

tity. Galley slavery in the Mediterranean, however, has not only been glossed over in modern-day scholarship, but French activists have mostly left it out of current discussions on race and racism (227). Martin and Weiss published *The Sun King at Sea* at a pivotal moment in our time, when transnational movements across the United States and Europe have forced people to directly confront legacies of slavery and colonialism. This study is an indispensable resource for scholarly audiences of seventeenth-century art and history because it demands that we acknowledge inherent biases, look anew, and consider who suffered at the expense of Louis XIV's grandiose image of magnificence.

Patrick Dandrey. *Trois adolescents d'autrefois: Rodrigue (Le Cid), Agnès (L'École des femmes) et Hippolyte (Phèdre)*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2021. 204 pp. 23,70€. Review by SARA WELLMAN, UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

Patrick Dandrey's most recent book offers a fresh perspective on three of the most widely studied seventeenth-century French plays, as well as new insight into how adolescence was understood, or rather misunderstood, by the French society in which these works were produced. In the introductory chapter of *Trois adolescents d'autrefois*, Dandrey provides a compelling argument for the importance of reading Corneille's *Le Cid*, Molière's *L'École des Femmes*, and Racine's *Phèdre* through the lens of adolescence. Dandrey sees the adolescent protagonists of these plays as the most representative examples of a recurring yet understudied theme in seventeenth-century French theater: Rodrigue, Agnès, and Hippolytus are "allégories de l'adolescence impossible" (26) that give voice to the trials and tribulations of an age group often silenced by the society of their time. Building on but also nuancing Philippe Aries' monumental study *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Dandrey argues that adolescence in this period was not just confused with childhood, but subject to "un effet de tuilage" (18), a conflicting set of expectations that created an identity crisis for young people who were alternately treated as children and as adults. While Ancient Greek and Roman societies recognized adolescence as a distinct, well-defined, and decisive period of life,

Dandrey draws on both literary and historical examples to demonstrate the contradictory treatments this age group endured during the era of Corneille, Molière, and Racine. Horace in *L'École des femmes* is old enough to live on his own and to be an effective seducer of women, but he still trembles like a child with fear when he learns that his father Oronte is in town, and he is obliged to bend to paternal authority. As a historical example, young men were often required to do military service before beginning their studies. Young women were married before they were biologically able to have children. While society disrespected adolescence by failing to develop a coherent understanding of this phase of life, adolescents had an advocate in fiction. Literature, particularly theater, was “capable de donner forme et de représenter par anticipation ce qui n'a pas encore atteint le seuil de la conscience sociale et morale” (20).

In the chapter “Rodrigue ou l'adolescence écartelée”, Dandrey provides the first example of how attention to the age of the protagonists gives new insight into the text. While conventional readings of *Le Cid* emphasize the importance of the conflict between honor and love, he argues that this conflict is a product of Rodrigue and Chimène's difficult transition from being seen as children to being recognized as adults by their community. Adding another layer to this anthropological reading of the play as a metaphor for adolescence, Dandrey examines the *Querelle du Cid*, and the play's eventual transition from tragicomedy to tragedy. He argues that this passage from one genre to another was not made possible due to changes in form or content, but rather by a recognition of the “tragique essentiel” of its young characters who sacrifice their personal desires in order to gain acceptance as adults, “sujet(s) à part entière” in their community (66).

The unstable definition of adolescence in seventeenth-century society as expressed in the characters of *L'École des femmes* is explored in the chapter “Agnès ou l'adolescence étouffée”. Agnès, who has been trapped in a prolonged childhood by Arnolphe in order to facilitate her abrupt transition into the adult role of submissive wife, is deprived of the crucial intermediate stage of life between childhood and adulthood. While previous readings of the play focus on its critique of arranged marriage or the oppression of women, Dandrey's analysis adds that the play was ahead of its time in denouncing a lack of respect for all

the steps in human development, “la défiguration de l’épanouissement naturel des êtres” (98). Society’s failure to recognize the importance of each developmental step also has an impact on Arnolphe. Not until the age of forty-two does his heart awaken for the first time, when he discovers that he loves Agnès instead of simply wanting to possess and control her. He has learned the lessons of adolescence too late and, by this point, he is no match for his younger rival Horace.

In the chapter “Hippolyte ou l’adolescence brisée,” Dandrey turns to one of the protagonists of Racine’s *Phèdre*, who is literally torn apart by the conflicting pressures of early modern adolescence. After establishing adolescent drama as a recurring theme of Racine’s tragedies such as *Britannicus*, *Bajazet*, and *Iphigénie*, he justifies his choice to focus on Hippolytus “pour expression des méfaits occasionnés par l’occultation symbolique de cette tranche d’âge dans la société de son temps” (143). As in previous chapters, Dandrey traces the genealogy of this character back to ancient Greek and Roman rituals surrounding the transition between childhood and adulthood, further strengthening his argument that adolescence is a key concept for understanding French Neoclassical theater. While these classical societies recognized adolescence as a unified, autonomous phase of life, of which Hippolytus was a patron deity, Dandrey traces the progressive relegation of Hippolytus’ role, eventually eclipsed completely by Phèdre’s. On the threshold of becoming an adult by marrying Aricia, Hippolytus dies an adolescent.

The concluding chapter includes a reflection on the evolution of theories of adolescence between the seventeenth century and the twenty-first century. Dandrey discusses what those of us living in an era he describes as “l’âge de l’adolescence par excellence” can learn from seventeenth-century French theater’s staging of this misunderstood, critical phase of life (192). This study provides important new insights into seventeenth-century theater and culture. It will also be of great use to anyone who teaches *Le Cid*, *L’École des femmes*, *Phèdre*, and the numerous other plays that Dandrey references, as it provides access to these texts that students often perceive to be quite far from their world through a theme that is very close to them.