

Italian, English, and/or German drama. There is also a quite extensive (yet, as I have argued, in some ways limited) Bibliography and a helpful Index to aid readers in navigating the collection's contents.

Jean de Guardia. *Logique du genre dramatique*. Travaux du Grand Siècle, 46. Genève: Librairie Droz, 2018. 495 pp. €79.00. Review by SUZANNE TOCZYSKI, SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY.

How do authors create coherence in dramatic fiction, and when and why do spectators and readers seek such coherence? These are the underlying questions of Jean de Guardia's *Logique du genre dramatique*, an impressive exploration of what De Guardia deems the most classically "coherent" period, authors, and genres of French literature, namely, the comedies and tragedies of Pierre Corneille, Jean Racine, and Molière dating from 1637 to 1687 (26). This fifty-year period, De Guardia maintains, offers a body of texts grounded in a classical aesthetic of maximal structural coherence and serves as a basis upon which De Guardia builds his *Logique*. De Guardia's goal is not so much to offer analyses of particular dramatic works as it is to explore a precise set of theatrical phenomena: the coherence of the individual texts under consideration, the theoretical models of coherence elaborated by writers of the time period, and the logical relationship between text and representation on the stage. While his approach may be off-putting to readers uncomfortable with the formalistic language and diagrams of syllogistic logic, De Guardia's prose is relatively straightforward and accessible with helpful charts and diagrams; his work offers a fascinating and novel dissection of the notion of dramatic coherence and its usefulness as a lens with which to consider some of the most well-known plays of seventeenth-century France.

De Guardia enters into the conversation around dramatic coherence with easy familiarity, drawing upon the works of Aristotle as well as those of seventeenth-century dramatic theorists François Hédelin, abbé d'Aubignac, and Georges de Scudéry. De Guardia also engages in fruitful dialogue with more contemporary theorists, from Anne Ubersfeld, Gérard Genette (with particular reference to Genette's work on *vraisemblance*), and Paul Ricoeur, to Georges Forestier and Gilles

Declercq. Most interesting, perhaps, are the myriad ways De Guardia brings ideas around coherence from different eras into dialogue with one another, synthesizing them into a new and valuable understanding of unity in dramatic fiction in general.

The first (and longest) section of *Logique du genre dramatique* explores the notion of “la cause fictive,” taking as its point of departure the fundamental principle that, “*la fiction doit fournir les causes de chaque fait qui la compose*” (38), a law of fiction that will hold at least to the end of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, after which point, De Guardia notes, coherence is no longer a dominant law in art. Distinguishing between “causes” and “reasons” in order to develop a taxonomy of causality, De Guardia contrasts the work of Corneille and, to some extent, Molière (wherein *causes* are related to what is “necessary” in terms of nomological explicability) with that of Racine (where we find a more pronounced use of *reasons* in the context of deliberative explicability). Ultimately, De Guardia suggests, fictional causality is essentially a language game (“un jeu de langage”) that takes place in the mind of the reader or spectator, if that individual is willing to participate; logic and verisimilitude are contrasted with structural complications that make the reader-spectator work harder at the interpretative process. Although all modalities can be found in classical French theater, De Guardia posits that total intelligibility is the consummate goal.

Part II of De Guardia’s *Logique* focuses on the three conditions necessary to create a true sense of unity in dramatic fiction: (1) *intégration*, such that there is nothing extraneous or unexplained outside of the causal network; (2) *liaison*, the condition requiring that various elements of the dramatic work be clearly linked one to another; and (3) *schema*, the process by which, taken together globally, these elements give form and unity to the piece. The most fascinating sections of this part of De Guardia’s *Logique* focus on predictability and surprise, with a particular attention given to the “formes étranges et hybrides” (269) of Corneille’s early comedies contrasted with his reflections on unity in *Horace* and *Cinna*. Part II of the *Logique* concludes with a lengthy “généralisation du théorème de Valincour” (331 ff.), in which De Guardia, grappling with Genette’s work on the topic, examines a later paradigm shift to a non-binary, more subjective approach to

theatrical composition. In the classical age, De Guardia notes, “*un ensemble de belles pratiques mal agencées (non vraisemblables ou non fonctionnelles) ne constitue pas une belle oeuvre*” (331); dramatic authors thus choose to vary their models at their own peril, striving always for “l’inaccessible fantasme classique” (361). De Guardia’s strength here is his combinatoric approach, which allows him to examine all possible logical models of fictional unity, contrasting, for example, plays as widely different as Corneille’s *Cinna*, Molière’s *L’Avaro*, Racine’s *Iphigénie*, and Yasmina Reza’s *Art* in one diagram.

In the third and final section of his study, De Guardia examines the relationship between *histoire* and *représentation* in an effort to identify the implicit rules that cause a spectator to recognize the unity of a given stage performance. Here, the notion of coherence is predicated on an acceptance that there are always elements of the dramatic work existing outside of the representation itself; it is therefore a question of determining what *constitutes* the action of the play and what *denotes* that action. In the end, considerations of logical *vraisemblance* and pragmatic *vraisemblance*, along with a well-regulated, fitting sequence of scenes, result in theatrical coherence and unity. The rhetoric of theatrical discourse is not neglected; De Guardia devotes considerable space to J. L. Austin’s concept of speech acts and their functioning to confer unity in the dramatic representations as well.

Readers seeking insights into specific works by Corneille, Racine, and Molière will be disappointed to find that these names are left out of the *Logique*’s index (although their contemporary Rotrou is there and can be found as a counterexample throughout the book; Rotrou’s *Les Cosroès* receives limited critical attention at various stages of De Guardia’s argument). Nor are significant conceptual terms catalogued; the index consists solely of surnames and is, thus, of limited usefulness. For the patient reader, however, Jean de Guardia’s *Logique du genre dramatique* insightfully develops a valuable theory of fictional coherence in the context of French seventeenth-century theater, a construct useful in judging the unity not only of works of *le Grand Siècle*, but also of the aesthetic production—both literary and cinematographic—of today.