogue with Abdon in Act 1 Scene 2, which establishes that Jephthé has been absent for many years and that when he was exiled, his daughter was of ‘too tender an age’ to bring with him. With this knowledge, spectators may further imagine Jephthé’s distress at meeting his victim, her confusion and the dramatic irony of an encounter that would have been even more appalling had Jephthé recognized his daughter.

57 *Mercure de France* (March 1732), 580.

58 George Buchanan, *Tragedies*, trans. Peter Sharratt and P. G. Walsh (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983).

59 Pellegrin, *Jephthé*, iv.

60 [Michel Pignolet de Montéclair,] *Jephthé, Tragédie tirée de l’Ecriture Sainte* (Paris: Boivin, 1732), 120.

61 The didascalía for Act 2 indicates ‘Le Théâtre représente le Palais de Jephthé’; the set indications for Act 3 are as follows: ‘Le Théâtre représente l’Avant-Cour du Palais de Jephthé, orné d’Arcs de Triomphe et d’Obélisques; On y voit un Trône.’ Pellegrin, *Jephthé*, 11 and 23. According to the first edition of the score, the setting of Act 3 is ‘une place publique’.



Pellegrin and Montéclair exploited the entr'acte for other significant events in *Jephté*. Between Acts 1 and 2, Jephté leads the Israelites into battle against the Ammonites. The music that depicts the rush to battle is the 'Marche des Guerriers' that accompanies the entrance of warriors in Scene 4. Both *livret* and score note that 'The army assembles around Jephté at the sound of the trumpets; Jephté, at the head of the Israelites, crosses the Jordan to fight the Ammonites'.⁶² Act 2 opens with a dialogue between Ammon, held captive in Jephté's palace, and his confidant Abner. The action under way – the battle between the Ammonites and the Israelites begun during the entr'acte and continuing off stage, implied by the dialogue – compels Abner to prompt Ammon to flee, the latter hesitating out of what will prove to be a fatal passion for Iphise.

The interval between Acts 3 and 4 is again bridged with a march accompanying military activity announced in the concluding lines of Act 3. The off-stage action is the assault of the Israelites against the rebel Ammon. It is accompanied by the bellicose march of Scene 5, which Montéclair labelled 'Air des trompettes'.⁶³ The dramatic and musical contrasts between Acts 3 and 4 are sharp, as the latter opens in a garden with Iphise lamenting her separation from her father in solitude. She does not yet know that she is to be sacrificed, and instead believes her vaguely intimated punishment stems from her illicit love for Ammon. At the end of Act 4 she rejects Ammon's promise of protection in a scene that 'connoisseurs' found to be 'the most beautiful of the work', according to the *Mercur*.⁶⁴ As she prepares to rush to the altar, her exit is clearly signalled in the dialogue: 'Ah! let me run to the altar to prevent his anger.' Iphise's action leads the spectator through the fictional space, as Act 5 opens with a view of a restless Almasie inside the temple.⁶⁵ Given that Act 4 is devoted to lamentation and prominently features musettes as part of the pastoral instrumental palette, there were no suitable dances from the act to draw upon for this animated, even frantic action. Montéclair composed a new instrumental piece that captures Iphise's rush to the temple and bridges the G major close of Act 4 with the C major opening of Act 5 (Example 2).

Both instances in which Iphise's actions are projected into the entr'acte show that Pellegrin's handling of entrance and exit discourse was grounded in classical poetic theory. For instance, d'Aubignac had addressed the question of how characters' discourse should mark the reason for exits before the end of the act. His principal concern was to establish motivation for what might otherwise appear to be an artefact not of the 'action' but of the 'representation'.⁶⁶ Corneille extended this technical justification to include the creation of suspense in the spectator; indeed, the precise nature of off-stage activity in certain cases could be less important than the creation of this suspense.⁶⁷ In his entr'actes, Pellegrin exploits exit discourse to project a speculative continuance of the action that is later defined through discursive reference, as when Jephté broods over his first encounter with his victim at the opening of Act 3.

Pellegrin's strategies for concealing actions link *Jephté* with *Hippolyte et Aricie*, his next *livret* and Rameau's first *tragédie en musique*. Certain of these strategies were identified and appraised in the opera's

62 Pellegrin, *Jephté*, 10, and Montéclair, *Jephté*, 80.

63 Montéclair, *Jephté*, 137 and 161.

64 *Mercur de France* (March 1732), 585.

65 The first two scenes of Act 5 were subsequently cut, as indicated in the Preface to the 1732 print of the *livret* (v) and the revised printed score, F-Po Liv 18[R38]. This is the version described in the *Mercur* notice. The revised Act 5 opens with Jephté's monologue 'Seigneur, un tendre Pere, à tes ordres soumis'; the stage represents 'le Temple de Maspha' with a view of the altar.

66 D'Aubignac distinguished between 'the truth of the action' or the 'true story' ('la vérité de l'action' or 'l'histoire véritable'), describing the autonomous dramatic action, and 'representation' ('la représentation'), the material aspects of performance that serve the spectators' interests. Abbé [François-Hédelin] d'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre* (1657), ed. Hélène Baby (Paris: Champion, 2011), 85–87 and 369–371. On d'Aubignac's terms see Yoshiko Hagiwara, 'La théorie de la représentation dans *La pratique du théâtre* de d'Aubignac', *Études de langue et littérature françaises* 40 (1982), 23–24, and Geoffrey Burgess, "'Le théâtre ne change qu'à la troisième scène": The Hand of the Author and Unity of Place in Act V of *Hippolyte et Aricie*', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10/3 (1998), 280.

67 Corneille, *Discours des trois unités*, 175.



P^f. violons. *Tous les violons.* *Hautbois et violons.*

Haute-contras. *Tous.*

côté droit. *Basses et Bassons.*

6 6 7 #6 6

8 # 6 # 6

14 5 # # 6

20 6

Example 2 Montéclair, *Jephté*, 'Entr'acte' between Acts 4 and 5, page 209



reception, beginning with a notice in the *Mercure de France* on the opera's first run in October 1733. This account of Act 5 points to the off-stage actions disclosed in its first two scenes: Phèdre's revelation of Hippolyte's innocence to Thésée, her suicide, the obstruction of Neptune's attempt to kill Hippolyte as brought about by Destin and the rescue of Hippolyte by Diane.⁶⁸ The *Mercure* notice clarifies that Phèdre's off-stage actions are prepared in her final address of Act 4, in which she responds to the reported death of Hippolyte. In her hallucinatory on-stage invocation of the gods, whose dense instrumental accompaniment tracks her volatile utterance with a kind of ecphrastic commentary, she senses 'hell opening up' beneath her and implores the gods for a momentary reprieve to reveal the truth to Thésée:

La gloire d'un Heros que l'imposture opprime	The glory of a hero, oppressed by a lie,
Vous demande un juste secours;	demands just assistance;
Laissez-moi, révéler à l'Auteur de ses jours,	let me reveal to his father
Et son innocence & mon crime.	both his innocence and my crime. ⁶⁹

With this exit discourse, Phèdre is propelled into the off-stage space of confession and imminent death, while the 'Air pour les Matelots et Matelotes' from Act 3 fills time in the absence of a set change. The entr'acte is unusual not only because of the static stage set, but also because the music is drawn from before the prior act, which may have been intended to refer to Thésée's suspicion of Hippolyte's guilt and subsequent invocation of Neptune seeking vengeance, as Geoffrey Burgess has suggested.⁷⁰ Pellegrin makes these off-stage events known through Thésée's monologue at the beginning of Act 5, where the king expresses horror at discovering Hippolyte's innocence through Phèdre's confession of 'detestable love' and seeing her commit suicide. In Racine's *Phèdre* (1677), by contrast, Phèdre's confession and death take place on stage in Act 5 Scene 7. Pellegrin's displacement of violent action and the foregrounding of affective response through diegetic reference in Act 5 mirror the opening of Act 2. As Thésée enters the stage, the action is already under way: he is fleeing the fury Tisiphone in the underworld, and in pleading for mercy describes seeing his friend Pyrrhous torn apart by Cerbère. During the *divertissement* of Scene 3 he disappears off stage and searches in vain for Pyrrhous among the tormented souls, as he relays through narrative once he returns in Scene 4.⁷¹ In his Act 5 monologue, Thésée condemns himself as a monster and calls upon Neptune to hide him forever – like Phèdre, he wishes to flee and return to the underworld. He moves to jump into the sea and thus accomplish through immediate enactment what had, in the case of Phèdre, been concealed beyond the frame of the stage. When Neptune arrives in Scene 2 to prevent this suicide, the god's vision reaches beyond the stage to describe preceding events and evoke the future. Although he prevents Thésée from killing himself, his wish to be 'concealed' is fulfilled: before the *divertissement* that reunites Hippolyte and Aricie, Thésée is consigned permanently to the off-stage space in exile.⁷² Destin has saved Hippolyte yet has also prohibited Thésée from seeing him again.

68 Burgess discusses the opera's reception in the *Mercure* and examines the implications of the initial maintenance of spatial unity across Acts 4 and 5 in 'Le théâtre ne change qu'à la troisième scène', 275–276.

69 [Simon-Joseph Pellegrin.] *Hippolyte et Aricie, Tragedie, représentée pour la première fois, par l'Académie royale de musique; le Jeudy premier Octobre 1733* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, 1733), 46. See Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733 version), ed. Sylvie Bouissou, in *Opera omnia Rameau* (Paris: Billaudot, 2002), series 4, volume 1, 258–259; here 'imposture' is replaced with 'injustice'.

70 Burgess, 'Le théâtre ne change qu'à la troisième scène', 277. On rare occasions, Rosow observes, Lully had also deliberately used 'musical recall' in entr'actes for symbolic effect, referring to prior events within the act for particular dramatic purposes. See Rosow, 'Making Connections', 234.

71 See Girdlestone, *Jean-Philippe Rameau*, 146.

72 Villégier's investment in visual display marked his 1996 production of *Hippolyte et Aricie*, in which Phèdre and Thésée return to haunt the final *divertissement*. The production is described in Downing A. Thomas, *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 173–175. Burgess reports on William Christie's use of a transposed arrangement of Phèdre's monologue 'Cruelle mère des amours' as the entr'acte music between Acts 4 and 5 in 'Le théâtre ne change qu'à la troisième scène', 278.



After Thésée's permanent withdrawal, the scene changes to a garden in which Aricie awakens after being transported away from the site of Hippolyte's apparent death. In revisions made during the first run of performances in October 1733, Rameau and Pellegrin excised the first two scenes of the act after criticism regarding the change of setting between Scenes 2 and 3.⁷³ The revision introduced a new dramaturgical problem by removing the narrative content so crucially supplied by Thésée and Neptune in Scenes 1 and 2. As the *Mercure* noted, Diane was given a new explanatory discourse that she offers to Hippolyte in Scene 6. This passage recuperates information from the now missing narratives of Thésée and Neptune, as Diane explains that Neptune's design to kill Hippolyte was thwarted by Destin. Addressing herself directly to Hippolyte, she offers a pithy summary of Phèdre's fate, closed off in a rhymed alexandrine couplet:

<p>à HIPPOLYTE Phèdre aux yeux de Thésée, a terminé son sort, Et t'a rendu ta gloire, en se donnant la mort.⁷⁴</p>	<p>to HIPPOLYTE Phèdre ended her life in Thésée's sight, And she restored your glory in killing herself.</p>
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Previous acts of narrative reference in the opera are implicated as off-stage events rather than on-stage performances. Across Acts 1 and 3, for instance, Hippolyte has acquired knowledge of Thésée's reported death, which informs his dialogue with Phèdre in Act 3 Scene 3. In his monologue in Act 4 Scene 1 ('Ah! faut-il en un jour, perdre tout ce que j'aime!'), he despairs at being exiled, a verbal action that must have occurred during the previous entr'acte. The *Mercure* notice specifies the placement of this act of banishment: 'Hippolyte exposes in a monologue what has happened during the entr'acte; that is to say, the exile to which his father has condemned him'.⁷⁵ By withholding these actions from the stage, Pellegrin and Rameau foreground the depiction of affective response; the significance of these expressive 'actions' is predicated on the sustained availability of off-stage space as another site of action.

The parody of *Hippolyte et Aricie* by Antoine-François Riccoboni and Jean-Antoine Romagnesi, premiered by the Comédiens Italiens on 30 November 1733, targets the elimination of on-stage events in Act 5 and their compensation through narrative. Scene 17 corresponds to Phèdre's scene of lamentation and guilt at the end of Act 4, and Scene 18 corresponds to Aricie's monologue in Act 5 Scene 3. Eliminating Thésée's monologue and the appearance of Neptune, the parody thus mirrors the revised structure of the opera. After Aricie's monologue, Diane commands the zephyrs to transport Hippolyte to be reunited with Aricie, yet rather than simply proffering a clarification of Phèdre's and Thésée's fates, she first enquires if Hippolyte desires such an explanation:

73 See Graham Sadler, 'Rameau, Pellegrin and the Opéra: The Revisions of *Hippolyte et Aricie* during Its First Season', *The Musical Times* 124 (September 1983), 533–537, and Burgess, 'Le théâtre ne change qu'à la troisième scène', 278.

74 [Simon-Joseph Pellegrin,] *Hippolyte et Aricie, Tragedie, représentée par l'Academie royale de musique; Pour la première fois, le jeudi premier octobre 1733. Remise au théâtre le mardi 11 septembre 1742* (Paris: J-B-Christophe Ballard, 1742), 46. Diane's narrative is cited in the *Mercure de France* (October 1733), 2248. The passage, set in *récitatif simple*, is given in the supplement ('Changemens conformes à la Réprés[e]ntation') in [Jean-Philippe Rameau,] *Hippolyte et Aricie* (Paris: Boivin and Le Clerc, 1733 [F-Pn Rés. F. 1234]), 4. In the 1767 print of the *livret*, all narrative references to Phèdre, Thésée, Neptune and Destin have been stripped away; the final scenes are given over to reunion and *divertissement*. See also Rameau, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733 version), ed. Bouissou, 291–292.

75 *Mercure de France* (October 1733), 2244. Much of the synopsis of the plot in this notice is oriented toward the informative function of dramatic discourse – that is, describing scenes such as Aricie's opening monologue 'Temple sacré, séjour tranquille' and the first two scenes of Act 5 in terms of the spectator's access to knowledge, aligning with d'Aubignac's conception of 'representation' rather than the internal, autonomous 'action'. The opening of Act 5, for instance, is described in the following terms: 'The first two scenes are employed to inform the spectators that Phèdre has died in Thésée's sight, after having justified Hippolyte's innocence, as she promised at the end of the preceding act' (2246). This priority of the informative function of discourse illustrates the critical role of the verbal text in conveying actions withheld from view.



<p>Mais voulez-vous savoir comment Hippolyte n'est point mort, comment Neptune a pu manquer à son serment, ce que sont devenus Phèdre et Thésée?⁷⁶</p>	<p>But do you want to know how it is that Hippolyte is not dead, how Neptune could have defaulted on his promise, and what happened to Phèdre and Thésée?</p>
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Hippolyte replies that none of this is of interest to him; what matters is only his survival and union with Aricie:

<p>Non, la fin de notre martyre est le sujet intéressant; tout ce que vous pourriez nous dire nous serait fort indifférent. Mais nous sommes obligés de chanter encore un duo.⁷⁷</p>	<p>No, the end of our martyrdom is the interesting subject; anything you could tell us would be completely indifferent to us. But we still need to sing a duo.</p>
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Narrative recuperation and dramatic integrity are sacrificed to Hippolyte's indifference and the pressing requirement of the final lovers' duet, which Aricie for her part pre-emptively rejects, characterizing it as a 'moment of boredom'. At the same time, Hippolyte's refusal cuts off the flow of necessary dramatic information to the spectator. This comic misfire points to the artifice of expository or diegetic speech in what Riccoboni and Romagnesi seem to have considered a dramaturgical flaw in the revision to Act 5 of *Hippolyte et Aricie*. In classical dramaturgy, the spectator's presence is virtually never acknowledged: within the fictional world, the internal logic of the action is understood to motivate expository discourse, and although the informative function of dramatic speech implicitly crosses the stage to include the spectator, the latter is conceived by classical poetics to be an unacknowledged voyeur observing an autonomous action. The tacit prohibition in both lyric and spoken tragedy against direct audience address is the clearest expression of this autonomy, secured through the notion of a 'fourth wall'.⁷⁸ A character who refuses narrative places an obstacle, a permanent enigma, before the spectator. At the close of the opera's original version, Diane does not offer Hippolyte a full explanation of the fates of Phèdre and Thésée, even though once he has been transported to the garden and reunited with Aricie, he has no knowledge of what has transpired during the entr'acte or Scenes 1 and 2; he only learns from Diane that Thésée is destined never to see him again. In Pellegrin and Rameau's revision, Hippolyte is just as unaware of these events as before; what has changed is not Hippolyte's state of mind but rather the spectator's access to discourses that have now been removed from the stage. The dramatic action thus lacks a compelling internal reason for explanatory narration from Diane directed to Hippolyte after the removal of Scenes 1 and 2. The critical eye of parody exposes this supplementary narrative as a feint, meant not for Hippolyte but the audience. Invoking d'Aubignac's fundamental concepts, this revision was dictated by the requirements of 'representation' – the spectator's need for narrative closure after Thésée and Neptune were erased from Act 5 – rather than by the 'truth of the action'.

The removal of Scenes 1 and 2, with the resulting elimination of Thésée's references to Phèdre's suicide, also provoked sardonic commentary in a parody by the Comédiens Italiens that targeted the opera's 1742 revival. In this parody, which was premiered on 11 October 1742, Diane presents the following explanation of Phèdre and Thésée's disappearance from the stage:

⁷⁶ *Hippolyte et Aricie, Parodie Par M.rs Riccoboni et Romagnési Pour les Comédiens Italiens 30 Nov.bre 1733*, in *Il teatro di Jean-Antoine Romagnesi: testi inediti ed esame linguistico*, ed. Gabriella Fabbri Trivellini (Naples: Liguori, 1998), 78.

⁷⁷ *Hippolyte et Aricie, Parodie Par M.rs Riccoboni et Romagnési*, 78.

⁷⁸ A concise account of these assumptions concerning spectatorship and representation in spoken theatre is found in d'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre*, 81–82.



D'avoir causé tant de ravages,	From having caused so much destruction
Phedre & Thésée enfin sont las.	Phèdre and Thésée are at last worn out.
On leur a fait jouer de si sots personnages,	They were made to play such stupid characters that
Qu'au dénouement ils ne s'exposent pas. ⁷⁹	they are not showing themselves in the denouement.

Diane is presented not merely as the goddess of the hunt and protector of Hippolyte but as a critic of dramaturgy. Invoking the term 'dénouement', she introduces the self-reflexive distinction between the techniques of theatrical representation (artifice) and action (illusion) so often exploited by parody. The credibility of fictional yet real characters dissolves: behind Phèdre and Thésée are actors compelled to 'play' unattractive roles who no longer wish to appear before the audience. Both parodies of *Hippolyte et Aricie* unmask the ruptures of dramatic representation created by the revised configuration of Act 5; by suppressing the perceived violation of spatial unity this revision altered the means by which off-stage incident was made available to spectators. The critiques are predicated on the recognition that off-stage action is a constitutive feature of representation and that the spectator's access to the whole of the *fabula* is mediated through both on-stage enactment and discursive allusion.



A striking feature of entr'actes in the *tragédie en musique* is their frequent concision and rapidity, corresponding to the rapid transposition of widely separated mimetic spaces through set changes. Actions that are assumed to occur within their temporal orbit extend well beyond the objective time of the *airs* and *symphonies* that bridge these gaps, typically around only a minute or slightly more in length. With its preservation of stage decor across Acts 4 and 5, the first incarnation of *Hippolyte et Aricie* presents an entr'acte that closely resembles practices in spoken theatre by 'consuming' time and establishing a space for unrepresentable or otherwise concealed actions.⁸⁰ The density of events that transpires – as Phèdre reveals her crime to Thésée and commits suicide – suggests that the dynamics of presence and absence are not exclusively the province of spoken tragedy. Furthermore, the unfolding of 'tragic time' in opera is not uniform: effects of compression, expansion, embodied presence and imaginary space are achieved through the act and the entr'acte. A chronotopic analysis of these structures helps to clarify the variability and complexity of spatiotemporal representation in the *tragédie en musique*.

Kintzler's categorical distinction between tragedy and opera at the level of representation, although capturing the undeniable importance of visual display for the *tragédie en musique* as a dramatic form founded on the *merveilleux*, neglects significant moments in which spectacle is strategically withheld. The appeal to absolute 'exteriorization' reaches an aporia when confronted with not only Pellegrin's Preface to *Jephté* but also the dramaturgies of *Jephté* and *Hippolyte et Aricie*. Adjusting Kintzler's Kantian formulation, it appears that the entr'acte as theorized and practised in spoken tragedy in fact belonged to the 'conditions of possibility of all theatrical experience' that circumscribed the 'invention' of poets and composers and the 'expectation' of spectators.⁸¹ Operatic entr'actes may simply 'bind' acts together, as when Iphise implicitly

79 *Hippolyte et Aricie, Parodie; Représentée pour la première fois par les Comédiens Italiens Ordinaires du Roi, le 11 Octobre 1742*, second edition (Paris: Duchesne, 1759), 45. This parody considerably reduces Phèdre's role by eliminating an equivalent to her scene of lamentation and self-accusation at the end of Act 4 of *Hippolyte et Aricie*. Diane's explanatory narrative in Act 5 Scene 6 was cut in both the 1742 and 1757 revisions of Rameau's opera, although two manuscript copies of the 1742 version preserve a modified version of the passage. See Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1757 version, with revisions of 1742), ed. Sylvie Bouissou, in *Opera omnia Rameau* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007), series 4, volume 6, 386–387.

80 This notion of the 'consuming' of time is drawn from Corneille, *Discours des trois unités*, 185.

81 Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français*, 19.



leads the audience to the sacrificial altar, yet they may also function as a ‘mask’ of hidden (and therefore speculative or imagined) actions.⁸² The *livrets* of *Jephté* and *Hippolyte et Aricie* illustrate these possibilities, and Pellegrin’s Preface to *Jephté* and the parodies of *Hippolyte et Aricie* confirm that spectators in the opera house possessed some awareness of these practices.

There were probably many ways of experiencing *tragédies en musique* in performance, then as now. The spectacle of moving flats and backdrops during entr’actes could call attention to itself and provoke astonishment. The suspension of dramatic action could be the occasion of mental relaxation, daydreaming or conversation. Yet it could also involve rumination on previous events in the tragedy, sustained emotional response and the imaginative projection or anticipation of events as shaped by the discourse of characters ‘on the verge of absence’, before exiting the stage space.⁸³ Off-stage action is in this sense a function of the poetic text, as it is only through discursive reference or musical allusion that such actions come to be defined. Yet even the ‘non-dramatic’ entr’acte lacking a clear semantic function is not necessarily a dramaturgical weakness, as the recycling of pre-existing music may have allowed for the kind of imaginative reflection that was one possibility of the spectator’s experience. Until the demands in the 1760s for increased dramatic integration, the ‘recycled’ entr’acte may have served this function effectively. More directly shaping the intimation of unseen events, the ‘functional entr’acte’, used in *Jephté* when Iphise rushes to the sacrificial altar, was exploited well before the 1760s to involve the spectator in moments of particular dramatic urgency.

82 On the notion of the entr’acte as a ‘mask’ see Kintzler, *Théâtre et opéra à l’âge classique*, 148.

83 I borrow the expression from Oliver Taplin’s *Greek Tragedy in Action*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2003), 21, cited from an earlier edition in H. T. Barnwell, ‘“They Have Their Exits and Their Entrances”: Stage and Speech in Corneille’s Drama’, *The Modern Language Review* 81/1 (1986), 52. Rosow alludes to this technique as revealed by act-opening conversations that begin *in medias res*; see Rosow, ‘Making Connections’, 232.